

# The Effect of Pictures Media on Sentence Writing Skills of 7<sup>th</sup> Graders

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**Abstrak:** Penelitian tindakan kelas ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui efektivitas media gambar dalam meningkatkan keterampilan menulis kalimat sederhana bahasa Inggris siswa kelas 7 di sebuah sekolah menengah pertama di Surabaya, Indonesia. Penelitian ini dilaksanakan dalam dua siklus, menggunakan pra-tes, pasca-tes, observasi, dan kuesioner terbuka untuk mengumpulkan data kuantitatif dan kualitatif. Temuan awal dari pra-tes menunjukkan bahwa mayoritas siswa kesulitan dalam menyusun kalimat dasar bahasa Inggris, dengan nilai rata-rata 69.03 dan hanya 57.69% yang mencapai kriteria ketuntasan minimal. Siklus I, yang mengintegrasikan media gambar sebagai stimulus visual, menunjukkan peningkatan yang signifikan, dengan nilai rata-rata pasca-tes meningkat menjadi 89.80 dan ketuntasan belajar naik menjadi 88.46%. Namun, Siklus II menunjukkan sedikit penurunan pada nilai rata-rata pasca-tes menjadi 87.88, meskipun ketuntasan belajar tetap sama. Data kualitatif dari kuesioner mengindikasikan bahwa tantangan gramatikal, lingkungan belajar yang kurang kondusif, dan penurunan motivasi siswa berkontribusi terhadap sedikit penurunan ini. Meskipun penggunaan media gambar pada awalnya terbukti bermanfaat dalam meningkatkan kemampuan siswa menghasilkan kalimat sederhana dengan memberikan konteks dan menstimulasi ide, penelitian ini menyoroti perlunya pendekatan dengan berbagai aspek dalam pengajaran menulis. Ini termasuk mengatasi pemahaman gramatikal, mengelola dinamika kelas, dan mempertahankan keterlibatan siswa untuk mencapai peningkatan keterampilan menulis yang lebih konsisten dan signifikan.

**Katakunci:** media gambar; kemampuan menulis; tata bahasa; motivasi siswa; lingkungan belajar

**Abstract:** This classroom action research aimed to determine the effectiveness of picture media in improving the simple English sentence writing skills of seventh-grade students at a junior high school in Surabaya, Indonesia. The research, conducted in two cycles, utilized pre-tests, post-tests, observations, and open-ended questionnaires to collect quantitative and qualitative data. Initial findings from the pre-test indicated that the majority of students had difficulty constructing basic English sentences, with an average score of 69.03 and only 57.69% achieving the minimum passing criteria. Cycle I, which integrated picture media as a visual stimulus, showed a significant improvement, with the average post-test score increasing to 89.80 and learning mastery rising to 88.46%. However, Cycle II showed a slight decrease in the average post-test score to 87.88, although learning mastery remained the same. Qualitative data from the questionnaires indicated that grammatical challenges, a less conducive learning environment, and decreased student motivation contributed to this slight decline. While the use of picture media was initially proven beneficial in enhancing students' ability to produce simple sentences by providing context and stimulating ideas, this research highlights the need for a multi-faceted approach in teaching writing. This includes addressing grammatical understanding, managing classroom dynamics, and sustaining student engagement to achieve more consistent and significant improvements in writing skills.

**Keyword:** picture media; writing skill; grammar; student motivation; learning environment

## INTRODUCTION

English is a foreign language for students in Indonesia. There are several skills that students need to learn in the process of studying English, including speaking, listening, reading, and writing. Among these four skills, writing is considered to be the most difficult skills for students (Parupalli, 2017) . Through writing, students can express language in written form related to what they think, whether it's about people, ideas, issues, or events (Fareed et al., 2016). Writing in a foreign language is a complex skill that

requires several components to support it, such as grammar, vocabulary, organization of ideas, and so on (Cheung, 2016). Therefore, writing is generally considered the most difficult skill for students to master because it requires more than just grammar and vocabulary skills.

In the context of English language learning at the junior high school level, especially for 7th-grade students who are still in the early stages of developing their English skills, many students face difficulties when asked to construct simple English sentences, even when the topic is related to their daily lives, such as study habits. These difficulties are caused by limited vocabulary, a lack of understanding of grammar, and an inability to organize ideas coherently (Farooq et al., 2020). These challenges make it difficult for students to express their thoughts in English, even though they know what they want to say in their first language, they often fail to translate those ideas into proper English sentences.

