

## IMPROVING STUDENTS' ABILITY TO CREATE DESCRIPTIVE TEXTS THROUGH STORY CARD WRITING MEDIA IN CLASS 8 OF MTS AL-SA'ADAH

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**Abstract:** *This study investigates the effectiveness of story card media in improving the descriptive writing skills of eighth-grade students at MTs Al-Sa'adah. Many students at this level struggle with organizing ideas and using appropriate descriptive language in their writing. Through a qualitative case study approach, the research observed 30 students guided in writing descriptive texts using story cards as a visual aid designed to stimulate imagination and structure narratives. Data collection methods included classroom observation, semi-structured interviews, and analysis of students' written work before and after the intervention. The findings reveal that the story card media significantly enhanced students' ability to generate ideas, expand vocabulary, and organize descriptive texts more coherently. The media also fostered a more engaging learning environment, increased student participation, and reduced writing anxiety. The study concludes that story cards are an effective and interactive tool for enhancing descriptive writing skills among junior high school students.*

**Keywords:** *descriptive writing, story card media, writing skills, junior high school, visual learning.*

**Abstrak:** Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui efektifitas media kartu cerita (story card media) dalam meningkatkan keterampilan menulis teks deskriptif siswa kelas VIII di MTs Al-Sa'adah. Banyak siswa pada jenjang ini mengalami kesulitan dalam mengorganisasi ide dan menggunakan kosakata deskriptif yang tepat. Penelitian menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan desain studi kasus terhadap 30 siswa yang diberikan perlakuan berupa penggunaan story card sebagai media bantu visual dalam menulis. Teknik pengumpulan data meliputi observasi kelas, wawancara semi-terstruktur, dan analisis dokumen hasil tulisan siswa sebelum dan sesudah penggunaan media. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa media story card secara signifikan membantu siswa dalam mengembangkan ide, memperkaya kosakata, dan menyusun teks deskriptif dengan lebih terstruktur dan koheren. Media ini juga menciptakan suasana belajar yang lebih menyenangkan, meningkatkan partisipasi siswa, serta mengurangi kecemasan saat menulis. Penelitian menyimpulkan bahwa kartu cerita merupakan media yang efektif dan interaktif untuk meningkatkan kemampuan menulis deskriptif siswa SMP.

**Kata kunci:** menulis deskriptif, media kartu cerita, keterampilan menulis, pembelajaran visual, siswa SMP.

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## **INTRODUCTION**

Writing is a crucial language skill that allows learners to express ideas clearly and systematically. According to Harmer (2022), writing involves a complex cognitive process that includes organizing ideas, selecting appropriate vocabulary, and forming grammatically correct sentences. However, for junior high school students, particularly those in the eighth grade, mastering writing skills—especially descriptive writing—remains a significant challenge. Many students face difficulties in generating ideas and expressing them in a logical and detailed written form.

Initial observations at MTs Al-Sa'adah revealed that most students struggle to produce well-organized descriptive texts. Their compositions tend to be underdeveloped, lacking sufficient and descriptive vocabulary. This problem highlights the need for an effective instructional strategy that supports students in developing and structuring their ideas more effectively.

To address this issue, the current study applies story card media as a learning tool. Story cards are illustrated visual aids designed to trigger students' imagination and help structure their narratives (Tan & Lee, 2022). These cards consist of image sequences that represent a storyline or scene, enabling learners to describe characters, settings, and events with greater ease and creativity. The treatment aims to enhance students' descriptive writing skills by providing concrete and engaging visual stimuli during the learning process.

The purposes of this research are: (1) to describe the influence of story card media on students' ability to write descriptive texts, (2) to identify factors that support improvement in students writing through the use of story cards, and (3) to evaluate the overall effectiveness of the media in improving the quality of students descriptive writing.

Several previous studies support the relevance of using story cards in language teaching. Pratama and Nugraha (2021) found that visual media significantly improve the quality of students' writing by helping them visualize and elaborate their ideas. Similarly, Hanafi and Kurniawan (2020) reported that story cards encourage creativity and expressive thinking. Sari and Sudiarto (2023) highlighted the role of the story card in increasing student motivation and writing competence. These findings are also in line with Brown (2021), who emphasized that language learning should be interactive and based on real-world experiences.

Based on the explanation and previous research above, integrating story cards into writing instruction at MTs Al-Sa'adah promises to tackle students' core challenges effectively. This approach offers a creative, engaging, and efficient alternative to conventional teaching methods. Overall, it aims to enhance student learning experiences through innovative pedagogy.

## **METHOD**

This research employed a qualitative approach using a case study design to investigate the effectiveness of story card media in enhancing students' descriptive writing skills. The study was conducted at MTs Al-Sa'adah during the even semester of the 2024/2025 academic year. The research subject consisted of 30 eighth-grade students, selected as the target group based on preliminary observation indicating difficulties in descriptive text composition.

