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The Effect of Using Pictures on the Students' Writing Ability of Grade X at SMA Swasta Kampus Nommensen Pematangsiantar

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Abstract

This study aims to investigate the effect of using picture media on students' writing ability in descriptive text at Grade X of SMA Swasta Kampus Nommensen Pematangsiantar. Writing is one of the most important language skills in English learning; however, many students still face difficulties in generating and organizing ideas in written form. Therefore, the use of appropriate instructional media such as pictures is expected to help students improve their writing performance. This research employed a quantitative approach with a quasi-experimental design, specifically the non-equivalent control group design. The sample consisted of two classes: X-1 as the experimental group and X-2 as the control group, with a total of 50 students selected through purposive sampling. The experimental group was taught using picture media, while the control group was taught using conventional methods. The instruments used in this study were pre-test and post-test writing tasks. The data were analyzed using statistical procedures, including mean score comparison and t-test analysis. The findings showed that the experimental class obtained a higher mean score (80.16) compared to the control class (77.44). The t-test result (2.25) was higher than the t-table value (2.01) at a 5% significance level, indicating that the alternative hypothesis was accepted. It can be concluded that the use of picture media has a significant effect on students' writing ability in descriptive text. Therefore, picture media can be recommended as an effective teaching strategy to improve students' writing skills in English learning.

Keywords: Picture Media, Writing Ability, Descriptive Text, Quasi-Experimental, English Learning

INTRODUCTION

Writing is one of the most essential language skills in English learning because it allows

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students to express ideas, thoughts, and experiences in a structured written form. In the context of second language learning, writing is considered a complex skill that requires mastery of vocabulary, grammar, organization, and coherence. According to Harmer (2004), writing is a process that involves not only producing words but also organizing ideas logically so that the message can be clearly understood by the reader. Therefore, writing is often seen as one of the most challenging skills for English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners.

In Indonesian senior high schools, writing English texts is still a major difficulty for many students, especially in descriptive writing. Students often struggle to generate ideas and develop them into well-organized paragraphs. This problem is commonly caused by limited vocabulary, lack of motivation, and insufficient learning media used in the classroom. Hyland (2019) explains that learners need adequate input and support in writing tasks to help them develop their ability in producing coherent texts. Without appropriate teaching strategies, students tend to produce short and unstructured writing. One of the genres taught in Grade X of senior high school is descriptive text. Descriptive text requires students to describe a person, place, or object in detail by using appropriate adjectives and clear sentence structures. However, many students find it difficult to describe objects vividly because they cannot visualize the ideas clearly. As a result, their writing becomes less meaningful and lacks detail. This situation shows that teachers need to use more engaging teaching media to support students' understanding.

To overcome these difficulties, the use of visual media such as pictures can be an effective teaching strategy. Pictures help students to generate ideas more easily because they provide concrete visual stimuli. According to Wright (2010), pictures are valuable teaching tools because they stimulate students' imagination and make language learning more meaningful. By using pictures, students are expected to be more motivated and able to organize their ideas into written form more effectively.

In addition, visual media such as pictures can also increase students' engagement in the learning process. When students are interested in the learning materials, they tend to participate more actively in classroom activities. This is supported by Arsyad (2017), who states that instructional media play an important role in improving students' motivation and learning outcomes. Therefore, pictures can be an alternative solution to improve students' writing ability, especially in descriptive text writing. Several previous studies have shown that the use of pictures has a positive effect on students' writing skills. For instance, a study by Yunus, Salehi, and Embi (2012) found that visual aids significantly helped students in generating ideas and improving writing quality. Similarly, pictures can serve as a bridge between abstract language concepts and real-world understanding, making it easier for students to express their thoughts

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in English.

Based on the explanation above, it is important to conduct a study on the effect of using pictures on students' writing ability. This research focuses on Grade X students at SMA Swasta Kampus Nommensen Pematangsiantar. It is expected that the use of pictures as a learning medium can improve students' ability in writing descriptive text and provide an effective alternative teaching strategy for English teachers.

Therefore, this study aims to investigate whether there is a significant effect of using picture media on students' writing ability in descriptive text. The findings of this research are expected to contribute to the improvement of English teaching strategies, especially in enhancing students' writing skills in senior high schools.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study employed a quantitative research approach because the data were collected in numerical form and analyzed using statistical procedures to determine the effect of the treatment. Quantitative research is commonly used to test hypotheses and examine relationships between variables through measurable data. According to Creswell (2018), quantitative research involves the collection and analysis of numerical data to explain, predict, or control phenomena. In this study, the independent variable is the use of picture media, while the dependent variable is students' writing ability in descriptive text.

