

## Improving Student’s Ability in Writing Descriptive Text through Picture Series

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### ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini memiliki tujuan untuk mengetahui sejauh mana peningkatan keterampilan menulis *descriptive text* peserta didik kelas X Teknik Otomotif 3 di SMK Negeri 4 Semarang dengan menggunakan media *picture series*. Penelitian ini selain digunakan untuk melihat peningkatan nilai pengetahuan juga digunakan untuk melihat peningkatan nilai keterampilan serta sikap belajar peserta didik selama proses pembelajaran dikelas. Metode yang digunakan pada penelitian ini adalah penelitian tindakan kelas yang terdiri dari dua siklus yaitu siklus I dan siklus II. Alat pengumpulan data yaitu berupa data kuantitatif yaitu tes tertulis pada setiap siklusnya. Data kualitatif yang digunakan berupa lembar observasi atau pengamatan, lembar refleksi diri, penilaian antar teman dan rubrik penilaian kinerja. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa dengan media *picture series* dapat meningkatkan keterampilan menulis *descriptive text* bagi peserta didik. Peningkatan keterampilan peserta didik dari hasil nilai rata-rata mencapai 77% dari pra siklus dan mengalami peningkatan sebesar 72% pada siklus II dari rata-rata hasil belajar pada siklus I. ketuntasan belajar juga mengalami peningkatan dari 6% pada pra siklus menjadi 29% pada siklus I dan meningkat drastis pada siklus II yaitu mencapai 83% peserta didik yang tuntas.

**Kata kunci:** Keterampilan menulis, *descriptive text*, *picture series*

### ABSTRACT

*The research aims to find out the improvement of students’ writing of descriptive text in a tenth grade automotive engineering class at SMK Negeri 4 Semarang by using picture series media. This research was not only conducted to find out the improvement levels of knowledge but also to find out the improvement of writing skills and the attitude of students during the learning process in a class. The method used in the research was classroom action research, consisting of two cycles, namely cycle I and cycle II. The data collection tool used quantitative data, which is a test written for each cycle. Qualitative data used are observation, self-reflection, peer review sheets, and performance appraisal rubrics. The results of the research showed that picture series media could improve students’ skills in writing descriptive text. The students’ improvement skills from the average score reached 77% in the pre-cycle and improved up to 72% in the second cycle compared to the average learning outcome in cycle I. Learning mastery improved from 6% in pre-cycle to 29% in cycle I and drastically increased in cycle II, reaching 83% of students ability.*

**Keywords:** *writing, descriptive text, picture series*

### 1. INTRODUCTION

English is a very important skill for a student. This is a supply of students for life in the future, because with good English skills, the chances of getting a good job are also very wide open. In learning English, there are four language skills that should be learnt, they are listening, reading,

speaking, and writing. Compared of those four skills, writing is considered as the most difficult skill to be mastered. According to (Putri & Aminatun, 2021) writing is an activity of using language to express the ideas, feeling or desire in the written form. Writing is not a natural skill because one could not acquire this ability automatically

and easily. To acquire it, the students should get sufficient writing practices. These practices are supposed to stimulate the student's skill in writing and expressing thoughts in a good passage (Kartawijaya, 2018). Writing is a productive and expressive activity (Budiyono, 2016). It is a productive activity because we pour our ideas into the production of words so that they become a sentence and can be understood by the reader. While expressive is an activity that expresses the expression that the writer wants to convey, it can be ideas, feelings, or other messages. Writing is the activity a person performs in order to produce writing that is used to report, inform, or influence. In order for the purpose to be well conveyed, it is necessary to have a way to express the thought clearly, or the clarity used to choose the right words and structure of sentences. Writing requires a number of supportive competencies so that the results are good and can be understood well, including the proper vocabulary and grammar. (Harisna, Suharno, & Suwandi, 2019).

Writing is one of the skills that must be possessed by students in SMK Negeri 4 Semarang. With good writing skills, the student is able to express his ideas through writing, which complements his skills in learning English. Descriptive text is a learning material that needs to be mastered by students at SMK (Prasetyo, 2021). This material aims to train students to be able to describe a particular thing or object well. Descriptive text is a text that describes an object in detail so that the reader can feel, see, and listen to what is communicated in the text (Lusita & Emidar, 2019). According to (Fitrianita, Syahrul, & Tressyalina, 2017) Descriptive text is a text that gives the reader a direct understanding of a topic by providing a detailed description of the subject, location, or event. The other research written by (Jayanti, 2019) stated that Descriptive text is used to describe an object and the readers become easily to be understood, so that they can imagine the object which is described clearly like the real one. Based on some of the definitions above, it can be concluded that a descriptive text is a text that provides an image or detailed explanation of a thing, a

place, or an event so that the reader has an understanding of something described.

In writing descriptive text, students get the difficulties although the students have been guided by the teacher (Siregar & Dongoran, 2020). This is what the researcher finds on the field that shows that not all students are able to write descriptive text well. Especially in the era of all technology, they tend to hang everything with technology, starting from translating, fixing grammar and also sometimes developing ideas they also use technology. From the results they exclude related grammar, context and punctuation. In addition, according to the observation results, the ability of SMK Negeri 4 Semarang students is still below KKM 75. Based on the results of interviews with students, it was found that their ability to write descriptive text was still low because they were confused about how to convey the basic idea of a story. In addition, there are some errors in the writing of sentences that have not used simple present tense because they refer to Google Translate. The punctuation is also a problem for the students. There are also some writing mistakes in the vocabulary used. Develop the idea into good sentences that are easy to understand by the reader; it is not easy for the student. Lack of vocabulary is the biggest problem for the student. The use of Google Translate, which translated word by word, is a factor in the quality of the students' writing skills. Another factor is the dislike of the students for the teacher's approach to teaching descriptive texts, which is also a reason for the students lack of ability to write. Teachers just give them themes and ask participants to write without giving them time to think about what they're going to write. This problem will cause the student's writing ability to always get a low score if it is left unattended.