The same issue was revealed through initial classroom observations, which showed that students had difficulties expressing their ideas to form correct sentences. Therefore, to assist students in overcoming these challenges, there is a need to implement innovative and creative teaching strategies that can help students connect their thoughts and express them in writing. One strategy that can be used to address this issue is the use of visual aids in the form of picture media. Visual picture media not only serves as an illustration of meaning but can also function as a stimulus in language production. According to Paivio's Dual Coding Theory, humans receive and process information in two forms: verbal (words) and visual (images). Visual information is easier to understand and remember compared to information presented only through text. Therefore, in writing instruction, the use of picture media can help students organize their ideas in sequence and improve their ability to construct logical and coherent sentences (Clark & Paivio, 1991).

The use of picture media in writing instruction stimulates students' cognitive abilities to connect visual clues with vocabulary and sentence patterns, thus facilitating the process of composing logical and structured sentences (Listyani, 2019). According to Mayer cited in Pantazes, Mayer's findings in the Cognitive Theory of Multimedia Learning, which emphasizes that combining textual and visual elements can enhance student engagement during the learning process (Pantazes, 2021). Mayer also highlights how learning with multimedia can encourage students to actively process information. When students learn with relevant texts and images, they tend to make more effort to select important information, organize it in their minds, and connect it with what they already know. This active thinking process ultimately improves student understanding.

The researchers has conducted a literature review of several previous studies related to the impact of using picture media on students' writing skills. Sakkir in his study titled "The Effectiveness of Pictures in Enhancing Writing Skill of Senior High School Students" stated that the use of pictures in writing instruction can improve students' ability to learn English writing (Sakkir, 2020). Romadlona & Khofshoh in their study titled

"The Effectiveness of Using Picture Series Media on Student's Writing Narrative Text" also stated that the use of picture series media is effective in improving students' writing skills (Romadlona & Khofshoh, 2023). This is supported by data analysis results which show that the treatment using picture series media has a significant impact on students' writing skills.

Based on initial observations, the researchers found that 7th-grade students at one of junior high school in Surabaya still face difficulties in writing simple sentences about study habit in English. Although the topics given are related to everyday life, students showed limitations in developing ideas and forming correct sentences. To address these issues, the use of learning media that can stimulate ideas and facilitate the writing process is necessary. One medium being considered is picture media. Therefore, this study focuses on investigating the extent to which the use of picture media can influence the improvement of students' writing skills. Based on this research, the researchers want to know how does the use of picture media affect students' ability to write simple sentences about study habit.

## **RESEARCH METHODS**

This study uses the Classroom Action Research (CAR) method which is implemented in 2 cycles. Each cycle in this study refers to the Classroom Action Research cycle model which consists of four stages: planning, implementing actions, observing, and reflecting (Kemmis & McTaggart, 2007). This study was conducted in one of the State Junior High Schools in Surabaya from April to May 2025 with the research subjects being 7th grade students with a total of 26 students. The research procedure begins with a preliminary study to identify the problem, followed by action planning which includes the preparation of teaching modules that integrate the use of image media as visual stimuli in writing activities, as well as the development of valid and reliable research instruments, namely pre-test, post-test, open questionnaire, and observation sheets.

The study employed both quantitative and qualitative data analysis. Quantitative data were collected from the results of the pre-test and post-test, which were analyzed using descriptive statistics to determine the increase in the average scores and students learning completion rates. This analysis aimed to measure the impact of the use of picture media on student learning outcomes. Qualitative data were collected from field notes and open-ended questionnaire responses which were then analyzed through the stages of data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions to understand students' learning processes, media interactions, and perceptions of picture media's effectiveness in improving writing skills.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

Before the learning activities, students took a pre-test to assess their sentence-writing skills. The pre-test showed that the average score for class 7 was 69.03, and only 57.69% of students (15 out of 26) achieved the minimum passing grade (set at  $\geq 75$ ). This indicates that most students struggle to construct simple, grammatically correct English

sentences appropriate to the context. Based on these results, a two-cycle learning approach was implemented.

### Cycle I

In cycle 1, the planning stage was carried out by designing a teaching module to implement learning activities. The teaching module was designed using picture media that were relevant and appropriate to the material's context and the students' lives, particularly concerning their learning habits. The teacher prepared pictures that displayed or illustrated daily learning habit situations, such as reading books, doing assignments, and discussing with friends. In addition, the teacher also prepared examples of simple sentences, student worksheets, vocabulary lists to facilitate student writing, an assessment rubric, and an observation sheet as requirements for this research.