The research design used was a quasi-experimental design, specifically the non-equivalent control group design. This design was selected because the researcher could not randomly assign students to groups since the classes were already established by the school system. Fraenkel, Wallen, and Hyun (2012) state that quasi-experimental designs are widely applied in educational research because intact classrooms are often used as research groups. Therefore, the existing classes were assigned as experimental and control groups.

In this design, two groups were involved, namely the experimental group and the control group. Both groups were given a pre-test (X1) before the treatment to measure their initial writing ability. After that, the experimental group was taught using picture media, while the control group was taught using conventional teaching methods such as textbooks. After the treatment, both groups were given a post-test (X2) to measure the improvement in students' writing ability.

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Table 1. Research Design

Group	Pre-test	Treatment	Post-test
Experimental	X1	Y1	X2
Control	X1	Y2	X2

Notes:

X1 : Pre-Test

X2 : Post-Test

Y1 : Treatment using pictures

Y2 : Treatment using conventional media (textbook)

The research was conducted at SMA Swasta Kampus Nommensen Pematangsiantar, located at Jalan Sangnawaluh No. 4, Pematangsiantar City, North Sumatra, in the academic year 2025/2026. The school was chosen because it provided appropriate access to Grade X students who were relevant to the focus of the study, particularly in learning English writing skills.

The population of this study consisted of all Grade X students at SMA Swasta Kampus Nommensen Pematangsiantar. The population was divided into three classes with a total of 72 students. Each class had relatively similar learning conditions and followed the same English curriculum.

Table 2. List of Population

No.	Class	Total of Students
1	X-1	25
2	X-2	25
3	X-3	22
	Total	**72**

The sample of this study was selected using purposive sampling. According to Sugiyono (2019), purposive sampling is a technique of selecting samples based on specific considerations relevant to the research objectives. The researcher selected two classes that had similar academic abilities and learning conditions to ensure fair comparison between groups.

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Table 3. Research Sample

Group	Class	Total Students
Control	X-2	25
Experimental	X-1	25
Total		**50**

The data collection technique used in this study was a writing test consisting of a pre-test, treatment, and post-test. The data were obtained from students' writing scores in both experimental and control groups. The assessment was based on a writing rubric that included content, organization, vocabulary, grammar, and mechanics. The pre-test was administered before the treatment in both groups. The purpose of the pre-test was to measure students' initial ability in writing descriptive text. Students were asked to write a descriptive text with the theme "favorite animal." The results were then scored using a standardized rubric.

The treatment was applied only to the experimental group, while the control group was taught using conventional methods. In the experimental group, picture media was used as a teaching aid to help students generate and organize ideas in writing descriptive text. The use of pictures was expected to make learning more engaging and easier to understand. After the treatment was completed, the post-test was given to both groups. Students were asked to write a descriptive text with the theme "Seal." The post-test was used to measure students' writing improvement after the treatment. The results of both tests were then analyzed statistically to determine the effectiveness of picture media in improving students' writing ability.

RESULTS

The data obtained from the pre-test and post-test were analyzed to determine the effect of using picture media on students' writing ability in descriptive text. After conducting the treatment in the experimental class and conventional teaching in the control class, the results showed differences in students' achievement between the two groups. The analysis focused on comparing mean scores, total scores, standard deviation, standard error, and hypothesis testing using the t-test. The results of the post-test showed that the experimental class achieved a higher mean score compared to the control class. The mean score of the experimental class was 80.16, while the control class obtained a mean score of 77.44. This indicates that students who were taught using picture media performed better in writing descriptive text than those who were taught using conventional methods. In addition, the total score of the experimental class post-

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test was 2004, while the control class obtained a total score of 1936, showing a difference in overall performance between the two groups.

Furthermore, the level of score distribution in both classes was also analyzed using standard deviation. The standard deviation of the experimental class post-test was 3.48, while the control class had a higher standard deviation of 4.97. This shows that the experimental class had more consistent writing scores, while the control class showed greater variation among students' performance. A lower standard deviation in the experimental class indicates that picture media helped students achieve more stable writing outcomes.

