

## **BOOSTING 4TH GRADERS' DESCRIPTIVE WRITING SKILLS WITH PICTURE SERIES AT SDIT AL-LAUZAH**

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### **Abstract**

This study aims to find the improvement in the students' writing descriptive text using picture series at the 4th grade of SDIT Al-Lauzah Tangerang Selatan. This study uses a qualitative descriptive method and implements Class Action Research (CAR) theory. The data is taken from the 4th grade students by giving them a pre-test and post-test and doing some observation in the classroom. The instruments used in this study are picture series and some questionnaire to be given in observation. Then the data is analyzed based on Arikunto's theory. The result showed that picture series could improve students' writing descriptive text. It can be seen from the mean of the score in pre-test is 60,1, post-test 1 is 68, and post-test 2 is 74,54. It means there is an increase or significant improvement when pictures series are used as media to improve students' writing descriptive text. In conclusion, picture series can motivate students to improve the skill of writing descriptive text. The quality of their writing was also increasing. In post-test 2, they used more correct grammatical structure than in pre-test or post-test 1. They can arrange the sentences correctly, use appropriate punctuation, use more new vocabularies in their writing, and describe the picture clearly in the content of their writing. Finally, this research not only benefits students and teachers at SDIT Al-Lauzah but also offers insights for future research in similar educational contexts. It highlights the potential innovation of teaching method using picture series to make language learning more engaging and effective for students.

**Keywords:** *classroom action research; descriptive text; picture series*

### **INTRODUCTION**

Previous studies have shown that students' ability in writing was still low, evidenced by the students' mean score of 50.75 in a preliminary study. The students faced several difficulties when starting to write, such as finding ideas and writing good sentences. Writing, an essential part of English skills, plays a necessary role as a medium of communication (JP, 2014, p. 14). Writing helps students communicate their ideas in written form. According to Harmer (2004), writing is a form of communication to deliver thoughts or express feelings in written form. Conversely, writing is claimed to be the most difficult skill because it is a complex process (Richard, as cited in Rahayu, 2016). Writing is particularly challenging for primary school students, who find it difficult to transition from speaking to writing due to the need to pay attention to punctuation, spelling, and grammar.

These difficulties are also faced by the fourth-grade students at SDIT Al-Lauzah Tangerang

Selatan. They have similar issues, such as difficulty deciding on a topic, arranging sentences, and choosing appropriate vocabulary. Ellis (1986) claims that internal and external factors influence students' writing abilities. Internal factors include age, aptitude, motivation, and personality, while external factors encompass social factors, input, and interaction. Students struggle with writing due to both internal and external factors. Internally, students may lack enthusiasm, motivation, and vocabulary. Externally, many teachers still use traditional teaching methods, failing to incorporate varied teaching media, especially in writing instruction, leading to student boredom. Innovative teaching strategies and media are necessary to engage students effectively.

Therefore, appropriate strategies are needed to overcome these problems. One effective strategy is using picture series to guide students in writing sentences correctly. To determine the effectiveness of this approach, observation and research are necessary. Picture series were chosen because they serve as a learning medium that can enhance writing skills. Previous studies have shown that pictures are effective in improving students' English skills, including reading, speaking, and writing. Using pictures in writing activities allows students to describe what they see and feel, then translate those descriptions into well-constructed sentences and paragraphs. According to Hamalik (as cited in Rahayu, 2016), media are tools, methods, or techniques that enhance the communication and interaction between teachers and students during the teaching-learning process. There are three types of media: audio, visual, and audiovisual. Visual media, particularly pictures, are considered the most effective for learning because students learn best through sight. Pictures offer various choices for teaching writing, such as individual pictures, picture series, diagrams, tables, maps, and charts (Raimes, as cited in Rahayu, 2016). Picture series are expected to improve students' writing skills and increase their enthusiasm for learning English. Wright (as cited in Rahayu, 2016) states that pictures significantly contribute to both the content and process of language learning. Picture series motivate students, inform them about objects or events, and foster creativity in composing stories.