During the implementation stage, the teacher began the lesson by introducing vocabulary related to common learning habits among students. Next, the teacher explained the material, starting from recognizing sentence structure, the order of composing sentences, and practicing making simple sentences. In the following activity, students practiced completing fill-in-the-blank sentences with provided verbs. For the treatment using picture media, the teacher engaged students in a pasting activity. The teacher prepared pictures, sentences, and answer sheets, then distributed the pictures to the students and asked them to paste the pictures onto the answer sheets and create simple sentences according to the context of the pictures. Throughout the activity, the teacher guided and provided direction when students encountered difficulties.

Observation was conducted during the learning process. The purpose of this observation was to understand how students engaged with picture media during learning. Throughout the writing activity, it was apparent that the majority of students showed enthusiasm, evident in their active participation in asking questions and engaging in discussions together. However, a small number of students still seemed to have difficulty constructing sentences independently and tended to copy from sentence examples previously provided by the teacher. The observation results also revealed that some obstacles were experienced by students when writing, namely low self-confidence and limited vocabulary. This was evident when these students were guided by the teacher and expressed fear of making mistakes in writing and lacked confidence in the sentences they produced.

In the reflection stage, the results of post-test I showed that out of 26 students, 23 students had successfully achieved the minimum passing grade (KKM) of  $\geq 75$ , while 3 students had not yet reached the passing grade. The following are the data results from cycle I:

Table 1. Pre-test and Post-test I

Assessment	Average Scores	Number of Students Who Achieved Mastery	Percentage of Learning Mastery
Pre-test	69,03	15	57.69%

Post-test I	89,80	23	88,46%
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Based on the pre-test results above, it can be seen that the average score obtained by the students was 69.03, with 15 students achieving a score of  $\geq 75$  (the KKM), resulting in a learning mastery percentage of 57.69%. A total of 11 students who took the pre-test had not yet reached the KKM. For the results of post-test 1, it can be seen that there was an increase in scores, with an average score of 89.80. As many as 23 students had achieved the KKM with a learning mastery of 88.46%, and only 3 students had not yet reached the KKM. Based on the observations and evaluation of post-test 1, it can be concluded that the use of picture media has visibly had a positive impact on students' sentence writing skills. However, the teacher also realized that some students still needed more intensive guidance to be able to write sentences and not rely on example sentences. In addition, there were obstacles such as a lack of self-confidence and limited vocabulary. This impacted the low variation in the sentences produced by the students. Therefore, in cycle II, improvements are planned by optimizing the use of picture media and providing more complex explanations, which are expected to stimulate students' creativity and understanding in constructing sentences, as well as help increase their self-confidence.

## Cycle II

In cycle II, the action planning stage was carried out by developing a teaching module and learning activities that were more challenging and structured based on the reflections from the previous cycle (cycle I). The teacher designed learning activities that were more engaging and also easier for students to understand. These activities were designed to boost students' confidence in their writing skills, and the explanation of the material was simplified to facilitate student comprehension and placed greater emphasis on grammar.

The implementation of learning activities in cycle II began similarly to the previous lesson by introducing vocabulary relevant to learning habits. In this cycle, the teacher presented vocabulary in both English and Indonesian and then asked students to match them. The procedure was that students would race to the front to match the words. This was followed by an activity of arranging scrambled words into complete sentences, which was carried out in the same way as the previous activity. Next, the teacher provided further explanation of the material to deepen students' understanding. Then, for the picture media activity, the teacher presented a picture and then invited students to create sentences together. The activity began by writing down keywords relevant to the picture, starting with the subject, verb, and so on, and then collectively arranging the keywords into complete sentences. The teacher gave students the opportunity to practice creating sentences independently based on the pictures and allowed them the freedom to discuss with their peers. Before the post-test II activity was carried out, the teacher asked students to write one sentence about their learning habits and provided feedback on their work. The action concluded with the post-test II activity.

Observation was also conducted in cycle II during the learning process, with the aim of observing and identifying improvements from cycle I. It was noticeable in this cycle II that students appeared active in participating in the learning. However, some students showed a decrease in learning motivation. These students seemed quieter in the middle

of the lesson. Regarding the understanding of sentence construction, students appeared to have a deeper understanding and were more focused in their sentence arrangement, although some students still required guidance.