Data collection techniques included classroom observation, semi-structured

interviews, and document analysis of students' written work before and after treatment. Classroom observation was conducted systematically to understand the dynamics of the learning process and students' responses during the use of story card in writing activities. The observation focused on students' behaviour, participation, and engagement during the lessons.

The researcher noted how students responded to the use of story cards, including their level of involvement in group discussion, interactions with peers, and ability to develop narrative ideas. In addition, the researcher observed changes in students' learning behaviors from one session to another, as well as how the teacher facilitated the learning activities using this teaching aid.

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with both students and teacher to complement the observational data. These interviews were designed to be flexible, allowing for follow-up questions based on the respondents' answers. The questions related to the participants' direct experiences using story cards, students' perceptions of the writing process, and the effect they felt after using this medium.

Teachers were also asked about the effectiveness of story cards, challenges encountered during implementation, and any observable changes in students' motivation and writing abilities. Through this approach, the researcher was able to gather in-depth qualitative data regarding the participants' subjective perspective.

Document analysis involved evaluating students' written work before (pre-treatment) and after (Post-Treatment) the intervention using story cards. These writings were collected from each student as representative samples of their writing ability at the beginning and end of the study. The document analysed included narrative compositions or short stories written by the students.

Aspects evaluated included narrative structure, creativity, vocabulary use, and coherence of ideas. By comparing students' writing before and after using story cards, the researcher was able to observe any development or significant changes. These changes were analyzed qualitatively, focusing on the quality of ideas, language expression, and the flow of the story.

The combination of these three data collection techniques aimed to provide a comprehensive picture of the effectiveness of using story cards in improving students' writing skills, from the perspectives of behaviour and participation, subjective perceptions, and final writing outcomes.

To analyze the data, the researcher applied the Miles and Huberman model (1994), which includes three main steps:

1. Data reduction – selecting and simplifying the relevant data.
2. Data display – organizing the data visually or narratively for interpretation.
3. Conclusion Drawing and Verification – interpreting findings to draw and verify conclusions about the impact of the story card use.

The qualitative method was chosen to allow in-depth exploration of how story cards influence writing development, vocabulary usage, and students' engagement in a real classroom setting. This approach also enabled the researcher to identify supporting factors and potential challenges in the implementation of creative media in teaching descriptive texts.

## **RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

The analysis of students' written work, classroom observations, and interview data revealed a significant improvement in students' ability to write descriptive texts after the implementation of story card media. Prior to the use of this media, students commonly produced texts that were poorly organized, lacked descriptive vocabulary, and had limited detail. Their writing often appeared disjointed and repetitive, indicating difficulties in idea development and vocabulary usage.

The qualitative and quantitative analysis of the students' written work, classroom observation, and semi-structured interview data revealed a substantial improvement in students' ability to write descriptive texts following the integration of story card media into English language instruction. This improvement was evident across multiple dimensions: structural organization, vocabulary richness, content detail, and overall engagement in the writing process.

#### 1. Analysis of students' written work

Before the introduction of story card media, students struggled significantly with organizing their ideas coherently. Their descriptive texts were often characterized by:

- a. A lack of logical sequence or progression.
- b. Minimal use of descriptive adjective and sensory details.
- c. Repetition of basic vocabulary (e.g., “big”, “nice”, “good”).
- d. Incomplete descriptions that failed to paint a vivid mental image for the reader.
- e. Poor paragraphing, with many students writing in one long, unbroken block of text.

For example, in pre-intervention writing samples, one student described a beach as simply “a place where there is water and sand.” There was no elaboration on color, texture, sound, or atmosphere-key components of effective descriptive writing.

However, after six weeks of using story card media, students demonstrated marked improvement in both the quality and quantity of their writing. Post-intervention texts showed:

- a. Clearer organization structure, including an introduction, body with sequential details, and a concluding sentences.
- b. Use of more varied and precise vocabulary (e.g., “sparkling turquoise waves”, “golden sandy shore”, “gentle breeze”).
- c. Inclusion of sensory details (sight, sound, touch) that enhanced the vividness of descriptions.
- d. Logical sequencing of ideas, often mirroring the visual narrative presented in the story cards.

One post-intervention sample described a similar beach scene as: “The sun dipped low, casting a golden glow over the sparkling turquoise sea. The soft rhythm of waves lapping against the shore created a soothing melody, while the warm grains of sand slipped between my toes.” This illustrates a dramatic enhancement in descriptive fluency and imagery.

#### 2. Classroom Observations

During the intervention phase, classroom observations revealed several key behavioural and cognitive shifts among students:

- a. Increased Engagement: Students were visibly more engaged during writing lessons.

They eagerly participated in group discussions about the story cards, brainstorming possible settings, characters, and sensory elements before beginning to write.