Based on the above statements, the writer aims to improve students' descriptive text writing skills using picture series. Besides the previously mentioned problems, the fourth-grade students at SDIT Al-Lauzah Tangerang Selatan struggle with arranging sentences using correct grammatical structures, lack vocabulary, and have a low understanding of sentence construction. Therefore, it is crucial for teachers to find appropriate strategies to improve students' writing skills, which are essential for academic and professional success. Descriptive writing, which uses the simple present tense, aligns with the students' studies. This study aims to determine whether picture series can enhance students' descriptive writing skills. Previous studies have demonstrated that picture series can improve writing skills. Risdayanti's research showed an increased average score from 54.25 to 75.91 after treatment. Similarly, Mutia's research indicated a significant increase, with average pre-test scores of 50.30 and post-test scores of 72.64, resulting in an increase of 22.34 points.

## **REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

### **Writing**

One of the skills in language learning is writing. Writing is an activity that involves creating information using language and can be considered a medium of human communication through written symbols. According to Nunan (as cited in Rahayu, 2016), writing is the process of thinking to invent ideas, thinking about how to express ideas into good writing, and arranging the ideas into clear statements and paragraphs. It plays a major role in expressing one's ideas, thoughts, opinions, and attitudes. Writing is included in the activity of an active thinking process, making it an activity that requires high creativity. According to White and Arndt (as cited in Shalawati, 2021), writing is a thinking process that demands intellectual effort, involving generating ideas, planning, goal setting, monitoring, evaluating what is going to be written and what has been written, and using language to express exact meanings. Writing consists of several stages that must be carried out by the writer to convey the contents of the message effectively.

## **Descriptive Text**

Kane (as cited in Pratama, 2022) states that description is about sensory experiences, such as how something looks, sounds, or tastes. Descriptive text is a text that describes a particular object in detail, including its shape, color, smell, etc., to explain the object clearly. Gerrot and Wignell (1994) state that there are two generic structures of descriptive text: identification and description. Identification involves introducing a person, animal, place, or object, while description provides detailed information about the subject's characteristics, qualities, and parts. In identification, students introduce the subject, and in description, they elaborate on specific features of the object. Additionally, students must incorporate language features such as grammar, vocabulary, and mechanics into their descriptive texts. Brown (as cited in Purnamasari, 2021) identifies several indicators of English descriptive text: content, organization, grammar, vocabulary, and mechanics.

Content refers to the topic used by the writer in descriptive text, requiring a suitable topic. Brown (2001) asserts that content in writing descriptive text constitutes 30%, emphasizing the need for attention to content. Organization refers to the structure of the text, consisting of identification and description. Identification helps to introduce the subject, and description provides detailed explanations of the subject's characteristics. Grammar in descriptive text focuses on the use of nouns, adjectives, and verbs. Oshima and Hogue (2013) note that students use the simple present tense and adjectives to clarify nouns in descriptive texts. Vocabulary is crucial in writing descriptive text, helping readers understand the main points. Johnson et al. (2013) state that vocabulary should effectively represent the subject and be used correctly. Mechanics involve the writer's ability to use correct spelling and punctuation. Heaton (1988, as cited in Purnamasari, 2021) defines mechanics as the correct use of punctuation and spelling in writing.

## **Picture Series**

Picture series consist of several consecutive images that tell a story or sequence of events. Using picture series as a medium in teaching aims to create more effective learning, improving students' writing skills. Wright (as cited in Rahayu, 2016) states that pictures make a significant contribution to language learning by promoting productive skills such as writing and providing a fun learning medium. Picture series show actions or events in chronological order and can be used to create an enjoyable classroom atmosphere. Brown (2000) mentions that although images are "old fashioned," they are "very helpful as a medium in teaching," presenting an image of reality and adding a fun element to lessons. Wright (1994, as cited in Rahayu, 2016) suggests that images can be used as a reference and stimulus to promote various language teaching emphases, such as structure, vocabulary, function, situation, and the four skills.

## **METHOD**

This study employed qualitative research. Creswell (2012) states that qualitative research is a means of exploring and understanding the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem. Data were collected from pre-tests and post-tests in two cycles using picture series as the instrument. Observations were conducted during the class by administering questionnaires. Additionally, Classroom Action Research (CAR) was used as the design for this study because CAR designs are typically employed in the evaluation of educational programs when random assignment is not possible.

