

Boosting Tenth Graders' Descriptive Writing Skills Through Picture-Based Teaching at SMKN 41 South Jakarta

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to determine the effect of using pictures as teaching media on students' descriptive text writing skills in the tenth grade at SMK Negeri 41 South Jakarta. The research employed a quantitative method, specifically a real experimental design. The population of this study consisted of tenth-grade students at SMK Negeri 41, with 32 students in the X DKV-1 class serving as the experimental group and 32 students in the X DKV-2 class as the control group. Based on the research findings, the experimental class had a mean score of 80.3, a median of 86, a mode of 82.5, a variance of 6.24, and a standard deviation of 39.051. Meanwhile, the control class recorded a mean score of 75.26, a median of 76, a mode of 78.3, a variance of 5.72, and a standard deviation of 32.827. The results indicate that the t-test value observed was higher than the t-table value. This confirms that the alternative hypothesis was accepted, and the null hypothesis was rejected. It can be concluded that there is a significant effect of using pictures as media in the learning process. The use of pictures significantly improves the writing skills and creativity of students in English descriptive text in the X grade at SMK Negeri 41 South Jakarta.

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INTRODUCTION

Language serves as the most essential tool for communication worldwide. Proficiency in a language enables individuals to communicate effectively and exchange information (Cahyono & Rahayu, 2020). Communication plays a pivotal role in facilitating learning, especially for students studying abroad. In today's digital era, English has become the primary medium for global communication. Indonesia, as one of the countries that prioritize English education, incorporates English instruction at various educational levels, including elementary school, junior high school, high school, and college. However, with recent curriculum changes in Indonesia, English learning now formally begins at the junior high school (SMP), senior high school (SMA), and college levels.

In English learning, students must develop four foundational skills: writing, reading, listening, and speaking. Among these, writing is a complex cognitive process involving the expression of ideas or insights on a specific topic. One fundamental aspect of writing emphasizes attention to structure and language. Students are exposed to various types of writing, such as

narrative, recount, descriptive, argumentative, and expository texts. Writing is widely recognized as an effective learning tool that holds a significant role in education (Sari et al., 2023).

At the high school and vocational levels, descriptive text is one of the functional texts studied. However, descriptive text poses challenges for many students. Ariyana et al. (2020) define descriptive text as a text that outlines the characteristics of a person, object, or place. It consists of two main parts: the introduction, which introduces the subject, and the description, which elaborates on the subject's attributes. Writing descriptive text often requires the use of the simple present tense and adjective clauses.

Students frequently encounter difficulties in writing descriptive texts, such as organizing their ideas, selecting appropriate vocabulary, and developing their imagination. Based on the writer's teaching experience in October 2024 at SMK Negeri 41 South Jakarta, many senior high school students found writing descriptive texts challenging and expressed a lack of interest in the task. This struggle often stemmed from their inability to construct sentences properly and choose suitable vocabulary.

Yusril (2022) describes descriptive text as writing that portrays the characteristics of people, animals, plants, or inanimate objects, such as houses and cars. Tarigan and Liana (2018) add that descriptive writing aims to provide readers with a detailed understanding and experience of the subject. To enhance students' writing skills in English, effective teaching media are essential. Teachers play a critical role as facilitators of learning, creating engaging classroom environments to prevent student boredom. By using appropriate media, teachers can act as intermediaries, ensuring effective delivery of learning materials and fostering student interest.

Hobbs (2017) identifies 13 types of learning media, including objects, models, direct sound, audio recordings, print media, programmed learning, blackboards, transparency media, stringed movies, frame films, movies, television, and pictures. Among these, image media is a cost-effective and accessible tool that serves as an effective learning aid. It helps students overcome confusion and provides clarity in selecting topics for their writing. In the context of descriptive text, image media facilitates the development of ideas and thoughts, enabling students to translate these into coherent written expressions.

Given this context, the current study investigates the impact of using image media on improving the descriptive text writing skills of tenth-grade students at SMK Negeri 41 South Jakarta in the context of English language learning.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Writing Skills

Writing is the process of expressing emotions, experiences, and thoughts through written language. Writing skills are considered process-oriented, as most individuals develop and refine them over time. Whether writing for scientific purposes, non-scientific contexts, or personal notes, the act of writing is rarely spontaneous or immediate. According to Rismayanti (2021), writing requires deliberate effort and practice.

Writing skills play a crucial role in helping students enhance their English learning. Beyond language acquisition, writing fosters cognitive development by encouraging students to organize and articulate their thoughts. This is supported by Manalu (2022), who states that "since writing is a productive skill, it also aids in pupils' development of their capacity for thought and feeling expressions." From this perspective, writing not only serves as a tool for communication but also contributes to the cultivation of students' ability to process and express their ideas and emotions effectively.