- b. Collaborative Learning: Story cards promoted peer interaction, as students worked in pairs or small groups to interpret visuals and generate descriptive language together. This collaborative approach appeared to reduce anxiety and build confidence in expressing ideas.
- c. Improved Focus and Task Persistence: With the guidance of the story cards, students spent longer periods on task without distraction. Teachers noted fewer disruptions and off-task behaviors compared to previous writing sessions.
- d. Use of Visual Cues for Planning: Students frequently referred back to the story cards while writing, using them as scaffolding tools to maintain focus and ensure coherence. Many learners sketched out their ideas directly on the cards or used them as outlines before drafting their full texts.

These observations align with Tan and Lee's (2022) findings, which emphasize the role of visual scaffolds in helping learners plan and structure their narratives effectively.

### 3. Interview Data

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with a sample of 15 students, providing valuable insights into their perceptions of the learning experience with story card media. Themes that emerged from the interviews included:

- a. Increased Confidence: Many students reported feeling more confident when writing because the story cards gave them a clear starting point and direction. One student shared,

“Before, I didn't know what to write. Now, I just look at the pictures and they tell me what words to use.”

- b. Enhanced Creativity and Imagination: Students felt that the visual prompts stimulated their imagination. For instance, one student mentioned,

“The pictures made me think of smells, sounds, and feelings I hadn't thought of before.”

- c. Reduced Anxiety: Several students admitted that writing had previously caused them stress, but with the story cards, the task felt less intimidating. Another student said,

“I don't get stuck anymore because the cards help me remember things to describe.”

- d. Enjoyment and Motivation: Overall, students expressed greater enjoyment in the writing process. They appreciated the novelty and interactivity of the media, with some even requesting additional time to create their own story cards.

These sentiments strongly support Sari and Sudiarto's (2023) assertion that interactive and engaging instructional tools can significantly boost motivation and competence in writing.

#### 4. Factors Contributing to effectiveness of the story card media

Three primary factors contributed to the effectiveness of the story card media in enhancing descriptive writing:

- a. **Visual Appeal and Accessibility:** The colourful and well-designed images captured students' attention immediately. Visual stimuli proved especially effective for younger learners or those with limited verbal expression skills.
- b. **Sequential Narrative Structure:** The story cards followed a logical sequence, allowing students to map out events or scenes mentally. This helped them organize their thoughts and develop coherent paragraphs.
- c. **Stimulated Creative Thinking:** The novelty of the media encouraged students to explore new vocabulary and express themselves in imaginative ways. Pratama and Nugraha (2021) suggest that such visual tools activate different areas of the brain, aiding memory and creativity-both crucial for effective writing.

Following the introduction of story cards, students were better able to develop descriptive content in a more structured, coherent, and engaging manner. The visual prompts provided by the cards served as effective stimuli for idea generation and helped guide the logical flow of their writing. This improvement aligns with Tan and Lee's (2022) view that visual aids assist students in planning and organizing their narratives.

Moreover, students showed greater enthusiasm and active participation during the learning process. The interactive nature of the media created a more enjoyable learning environment, reducing the anxiety often associated with writing tasks. These findings support Sari and Sudiarto (2023), who argue that engaging media like story cards can significantly enhance students' motivation and writing competence.

The use of story cards also encouraged students to expand their descriptive vocabulary, as they were prompted to articulate detailed observations based on the visuals. This reflects Pratama and Nugraha's (2021) assertion that visual learning tools help learners better visualize and describe ideas. Interviews with students confirmed that they found writing easier and more enjoyable when supported by story cards.

#### **CONCLUSION**

The findings of this study demonstrate that the use of story card media is effective in enhancing the descriptive writing skills of eighth-grade students at MTs Al-Sa'adah. This visual and interactive tool enabled students to better organize their ideas, increase vocabulary use, and produce more coherent and structured descriptive texts. The engaging nature of the media also contributed to a more positive learning atmosphere, fostering student motivation and active participation during writing activities. Through the combination of visual stimuli and narrative sequencing, story cards helped bridge the gap between students' imagination and their written expression. The improvement observed in students' descriptive writing indicates that integrating creative media in language learning not only boosts performance but also supports a more learner-centered approach to teaching writing.

In conclusion, story cards represent a valuable alternative to conventional writing

instruction, particularly for young learners who benefit from concrete, contextual, and engaging stimuli. Teachers are encouraged to incorporate such media regularly to support the development of students' writing competence, especially in descriptive genres. The visual and narrative cues provided by story cards help students generate ideas more easily, organize their thoughts coherently, and express themselves more vividly. Moreover, the use of story cards can foster creativity and motivation, making the writing process more enjoyable and less intimidating. By integrating story cards into writing lessons, educators can create a more inclusive and dynamic learning environment that caters to diverse learning styles and abilities.

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