The writer applied CAR as proposed by Kemmis and McTaggart. This study consisted of two cycles, with an evaluation at the end of each cycle. The study was conducted based on the model of Kemmis and McTaggart, as cited in Burns (2010). The steps of this study are planning, action, observation, and reflection, as illustrated in the figure below:

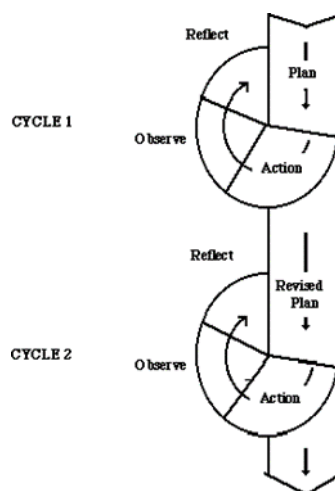


Figure 1. Action Research by Kemmis And McTaggart

First, the researcher conducts several preparations in the planning stage, such as developing a lesson plan, preparing the learning materials or media, and planning tasks and evaluations. Second, in the action stage, the researcher carefully implements these plans. This stage is divided into three sections: pre-activity, main activity, and post-activity, which will be discussed in more detail in the findings and discussion section. Third, observation is crucial for the next stage. This activity helps the researcher understand the condition or development in the class before and after the plan's implementation. Observation can be carried out by providing observation sheets, such as questionnaires, or through other methods according to the required data. The final stage is reflection, where the researcher evaluates the changes that occurred during the research.

In this study, the writer chose SDIT Al-Lauzah as the research site. SDIT Al-Lauzah is an elementary school in Tangerang Selatan, which has classes from grades one to six. In this school, grade four is divided into eight classes, each with 11 or 12 students. The writer selected one class with lower English proficiency, as previously explained, to receive a treatment using picture series in learning writing. Data were collected using Classroom Action Research (CAR). To collect the data, the writer used tests in the form of pre-tests and post-tests to determine if there were different results obtained from each pre-test and post-test.

To determine whether there is a positive and significant increase in the use of picture series to improve writing descriptive text in the fourth grade at SDIT Al-Lauzah, Tangerang Selatan, the writer analyzed the data by calculating the average scores of pre-tests and post-tests. Tests were administered in the initial and final cycles to assess student learning outcomes after the intervention. The average score was calculated using the formula proposed by Arikunto (2007). Indicators of success were derived from the process and results of the classroom action research. The intervention is considered successful if 70% of the students score above 70 (the KKM threshold) and if 70% of the students are actively engaged in the learning process.

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

### Finding

#### Pre-Test

The first step is giving a pre-test followed by 10 students of the fourth grade of SDIT Al-Lauzah Tangerang Selatan. After giving a pre-test, the writer got the results as the table below:

**Table 1. Pre-Test Table Score**

No.	Name	Aspect					Total	Criteria
		D	U	S	G	L		
1	AAA	6	6	6	13	13	44	Poor
2	AJM	10	13	13	6	13	55	Poor
3	AM	14	6	6	6	14	46	Poor
4	FRN	6	13	14	7	13	53	Poor
5	LPI	17	14	17	15	16	79	Good
6	LSO	8	10	6	9	12	45	Poor
7	MKA	8	15	11	13	12	59	Poor
8	MIA	17	15	18	13	15	78	Good
9	NLP	16	14	18	17	14	79	Good
10	KFN	15	10	14	11	13	63	Fair
11	ARS	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
12	ZVD	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
TOTAL							601	

D = Description

U = Use of English

G = Grammar

S = Spelling

L = Layout

$$X = \frac{\sum x}{\sum n} = \frac{601}{10} = 60,1$$

Note :

X = The average score pre-test

$\sum x$  = Total of the student's score

$\sum n$  = Total of the students that follow the test

From the table above, it can be concluded that the students' scores are below the standardized score (KKM) of 70. This indicates that their scores need to be improved through the method used in this research. Additionally, the table shows that the DUSGL (description, use of English, grammar, spelling, layout) scores are still low. This suggests that students are writing texts with poor grammar, inadequate content, inappropriate mechanics/spelling, and poor vocabulary, all of which need to be addressed and corrected in the next cycle.