Learning Media

Learning media is a critical factor in enhancing student learning outcomes. Effective use of media creates engaging and stimulating learning experiences, enabling students to absorb information more easily and clearly (Lawrence & Tar, 2018). Teachers are encouraged to design

learning activities as creatively as possible to maintain student interest and avoid boredom. Utilizing appropriate tools during the learning process can significantly improve engagement. According to Istiara and Hastomo (2023) learning becomes more effective and efficient when teachers provide high-quality and enjoyable education. This can be achieved by selecting, utilizing, and optimizing learning materials that are both engaging and tailored to students' characteristics.

Tan et al. (2019) highlight the importance of teaching aids, describing them as essential tools for making learning more effective and appealing. They assert that teachers have a responsibility to facilitate the teaching and learning process by using diverse resources, including media, to support student development.

Various types of learning media exist to aid instruction. Hobbs (2017) identifies, there are 13 types of learning media: objects, models, live sounds, audio recordings, print media, programmed learning, whiteboards, transparency media, chain films, frame films, films, television, and pictures. Among these, pictures stand out as an accessible, practical, and cost-effective medium. Teachers can use pictures as learning tools to help students clarify concepts and identify topics for their writing.

Wulandari et al. (2017) emphasize that visual media, such as pictures, can assist students in understanding lessons more quickly, strengthening their memory, and connecting lessons to real-world contexts. Similarly, Halim and Arifin (2022) define pictures as anything visible that functions as a medium or tool for communication. According to Ekarista (2018), a picture is "an imitation of an item." Pictures not only enable students to visualize concepts but also encourage them to express their imagination and transform their ideas into written language.

Descriptive Text

Descriptive text is one of the text types studied in schools. Pratama et al. (2022) state that "Descriptive text presents the appearance of things that occupy space, whether they are objects, people, buildings, or cities." Similarly, Manalu (2022) explains that descriptive essays depict objects as they truly are, allowing readers to see, hear, smell, and feel what is described from the author's perspective.

Ariyana et al. (2020) define descriptive text as a type of writing that portrays the characteristics of various entities, including humans, animals, plants, or inanimate objects such as houses and cars. Tarigan and Liana (2018) emphasize that the purpose of descriptive text is to provide the reader with a clear understanding of a specific object, person, or location by describing it comprehensively. Similarly, Pratama et al. (2022) assert that descriptive writing aims to enhance the reader's knowledge and experience by presenting actual, tangible elements.

A study conducted by Ariyana et al. (2020), investigated the effectiveness of picture series in teaching writing and explored student responses to this approach. The study employed qualitative research, with the researcher acting as the teacher, and involved one class of ninth-grade students at a junior high school. Data collection instruments included classroom observations, interviews, and students' writing samples. The findings revealed that the use of picture series significantly improved students' vocabulary mastery. Furthermore, the pictures helped students generate new ideas and organize them into chronological sentences by following the sequence of images.

The similarity between previous research and the current study lies in their shared goal of enhancing students' writing skills and the use of students' writing samples as a data collection instrument. However, a key difference is that previous research focused on recount texts, while the current study examines descriptive texts.

METHOD

This study utilized a quantitative research approach with an experimental design to examine the effectiveness of pictures as teaching media in improving students' descriptive text writing

skills. The research involved two groups: the experimental group, which received instruction using pictures as teaching media, and the control group, which was taught using conventional methods without pictures. The participants comprised 64 tenth-grade students from SMK Negeri 41 South Jakarta, divided into two classes. The experimental group consisted of 32 students from the 10th DKV-1 class, while the control group included 32 students from the 10th DKV-2 class. To ensure unbiased participant selection, the researchers employed a probability sampling technique, specifically simple random sampling. Hypothesis testing was conducted using a t-test (independent test) to compare the mean scores of the two groups and evaluate the effect of the intervention.

In this study, the researchers investigated two variables: the independent variable, which is the use of picture media in teaching, and the dependent variable, which is the writing skills of tenth-grade students at SMK Negeri 41 South Jakarta in descriptive text. To measure the effect of the independent variable on the dependent variable, the researchers employed a writing test as the instrument.

Table. 1 Test Instrument

No	Indicator	Material	Instrument
1.	1. Students are able to write descriptive text according to the theme, structure, and linguistic elements.	<i>Describe the picture of Animal</i>	Writing test
	2. Students are able to observe pictures in writing descriptive text		

There are five components that will be assessed in students' writing, including content, organization, vocabulary, mechanics, and language use. To score the test results, the researchers utilized a scoring rubric. A scoring rubric serves as a valuable tool for evaluating the quality of students' writing responses. The components to be scored are described as follows:

Table. 2 Scoring Components

No	Components	Score
1	Content	35
2	Organization	25
3	Vocabulary	20
4	Language	15
5	Mechanics	5
Total		100

Source: (Brown, 2004)

The research was conducted over a period of 2 weeks, during which data collection took place at the school. The gathered data was subsequently analyzed to address the research question and test the research hypotheses. Analysis was performed using descriptive statistics, involving calculations of the mean, variance, and standard deviation. The test results of the descriptive texts written by 10th-grade students at SMK Negeri 41 South Jakarta were subjected to homogeneity and hypothesis tests across both the experimental and control classes. The findings were then presented in tables and histograms to provide a clear visual representation of the results.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Table 3. Summary of Descriptive Text Writing Scores

Class	Mean Score	Median Score	Mode Score	Variance	Standard Deviation
Experimental (Using Picture Media)	86.03	86	82.3	39.051	6.24
Control (Conventional Method)	75.25	76	78.3	32.827	5.72

The study's findings were derived from the analysis of test data on the descriptive text

writing skills of both the experimental and control classes. Descriptive analysis was employed to characterize the test data, revealing distinct patterns in the students' performance under different instructional methods.

