



Improving Students' Writing Ability of Procedural Texts by Using Picture Media at Grade VIII SMP Negeri 8 Padangsidempuan

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Abstract

This research aimed to improve the procedural text writing ability of Grade VIII students at SMP Negeri 8 Padangsidempuan through the use of picture media. The study was prompted by the students' low proficiency in writing, particularly in composing procedural texts. To address this issue, a Classroom Action Research (CAR) method was employed over two cycles. The subjects of this research were 20 Grade VIII students. Data was collected through writing tests administered in the pre-cycle, Cycle I, and Cycle II stages. The results showed a significant improvement after the implementation of picture media. In the pre-cycle stage, only one student (5%) achieved the Minimum Mastery Criteria (KKM). This number increased to five students (25%) by the end of Cycle I. The most significant improvement occurred in Cycle II, in which 13 students (65%) met the KKM. This consistent improvement from 5% to 65% demonstrates that using picture media was effective in enhancing the procedural text writing ability of Grade VIII students at SMP Negeri 8 Padangsidempuan.

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1. Introduction

English is a global language that plays a vital role as a communication tool in the fields of science, technology, and culture. In the context of education in Indonesia, English is taught as a foreign language to develop students' communicative competence, which includes four major skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Among these, writing is often considered the most complex and difficult skill to master. It is a productive skill that requires not only a grasp of vocabulary and grammar but also the ability to organize ideas into a coherent and cohesive structure.

One of the essential genres taught in junior high school is the procedural text. A procedural text is designed to describe how something is achieved through a sequence of actions or steps. It requires students to understand specific language features, such as the use of the imperative mood (e.g., "mix," "pour," "stir"), temporal conjunctions (e.g., "first," "next," "finally"), and the present tense. Ideally, by the end of Grade VIII, students should be able to produce functional procedural texts related to their daily lives.

However, based on preliminary observations at SMP Negeri 8 Padangsidempuan, specifically in class VIII-5, students faced severe difficulties in writing procedural texts. Most students

struggled to generate ideas, lacked the vocabulary to describe specific actions, and frequently made errors in sentence structure. Furthermore, the teaching-learning process was largely dominated by a conventional teacher-centered approach, where students were asked to write without sufficient visual or contextual stimulation. This resulted in low motivation and a passive learning atmosphere.

To overcome these challenges, the use of visual aids, specifically picture media, was proposed. Pictures are powerful tools in language teaching because they provide a concrete representation of ideas, making abstract concepts easier to understand. Picture media can serve as a catalyst for students' imagination and help them organize the chronological steps of a procedure more effectively. By visualizing each stage of a process, students are expected to feel more confident and engaged in the writing process. This research, therefore, focuses on implementing picture media through Classroom Action Research to determine its impact on improving students' procedural text writing ability.

2. Literature Review

This Writing is a productive skill that involves a complex process of expressing ideas, feelings, and thoughts into written form. According to Hyland (2003), writing is a way of sharing meaning through text which requires not only grammatical knowledge but also the ability to organize ideas logically. In the context of eighth-grade students at SMP Negeri 8 Padangsidempuan, writing ability is measured by their capacity to produce functional texts that are coherent and contextually appropriate.

Several previous studies have demonstrated the effectiveness of visual media in improving writing skills. Khoiriyah (2014) found that using picture series significantly enhanced students' ability to write procedure texts by providing a clear narrative flow. Similarly, Puspitasari (2014) indicated that students taught with visual aids showed better engagement and higher scores in vocabulary and organization compared to those taught with conventional methods. These studies support the hypothesis that picture media is an effective intervention for the writing challenges faced by students' at SMP Negeri 8 Padangsidempuan.

2.1 Definition of Writing Ability

Writing ability is the capacity to produce clear, effective, and purposeful written content. This skill involves a complex process of planning, organizing, structuring, and revising text to ensure that the intended message is easily understood by the reader. In the educational context, writing holds a critical position as it serves as a primary means for students to communicate and express their ideas systematically.

Technical mastery in writing includes proficiency in grammar, spelling, sentence structure, and the selection of an appropriate writing style suited to the context. Students are required to possess the knowledge to choose precise vocabulary and the ability to compose sentences accurately following standard conventions. Consequently, writing is often considered the most complicated language skill among others because it is not merely about copying words but developing and pouring ideas into an organized structure.