**Table 2. Criteria of Student's Achievement of Pre-Test**

No	Total Score	Grade	Total of Student
1	40 – 60	Poor	6
2	61 – 70	Fair	1
3	71 – 80	Good	3
4	80 – 90	Very Good	-
5	90 – 100	Excellent	-
<b>Total</b>			<b>10</b>

### Cycle I

In Cycle I, the learning process was followed by 11 students. The stages of the learning process in Cycle I include planning, action, observation, and reflection. First, in the planning stage, the writer prepared necessary materials such as a lesson plan characterized by the Classroom Action Research (CAR) learning model, picture series as the media to be used in class, the observation sheet instrument, and the task/evaluation sheet. Second, in the action stage, the writer divided the activities into three sections: pre-activity, main activity, and post-activity. The pre-activity consisted of greeting, checking the attendance list, reviewing the previous lesson, and introducing the new lesson, which involved writing a descriptive text using the simple present

tense. In the main activity, the students received ample explanation on how to write a descriptive text using the simple present tense and were given picture series as the media for writing the text. The post-activity included discussion and evaluation of the previous activity, followed by closing remarks. Third, in the observation stage, the writer conducted observations during the class research. The results of the observation showed that students seemed less active at the beginning of the class but became more engaged when they were given picture series as the media for writing a descriptive text. The post-test results in Cycle I can be seen in the following table:

**Table 3. Score of Post test 1**

No.	Name	Aspect					Total	Criteria
		D	U	S	G	L		
1	ARS	15	15	20	12	15	77	Good
2	AAA	10	15	12	13	15	65	Fair
3	AJM	14	15	20	15	17	81	Very Good
4	AM	10	13	12	16	12	63	Fair
5	FRN	10	14	15	12	10	61	Fair
6	KFN	5	10	10	6	10	41	Poor
7	LPI	15	15	20	15	15	80	Good
8	LSO	6	10	10	6	10	42	Poor
9	MKA	15	10	20	13	10	68	Fair
10	MIA	15	18	20	17	16	86	Very Good
11	NLP	15	18	20	16	15	84	Very Good
12	ZVD	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Total Score</b>							<b>748</b>	

D = Description

U = Use of English

G = Grammar

S = Spelling

L = Layout

$$X = \frac{\sum x}{\sum n} = \frac{748}{11} = 68$$

$\sum n = 11$

Note :

$X$  = The average score Post-Test

$\sum x$  = Total of the student's score

$\sum n$  = Total of the students that follow the test

**Table 4. Criteria of Students Achievement of Post Test 1**

No	Total Score	Grade	Total of Student
1	40 – 60	Poor	2
2	61 – 70	Fair	4
3	71 – 80	Good	2
4	80 – 90	Very Good	3
5	90 – 100	Excellent	-
<b>Total</b>			<b>11</b>

From the data above, it can be concluded that the average score of post-test 1 is 68, which is higher than the pre-test average score. The percentage of students meeting the KKM (minimum competency criteria) increased from 25% in the pre-test to 42% in post-test 1. This indicates a significant improvement in students' performance after implementing picture series in the writing activity. The quality of writing also showed improvement, as evidenced by the DUSGL (description, use of English, grammar, spelling, layout) scores in the table. Students wrote with more correct grammatical structures, used a wider variety of vocabulary, and applied more

appropriate mechanics of writing compared to the pre-test.

The final stage of Cycle I is reflection. Based on the data, the percentage of students meeting the learning outcomes criteria is 42%, which is an improvement from the pre-test but still below the determined criterion of 70%. Therefore, there are still many shortcomings that need to be addressed in the next cycle.

## Cycle II

In Cycle II, the learning process was again followed by 11 students. The stages of the learning process in Cycle II remained the same: planning, action, observation, and reflection. The planning stage in Cycle II involved making corrections and evaluations based on the observations and reflections from Cycle I. Therefore, improvements were necessary in Cycle II to achieve the research goals. The preparation included creating a lesson plan, making media or post-test sheets using picture series, and preparing observation sheets for educator activities and student activities.

In the action stage, the writer divided the activities into three sections: pre-activity, main activity, and post-activity. The pre-activity consisted of greeting, checking the attendance list, reviewing the previous lesson, and introducing the next lesson, which involved writing a descriptive text using picture series in the simple present tense. In the main activity, the students received ample explanation on how to write a descriptive text using the simple present tense and were given picture series as the media for writing the text. The post-activity included discussion and evaluation of the previous activity, followed by closing remarks.