The next stage was reflection on the cycle II learning, where, during collaborative practice, students began to find ideas relevant to the pictures. However, when writing individually, students still faced difficulties. This was evident based on the results of post-test II, where some students experienced a decrease in scores from post-test I. The following are the post-test II results for cycle II:

Tabel 2. Post-test I and Post-test II Results

Assessment	Average Score	Number of Students Who Achieved Mastery	Percentage of Learning Mastery
Post-test I	89,80	23	88,46%
Post-test II	87,88	23	88,46%

Based on the table above, it can be seen that the average score on post-test II was 87.88, which is a decrease from the average score of 89.80 in post-test I. Although the number of students who achieved mastery was the same as in post-test I and the decrease was not very significant, this decrease in the average score became a point of attention during the cycle II reflection process. Therefore, it needs to be examined more deeply to determine the causes of the decrease in student scores. Consequently, to investigate and understand the reasons behind this, the researchers collected additional data through open-ended questionnaires given to the students to find out the reasons for the score decrease and their responses regarding learning using picture media.

Based on the analysis of the open-ended questionnaire data provided to the students after the implementation of post-test II, findings revealed various factors influencing the decline in students' learning outcomes. Students' answers were analyzed and categorized into several aspects of difficulty, including:

- a. Mastery and understanding of grammar, such as determining the subject, verb, vocabulary selection, and sentence construction.
  - "Ya, karena bingung menyusun kalimatnya." (Yeah, because I was confused about how to arrange the sentences.)
  - "Ya, terkadang sangat bingung untuk menaruh di bagian mana saja." (Yeah, sometimes it's very confusing to know where to put which part.)
  - "Minimnya kosa kata dalam bahasa Inggris, saya jadi sedikit kesulitan untuk menjelaskan  
(Limited English vocabulary, so I had a little difficulty explaining.)
- b. Less conducive classroom conditions.
  - "Ya, teman-teman ramai dan sulit dipahami." (Yeah, my friends were noisy and it was hard to understand.)
  - "Ya, kelas yang berisik." (Yeah, the class was noisy.)
- c. Lack of learning readiness among students.

"Tidak, aku belum siap melakukan post-test II." (No, I wasn't ready to take post-test II.)

"Mungkin agak siap dan mungkin tidak siap." (Maybe a bit ready and maybe not ready.)

"Tidak, karena saya saat pertengahan pembelajaran selalu mudah bosan." (No, because I always get bored easily in the middle of the lesson.)

This reflection indicates that the decrease in scores on post-test II was not solely caused by factors related to mastery of the material but was also influenced by psychological factors and less than optimal learning environment conditions. These findings suggest the need for more individualized follow-up actions, such as providing personal motivation, increasing the variety of learning media to prevent boredom, and more conducive classroom management to enable students to focus better on learning.

## **Discussion**

Writing is a common challenge faced by students learning English. This was also the case at SMP Negeri 34 Surabaya, specifically in grade 7. Based on the results of this classroom action research, the use of picture media in learning to write simple English sentences had a positive impact on improving the writing skills of grade 7 students. In the pre-action stage, the average pre-test score only reached 69.03 with a learning mastery of 57.69%, indicating that the majority of students still had difficulty constructing simple sentences with correct grammatical structures. This finding aligns with research conducted by Jayanti in 2020, which stated that students did not yet understand and know the grammatical structure of even simple sentences (Jayanti, 2020).

In cycle I, the implementation of picture media appeared successful in improving students' writing abilities. This was evident from the significant increase in the average student score, which reached 89.80 in cycle I with a learning mastery of 88.46%. This increase in scores proves that visual media such as pictures can facilitate understanding of context and motivate students to express their ideas in writing. The same result was shown by research conducted by N. Sarifah & Y. Apsari, the results of which showed that picture media can help improve students' writing skills (Sarifah & Apsari, 2020). According to Mayer cited in Pantazes, in the Cognitive Theory of Multimedia Learning, highlights the benefits of using multimedia in learning. The combination of text and visuals not only increases student engagement but also strengthens information processing in students' memory (Pantazes, 2021). Furthermore, observation results showed that the majority of students became more active and enthusiastic in learning, although some still relied on the teacher's example sentences. As stated by Navidinia et al., the use of picture media can improve students' performance in writing skills (Navidinia et al., 2018). As a visual stimulus, pictures have a significant impact on creating a more engaging and productive writing experience for students (Pramilaga et al., 2023).