The fundamental purpose of teaching writing in schools is to improve students' ability to convey messages or information comprehensively. According to the literature, writing purposes can be categorized into three main areas: for study purposes (such as scientific books and

journals), for business purposes, and for pleasure or entertainment. Through writing activities, students are trained to reflect on their observations and readings, transforming them into a tangible and productive form of expression.

2.2 Procedural Text

A procedural text is a type of writing designed to provide clear, step-by-step instructions on how to accomplish a specific task or achieve a goal. Its primary objective is to guide the reader through a logical sequence of actions to ensure the desired outcome is reached effectively. These texts are highly relevant to daily life, as they are frequently found in game rules, cooking recipes, and user manuals for electronic devices or machinery.

The essential characteristics of procedural texts include the use of imperative verbs (commands) and precise language to avoid any ambiguity. The structure typically consists of a goal or title, a list of materials or tools required, and a series of steps or methods for implementation. In the steps section, procedural texts often utilize numbering and temporal conjunctions to clarify the sequence and conditions of each process.

Mastering procedural texts is vital for junior high school students because these texts are authentic and practical. By learning this genre, students are trained to think sequentially and systematically when explaining a process. However, in practice, many students still face challenges in organizing steps coherently, using correct imperative forms, and selecting appropriate vocabulary without visual support.

2.3 Picture Media

Picture media refers to visual learning tools that teachers utilize during the instructional process to create more meaningful learning experiences. These media can present lesson materials visually, either through teacher-made transparencies or images sourced from books and magazines. The expertise and consistency of a teacher in employing such media significantly influence the development of students' interest and motivation in learning.

The use of picture media in writing instruction offers significant benefits as it stimulates the imagination and helps students visualize abstract ideas. Pictures provide a concrete representation of the objects or phenomena being discussed, making the material easier to grasp compared to purely verbal explanations. Furthermore, picture media assist students in ordering the steps of a procedural text logically based on what they observe visually.

The primary advantages of picture media include their ability to make concepts more concrete, clarify complex problems, and enliven the learning atmosphere. With the help of pictures, students become more active, enthusiastic, and less prone to boredom because the learning process becomes visually engaging. Research has confirmed that this visual support is effective in helping students generate ideas, organize sentences, and compose complete texts, ultimately leading to improved learning outcomes.

3. Method

This research followed the Classroom Action Research (CAR) design proposed by Kemmis and McTaggart. The study was conducted at SMP Negeri 8 Padangsidempuan with 20 students from class VIII-5 as the subjects. The research was carried out in two cycles, each consisting of four stages:

1. Planning: The researcher prepared the lesson plans (RPP), teaching materials, picture media (single pictures and picture series), and evaluation instruments (writing tests).
2. Action: The researcher implemented the teaching process. In Cycle I, students were given a topic and a single picture to describe. In Cycle II, based on the evaluation of the first cycle, the researcher used picture series to provide clearer steps.
3. Observation: The researcher observed the students' activities, their attention, and their responses toward the media during the teaching and learning process using an observation sheet.
4. Reflection: The researcher analyzed the data from the tests and observations to see the improvement and decided whether the next cycle was needed.

The data analysis was performed quantitatively to calculate the mean score and the percentage of students' mastery based on the KKM (75). Qualitative data from observations were used to support the findings.

4. Results

This section presents the primary findings regarding the improvement of students' writing ability in procedural texts through the use of picture media. The data provided includes formative test results from the pre-cycle, Cycle I, and Cycle II stages, as well as observation results concerning the development of students' learning behaviour and active participation during the classroom instructional process.

The analysis reveals a consistent and significant upward trend in scores at each stage, where picture media proved effective in helping students overcome difficulties in composing texts. In addition to cognitive improvements, there was also a noticeable increase in students' enthusiasm and self-confidence, which contributed to the achievement of the classical learning mastery targets.

4.1 Improvement in writing ability

This study employed Classroom Action Research (CAR), following the model proposed by Kemmis and McTaggart, which consists of four main phases: planning, acting, observing, and reflecting. The research was conducted at SMP Negeri 8 Padangsidimpuan, focusing on 20 students of Grade VIII-5 as the primary subjects.