During the observation stage, the writer conducted observations using an observation sheet. The results of the observation in this cycle were better. The students easily understood what to do with the task because they had learned from the previous cycle, and the class was more conducive to learning. The results of their writing also improved, showing a richness of new vocabulary, enabling students to write descriptive texts more easily. Additionally, some students demonstrated increased confidence in their studies, as evidenced by their increased participation in class and willingness to ask questions. This was particularly noticeable among students who were less active in Cycle I but became more active in Cycle II. When their writings were checked, it was evident that they wrote correct sentences, knew how to use the simple present tense, and understood how to arrange subjects and predicates in a sentence. This indicates an improved understanding of grammar. The following is the result of the post-test for Cycle II:

**Table 5. Score of Post test 2**

No.	Name	Aspect					Total	Criteria
		D	U	S	G	L		
1	AAA	12	15	15	15	13	70	Fair
2	AJM	15	20	20	15	15	85	Very Good
3	AM	10	10	18	15	12	65	Fair
4	FRN	12	12	16	15	15	70	Fair
5	LPI	18	20	20	17	17	92	Excellent
6	LSO	10	10	10	10	10	50	Poor
7	MIA	20	20	20	20	18	98	Excellent
8	NLP	20	20	20	20	18	98	Excellent
9	KFN	10	12	20	15	15	72	Good
10	ZVD	5	10	5	5	5	30	Poor
11	ARS	14	20	20	18	18	90	Excellent
12	MKA	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Total Score</b>						<b>820</b>		

D = Description

U = Use of English

S = Spelling

G = Grammar

L = Layout

$$X = \frac{\sum x}{\sum n} = \frac{820}{11} = 74,54$$

Note :

$X$  = The average score Post-

Test  $\sum x$  = Total of the

student's score

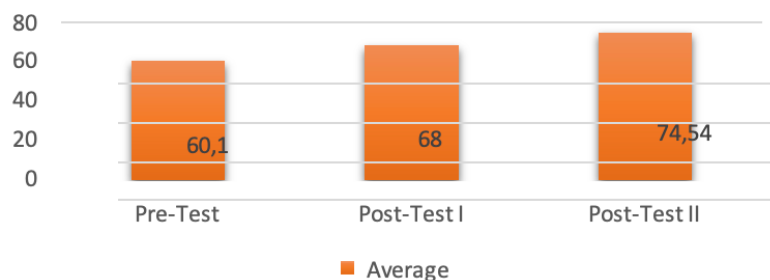
$\sum n$  = Total of the students that follow the test

**Table 6. Criteria of Students Achievement of Post Test 2**

No	Total Score	Grade	Total of Student
1	40 – 60	Poor	2
2	61 – 70	Fair	3
3	71 – 80	Good	1
4	80 – 90	Very Good	1
5	91-100	Excellent	4
<b>Total</b>			<b>11</b>

Based on the data above, it can be concluded that the average post-test score for Cycle I is 68, while the average post-test score for Cycle II is 74.54, indicating an improvement. The percentage of students meeting the KKM increased from 42% in post-test Cycle I to 73% in post-test Cycle II. This signifies a significant improvement in students' writing performance when using picture series as a teaching method.

Furthermore, there is a marked improvement in the quality of their writing. The DUSGL (description, use of English, grammar, spelling, layout) scores show that students made fewer grammar mistakes and improved in various aspects of writing, including punctuation, vocabulary, grammar structure, and content. This improvement is reflected in the increased scores across all aspects of writing. The summary of their improvement in writing is illustrated in the figure below:



**Figure 2. Comparison Graph Pre-Test, Post-Test 1 and 2**

The last stage of Cycle II is reflection. Based on the results obtained in Cycle II, the percentage of student learning outcomes was 73%. This indicates a significant improvement compared to the previous cycle, demonstrating that the use of picture series is effective in enhancing students' writing skills.

## Discussion

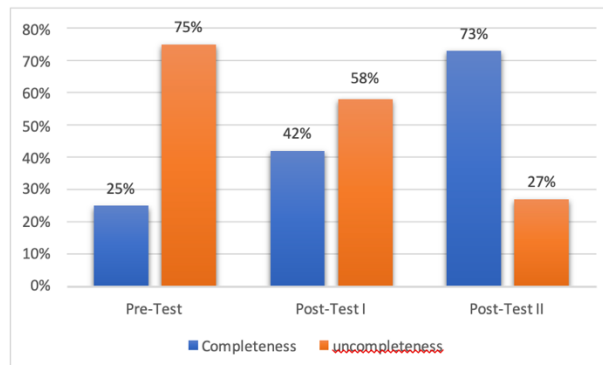
The implementation of picture series and classroom action research in writing descriptive texts can significantly improve students' learning outcomes. Based on the results of the post-test in Cycle I, the average student score was 68. The number of students who achieved the minimum completeness criteria (KKM) increased by 5 students, reaching 45% of the class, while 6 students (56%) still did not meet the KKM. This data indicates that the learning outcomes in Cycle I were