However, in cycle II, the average score of the post-test obtained by students decreased. In cycle II, the average student score was 87.88, and the learning mastery remained stable at 88.46%. Although the decrease in scores was not very significant, the

researchers investigated further to determine the reasons for the decrease in student scores through open-ended questionnaires. In addition to this, based on the observation results in cycle II, some students showed a decrease in learning motivation and appeared to be daydreaming. Therefore, open-ended questionnaires were conducted to examine the problems encountered in cycle II.

Based on the analysis of the open-ended questionnaire data, it was found that the majority of students felt more prepared for the second post-test, which was attributed to an increased understanding of the material and a more interactive learning atmosphere. However, some students admitted to still experiencing difficulties, particularly in aspects of grammar and vocabulary, which impacted the decrease in scores. Some students gave ambiguous responses such as "maybe" or "I don't know," indicating uncertainty in assessing their own readiness. These findings are consistent with research conducted by Alaei et al., which states that although learning with the help of visuals such as pictures can enhance understanding, challenges in applying language structures remain a major inhibiting factor in achieving test results (Alaei et al., 2019).

### **Factors Hindering Writing**

The student questionnaires identified several difficulties experienced when writing sentences with the help of picture media, including:

- a. Determining the subject and verb. This is a common error in simple sentence structure due to a lack of understanding of sentence patterns, such as subject-verb-object.
- b. Arranging the order of vocabulary. The difficulty experienced involves the placement of adverbs of frequency in sentences related to study habits.
- c. Choosing vocabulary. Limited vocabulary makes it difficult for students to express ideas accurately. Additionally, selecting the correct verb to agree with the subject, such as the use of "do" and "does," poses a challenge.

All the difficulties faced by the students align with research conducted by Mirzayev, which explained that syntactic and lexical errors often arise due to first language (L1) interference and a lack of structured practice (Mirzayev, 2024). This is further supported by Godwin, who emphasizes that vocabulary acquisition must be accompanied by contextual practice so that students can apply it in simple, easily understandable sentences (Godwin-Jones, 2018).

### **Influence of the Learning Environment**

The majority of students reported disturbances during the learning process, related to noisy classroom conditions, while a small number admitted difficulty focusing due to fatigue. Another factor was related to students' learning enthusiasm, where they were initially enthusiastic but felt bored in the middle of the lesson. This is consistent with Abdolreza & Amir, who suggests that noise in the classroom has a negative impact on



children's academic achievement, especially in areas requiring good language processing and comprehension (Abdolreza & Amir, 2016).

### **The Teacher's Role in Guiding Students**

The majority of students stated that the guidance provided by the teacher was quite good, especially in terms of providing detailed explanations and assisting students who had difficulties during learning. However, it is possible that some students struggled to understand explanations related to grammar. Difficulty in understanding English grammar is a common experience among learners. This is due to the often abstract nature and large number of grammar rules, where learners not only have to learn their application but also when those rules do not apply (Fitria, 2023).

### **Students' Readiness to Learn**

Overall, most students stated that they felt more prepared to do the second post-test because they increasingly understood the material being taught and practiced more often. However, a small number of students admitted to still having difficulties due to boredom experienced in the middle of the lesson. Ryan & Deci state that compared to extrinsic motivation, intrinsic motivation results in higher levels of interest and enjoyment, greater persistence, more creativity, enhanced conceptual understanding and deep processing, superior performance, and greater well-being (Ryan & Deci, 2020).

### **CONCLUSION**

Based on the results of this classroom action research (CAR), it can be concluded that the use of picture media is effective in improving the simple English sentence writing skills of seventh-grade students. This is evidenced by the significant increase in the average score from 69.03 in the pre-test to 89.80 in the post-test of Cycle I, with the percentage of learning mastery increasing from 57.69% to 88.46%. Picture media successfully motivated students, facilitated understanding of context, and aided in the organization of ideas in writing. However, in Cycle II, there was a decrease in the average score to 87.88, although learning mastery remained stable, which was attributed to factors such as grammatical difficulties, less conducive classroom conditions, and decreased learning motivation.

These findings indicate that while visual media has a positive impact, teaching writing requires a more holistic approach, including strengthening grammar, effective classroom management, and individual guidance to boost students' confidence. Therefore, it is recommended that teachers not only rely on picture media but also integrate other methods such as vocabulary games, peer feedback, and scaffolding to ensure deeper understanding. This research also emphasizes the importance of creating a conducive learning environment and consistently motivating students to achieve optimal learning outcomes. Thus, a combination of creative learning media, varied teaching strategies, and psychological approaches will be more effective in developing students' writing skills sustainably.

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