In the experimental class, where picture media were used, the data showed a mean score of 86.03, a median of 86, and a mode of 82.3. The variance was calculated at 6.24 with a standard deviation of 39.051. A frequency distribution table and histogram visually depicted the distribution of scores. Conversely, in the control class without picture media, the mean score was 75.25, a median of 76, and a mode of 78.3, with a variance of 5.72 and a standard deviation of 32.827. A similar frequency distribution table and histogram were presented for this group.

Comparing the results, it is evident that the average score in the experimental class (86.03) surpassed that of the control class (75.25). This difference indicates a significant improvement in descriptive text writing skills among students taught using picture media compared to those taught through conventional methods.

Furthermore, hypothesis testing confirmed these findings, revealing a t-test value of 17.67, exceeding the critical t-value of 1.693 at the significance level of $\alpha = 0.05$. Consequently, the null hypothesis (H_0) was rejected, indicating a significant impact of picture media on enhancing descriptive text writing skills among tenth-grade students at SMK Negeri 41 South Jakarta. Thus, it can be concluded that the use of picture media significantly influences the improvement of students' English descriptive text writing skills in both DKV-1 (experimental) and DKV-2 (control) classes.

DISCUSSION

This discussion explores the relationship between the research findings and the theoretical frameworks employed in the study. The data, processed through statistical analysis, revealed that the average writing skill score for students taught using image media was 86.03, with a standard deviation of 6.24. In contrast, students taught using conventional teaching methods achieved an average score of 75.26, with a standard deviation of 5.72. These results indicate that writing skills taught through the use of image media yielded better outcomes than those taught through conventional learning models.

A comparison of the research results from the experimental and control classes further supports these findings. The experimental group, which was taught using image media, had an average score of 80.03, while the control group, which followed conventional teaching methods, scored an average of 75.26. The median, mode, standard deviation, and variance for both groups were also measured, with the experimental group showing higher values in several metrics. These findings suggest that using image media significantly enhances students' writing skills in English descriptive text compared to traditional methods.

The hypothesis testing, using the t-test, confirmed these conclusions. The calculated t-value of 17.67 exceeded the t-table value of 1.693 at a 0.05 significance level, leading to the rejection of the null hypothesis (H_0). This result indicates a statistically significant positive effect of image media on the English descriptive writing skills of students at SMK Negeri 41 South Jakarta.

Furthermore, the use of picture series has been shown to increase students' interest and engagement in learning English, particularly in the area of writing. As Manalu (2022) suggests, effective writing requires careful thought, including idea generation, vocabulary selection, and logical organization. Pictures serve as a creative tool to help students develop these skills by stimulating their imagination and encouraging them to structure their ideas coherently. According to Noor Azilna, the use of visuals or realia enhances students' comprehension and facilitates idea development, thereby improving their writing skills.

In conclusion, the research results demonstrate a positive relationship between the use of pictures as teaching media and the improvement of descriptive text writing skills. The findings emphasize the effectiveness of visual media in fostering creativity and enhancing students' writing abilities.

CONCLUSIONS

Based on the findings, it can be concluded that the use of pictures is an effective technique for improving the writing skills of senior high school students, particularly those at SMK Negeri 41 South Jakarta. The incorporation of pictures into the teaching and learning process facilitates the generation of ideas for writing compositions, especially when creating descriptive texts. By observing and interpreting the pictures provided by the teacher, students are able to develop their ideas more effectively. Additionally, pictures support vocabulary acquisition and enhance students' ability to express themselves in writing.

Moreover, pictures serve as a motivating factor for students, as they capture their interest and help them understand the ideas and information necessary for writing. This visual aid also addresses limitations related to time, size, and space, allowing for a more efficient teaching process. Teachers find it easier to explain the material by integrating pictures, which support students' comprehension and enhance the learning experience.

The use of pictures is particularly beneficial because they provide clear guidance on vocabulary, sentence structure, and organization, while also enabling students to engage with new subject matter. Unlike simply listening to a teacher's explanation, pictures offer an interactive approach that stimulates students' creativity, helping them to better organize their thoughts and improve the quality of their writing. Overall, the use of picture media in the classroom plays a crucial role in enhancing students' writing abilities.

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