In addition, the standard error of the difference between the two means was calculated to determine the accuracy of the comparison. The result showed that the standard error of the difference was 1.21, which was used in the t-test calculation. This statistical value helped in determining whether the difference between the two groups was significant or not. The hypothesis testing was conducted using a t-test formula. The result showed that the calculated t-value was 2.25. This value was then compared with the t-table value at a 5% significance level with a degree of freedom (df) of 48, which was 2.01. Since the value of t-test (2.25) was higher than the t-table (2.01), it indicated that there was a significant difference between the experimental and control groups.

Based on the hypothesis testing results, the null hypothesis (Ho), which stated that there was no significant effect of using picture media on students' writing ability, was rejected. Meanwhile, the alternative hypothesis (Ha), which stated that there was a significant effect of using picture media on students' writing ability, was accepted. This confirms that the use of picture media had a positive and significant effect on students' ability in writing descriptive text. In conclusion, the statistical analysis proved that students taught using picture media performed better in writing descriptive text compared to those taught using conventional methods. The findings suggest that visual learning media such as pictures can effectively enhance students' understanding, idea generation, and overall writing performance.

DISCUSSION

The findings of this study indicate that the use of picture media has a positive effect on students' ability in writing descriptive text. The experimental class, which was taught using picture media, achieved a higher mean score than the control class. This result suggests that visual learning tools can help students develop their ideas more effectively in writing activities. Pictures provide concrete references that assist students in transforming abstract thoughts into written language. The improvement in the experimental class can be explained by the role of

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visual stimuli in language learning. Pictures help students to understand the topic more clearly and reduce difficulties in generating ideas. According to Wright (2010), visual materials such as pictures are powerful tools in language teaching because they encourage students to think and describe what they see. This supports the idea that students are more likely to produce better writing when they are provided with clear visual input.

In addition, the use of picture media increases students' motivation and engagement in the learning process. When students are interested in the learning materials, they tend to participate more actively in classroom activities. Arsyad (2017) states that instructional media play an important role in improving students' motivation because they make learning more attractive and meaningful. In this study, students in the experimental group showed higher enthusiasm during writing tasks compared to the control group.

The results also show that picture media helps students improve the organization of their writing. Descriptive text requires students to describe objects in a clear and structured way, including physical appearance, characteristics, and details. With the help of pictures, students were able to organize their ideas more systematically because the visual cues guided them in developing their paragraphs. This aligns with Hyland (2019), who emphasizes that writing development requires sufficient input and guidance to produce coherent texts. Furthermore, the lower standard deviation in the experimental class indicates that students' writing abilities became more consistent after the treatment. This suggests that picture media not only improved high-achieving students but also supported lower-achieving students in improving their performance. Visual aids reduce learning gaps by providing equal opportunities for students to understand the topic and express their ideas.

The findings of this research are also consistent with previous studies. Yunus, Salehi, and Embi (2012) found that the use of visual aids significantly improves students' writing performance because it helps them generate ideas and expand vocabulary. Similarly, this study proves that students who learn through visual stimulation tend to produce better and more detailed descriptive texts compared to those who rely only on textbook-based instruction. Moreover, the use of picture media creates a more interactive and student-centered learning environment. Instead of passively receiving information, students are encouraged to observe, interpret, and describe what they see. This learning process supports communicative language teaching principles, where students actively construct knowledge through meaningful activities. As a result, students become more confident in expressing their ideas in English writing.

Overall, the discussion shows that picture media is an effective teaching strategy in improving students' writing ability, especially in descriptive text. It provides visual support,

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increases motivation, improves idea generation, and enhances writing organization. Therefore, English teachers are recommended to integrate visual media such as pictures into their teaching practices to support students' writing development.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results and discussion of this study, it can be concluded that the use of picture media has a significant effect on students' writing ability in descriptive text. The students who were taught using picture media achieved higher scores compared to those who were taught using conventional methods. This indicates that visual learning media can effectively support students in improving their writing performance. The statistical analysis also supports this conclusion, where the result of the t-test (2.25) was higher than the t-table value (2.01) at the 5% significance level. Therefore, the null hypothesis (Ho) was rejected and the alternative hypothesis (Ha) was accepted. This confirms that picture media contributes positively to the improvement of students' writing ability.

In general, picture media can be considered an effective teaching strategy in English writing classes, especially for descriptive text. It helps students generate ideas more easily, organize their thoughts better, and become more motivated in learning. Thus, it is recommended for English teachers to use visual media such as pictures to enhance students' writing skills.

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