Data were collected through two main instruments: quantitative data from writing tests (Pre-test, Post-test I, and post-test) to measure the improvement in students' procedural text writing ability, and qualitative data from observation sheets to monitor student activities and engagement during the learning process. The success of this research was determined by the students' ability to reach the Minimum Mastery Criterion (KKM) of 75, with a target of classical completeness. The collected data were analysed using descriptive statistics to compare the mean scores across cycles.

Table 1. Result pre-test for cycle 1 and 2

Pre test	43,6	5%
Cycle 1	69,1 %	25%
Cycle 2	77,4%	65%

In the pre-cycle stage, the students' mean score was only 43.6, with a completion rate of 5%. After the intervention in Cycle I, the mean score increased to 69.1 (25% completion). In Cycle II, the final results showed a higher mean score of 77.4, with the classical completeness reaching 65%. Students' Learning Activity Based on the observation results in Cycle II, students' engagement was categorized as very good. The "Doing the Task" indicator reached the highest percentage at 90%, followed by "Paying Attention" and "Answering Questions" at 75% each.



Figure 1. The research conducted at the school

The research was conducted in two cycles, following the standard Classroom Action Research phases. Each cycle consisted of planning, acting, observing, and reflecting.

4.2 The Result of the Observation

Based on the students' observation, participation in the writing class through the observation sheet shows that the students' participation gradually improves from the pre-observation into the second cycle.

Table 2. Student's participation improvement in reading class

No	Indicators	Pre cycle	Cycle 1	Cycle 2	Improvements
1	The students pay attention	40%	75%	85%	75%
2	The students ask the researcher	35%	65%	70%	53%
3	The students' answer to the question	50%	75%	75%	50%
4	The students give idea and suggestion	25%	60%	70%	27%
5	The students' does the assignment	55%	90%	95%	80%

Referring to the table, the following can be seen: First, the improvement in students' attention during Classroom Action Research is 75%. Second, the students' improvement of the students' asks the researcher when they find difficulties are 53%. Third, the improvement of students' ability to answer the question is 50%. Fourth, students' ability to provide ideas and suggestions increased are 60%. Fifth, the increase in students' enthusiasm when working on

assignments is 80%. The improvement of students' activities above means that the implementation of the Picture Media was successful. It could be seen from the second cycle of each activity higher than cycle 1 and pre cycle.

5. Discussion

5.1 Effectiveness of picture media in writing

The implementation of picture media effectively helped students overcome difficulties in organizing ideas and mastering vocabulary for procedural texts. In Cycle 1, the visual aids provided a clear understanding of the text's generic structure, including goals, materials, and steps. By Cycle 2, the addition of specific keywords to each image further strengthened students' ability to use imperative sentences and sequence adverbs accurately and systematically.

5.2 Improvement of students' writing performance

Quantitative data showed a significant increase in students' writing scores throughout the research stages. The mean score rose sharply from 43.6 in the pre-test to 77.4 by the end of Cycle 2. Furthermore, classical completeness improved from only 5% (1 student) to 65% (13 students) who passed the Minimum Mastery Criterion (KKM). These results prove that consistent visual support successfully enables the majority of students to meet academic standards.

5.3 Enhancement of student engagement and motivation

Beyond cognitive gains, picture media fostered a more interactive and enjoyable classroom atmosphere. Observation results indicated that student participation reached 90%, reflecting a boost in motivation and self-confidence. The visual prompts served as concrete guides that stimulated students' imagination, reducing their initial fear or confusion and transforming the writing process into a more effective and participatory learning experience.

6. Conclusion

Based on the research findings, it can be concluded that the implementation of picture media significantly improves the procedural text writing ability of Grade VIII students at SMP Negeri 8 Padangsidempuan. The use of visual aids effectively helps students organize their ideas, master the generic structure of the text, and enhance their vocabulary, as evidenced by the increase in the students' mean score from 43.6 in the pre-test to 77.4 in post-test.

Furthermore, picture media fosters a more interactive and motivating learning environment, increasing student engagement to 90% and reducing their hesitation in the writing process. These results prove that picture media is an effective instructional tool to achieve the Minimum Mastery Criterion (KKM) while simultaneously boosting students' creativity and confidence in English writing.

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