not optimal, necessitating further action in Cycle II. In Cycle II, the results of the post-test showed an average score of 74.54. Of the 11 students, 8 (73%) achieved the KKM, while 3 (27%) did not. The data clearly shows an increase in learning outcomes from Cycle I to Cycle II. The following table presents the results of observations of students' learning activities during the classroom action research conducted by the researchers:

**Table 7. Criteria of Students Achievement of Pre-Test, Post- Test 1 and PostTest 2**

No	Name	KKM	Score		
			Pre-Test	Post-Test I	Post-Test II
1	ARS	70	-	77	90
2	AAA	70	44	65	70
3	AJM	70	55	81	85
4	AM	70	46	63	65
5	FRN	70	53	61	70
6	KFN	70	63	41	72
7	LPI	70	79	80	92
8	LSO	70	45	42	50
9	MKA	70	59	68	-
10	MIA	70	78	86	98
11	NLP	70	79	84	98
12	ZVD	70	-	-	30
<b>Total Score</b>			<b>601</b>	<b>748</b>	<b>820</b>
<b>Average Score</b>			<b>60,1</b>	<b>68</b>	<b>74,54</b>
<b>Completeness Percentage</b>			<b>25%</b>	<b>42%</b>	<b>73%</b>



**Figure 3. Comparison Students Learning Outcomes**

Based on the data above, it is evident that there is an increase in students' writing skills. Before using picture series as a learning medium, student scores were still low. This is seen in the pre-test results of 10 students, where only 3 students (25%) met the KKM, while 7 students (75%) did not. In post-test I, 5 out of 11 students (42%) met the KKM, while 6 students (58%) did not. The results of post-test II, taken by 11 students, showed that 8 students (73%) met the KKM, while 3 students (27%) did not. This indicates a significant improvement when picture series are used as a medium to enhance students' descriptive writing skills.

Additionally, this research found that the quality of students' descriptive writing improved with each test. This is reflected in the improved aspects of writing, including correct grammatical structure, expanded vocabulary, and appropriate mechanics, as shown in the tables above. The findings of this study are consistent with previous research on writing using picture series. For instance, Risdayanti's study showed an increased average score from 54.25 to 75.91 after

treatment using picture series. Similarly, Mutia's research demonstrated a significant increase, with the average pre-test score of 50.30 rising to 72.64 post-test. Thus, the use of picture series contributed to an increase in students' average scores. In contrast, some studies suggest that writing descriptive texts using picture series can be effectively combined with speaking skills. Both skills can utilize picture series to express ideas, allowing students to convey their opinions in both written and spoken forms.

## CONCLUSIONS

Based on the previous data and explanation, it can be concluded that there is a significant improvement when implementing picture series in writing a descriptive text in the classroom. The data from the pre-test, post-test 1, and post-test 2 show that the average score increased in each test. The minimum standardized score (KKM) of 70 was achieved. The mean score of the pre-test was 60.1, post-test 1 was 68, and post-test 2 was 74.54. The conclusion is that picture series significantly help the 4th-grade students of SDIT Al-Lauzah Tangerang Selatan improve their skill in writing a descriptive text.

One limitation of this study is its focus on one type of writing (descriptive text) and a specific group of students (4th grade of elementary school) using one medium of learning (picture series). This narrow scope may limit the generalization of the findings to other types of writing or different student populations. Future studies could expand to include various types of writing and a broader range of students from different schools or grade levels. Additionally, this study relies on the results of the students' descriptive text writing using pre-tests and post-tests from two cycles. Including more detailed observation and reflection could provide a more comprehensive understanding of the study.

Furthermore, the results of this study are expected to be beneficial for readers or other researchers, and it is suggested to use picture series in their learning activities due to the success demonstrated in this classroom. It is also expected that other teachers or researchers will be more creative in using various recent media, strategies, or references when conducting similar research. The implications of this study are significant for language learning, particularly in the area of writing.

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