One way to solve this problem is by using learning methods that are suitable for the needs of the students. The right learning method is problem-based learning. Problem-Based Learning (PBL) is a learning approach that uses real problems as a context so that students can learn to think critically in solving problems aimed

at acquiring knowledge or essential concepts of essential materials. H. Barrows in M Taufiq Amir as an expert of Problem Based Learning said that “Problem-Based Learning is a learning method based on the principle that problems can be used as a starting point to acquire or interact with new science”. The problem is used as a means by which the pupil can learn something that matches his knowledge. Problem Based Learning is a learning process that is the starting point of learning based on problems in real life. From this problem, students are stimulated to expand the problem based on the knowledge and experience they have already gained so that they can form new knowledge and experiences. Discussion in small groups is a key point in the application of problem-based learning.

David Boud and Graham Felletti stated that “*Problem based learning is an approach structuring the curriculum which involves confronting students with problems from practice which provide a stimulus for learning. However, they are many possible forms that a curriculum and process for teaching and learning might take and still be compatible with this definision*” from the quotations above, David Boud and Graham Felletti stated that the approach involves students with problems to give them incentives to learn.

In a problem-based learning model, small groups of students work together to solve a problem that has been agreed upon by students and teachers. When teachers apply the model, students often use a variety of skills, problem-solving procedures, and critical thinking. In this model, learning begins with presenting real problems whose regrets require cooperation among students. In this learning model, the teacher guides the student to delineate a problem-solving plan into stages of activity and gives examples of the use of skills and strategies needed to solve those tasks. Teachers create a flexible and research-oriented classroom atmosphere for students.

The relationship between the learning media and the objectives, materials, methods, and conditions of learning should be the focus and

consideration of teachers when choosing and using the media in the learning process in the classroom, so that the media used is more effective and efficient for the learning objectives. Because learning media cannot stand alone but are connected and interrelated with these four aspects, Thus, the tools, means, or learning media used must be aligned with these four aspects in order to achieve the learning objectives effectively and efficiently. The right learning method has a great impact on the quality of learning. Students will also experience a more lively and enjoyable learning atmosphere.

In addition to the correct learning method, learning media also play a significant role in helping students acquire learning material. According to (Rismayanti, 2021) Media is a form of learning information intermediary, both printed and audiovisual, as a messenger. Based on this understanding, we can conclude that various media can be shown to students, either printed or only shown as visual media, that can make it easier for students to capture meaning or gain a deeper understanding of learning materials. Image media is the easiest to find because, with images, students can better understand the material delivered. Writing is not an easy activity; it takes many ways to just develop an idea, so the presence of image media is believed to help learners come up with an initial idea or motivation. Images are very important in an effort to clarify the learners understanding. Thus, by using the image of the student, he can pay more attention to objects or things that he has never seen related to the lesson. Images can help teachers achieve instructional goals because they include simple and inexpensive media as well as great meanings to elevate the value of teaching. As images, experiences, and understanding of students become wider, clearer, and not easily forgotten, as well as more concrete in the memory and association of students.

With the presence of media, especially series media, students are expected to be helped in developing early ideas for writing articles in the learning of English. With the early ideas of the students, it is easier to develop their writing

into an interesting work. By looking at the picture, the student can draw the content of the conclusion from the image and then delineate it in writing. The use of series image media is very suitable to help students develop their writing skills. Serial or connected images are graphic media used to describe a series of developments because each series of image media is connected and always consists of a number of images.

Learning media can be understood as anything that can communicate and transfer messages from sources in a planned way so that a conducive learning environment is created in which the recipient can perform the learning process efficiently and effectively. The main reason teachers don't use or present images in the learning process is that they can't draw. This reason appears to be only to cover up himself, who is less creative or lazy, because he already has the pattern that has been done (the Ceramah Method) and others. One medium that can help students write descriptive text is picture series.

Picture series can enhance descriptive text writing skills and can be used to support the teaching process. (Eliyawati, Rohmah, & Matin, 2022). Learning using picture series helps students easily develop ideas or thoughts in writing (Rismayanti, 2021). In a research written by (Hakim, 2022) stated that by using the successful picture series, the learning atmosphere becomes more positive, and the student becomes more serious, enthusiastic, and active as the learning process takes place. Other research results also mentioned that learners improved writing skills developed very well when using picture series (Budiyono, 2016). Further research also said that, in the content aspect, the student's writing ability can develop well when using picture series. In addition, the media picture series is also very helpful to teachers in that the delivery of materials is easier and more efficient to help students understand learning materials. (Khotimah, Daud, & Burhansyah, 2017). Based on some previous studies, it can be concluded that picture series can be used to improve the writing abilities of students. However, in

the previous studies, there was little study of the use of picture series to improve the ability to write descriptive text. Therefore, this study has a focus on learning to improve the ability to write descriptive text using media picture series at ten grade students' of Automotive engineering at SMK Negeri 4 Semarang in the academic year of 2022/2023.

## 2. METHODS

This research uses a class action research plan. This research aims to solve a problem that exists in the classroom by performing certain actions in the learning process. Class action research is carried out in several research cycles. According to Kemmis and McTaggart (1988), each cycle consists of four phases of research consisting of planning, action, observation, and reflection. In the first step is planning, the researcher identifies a problem, which is then transformed into an action plan. The second step is action. In this phase, the researchers follow up on a previously planned project. This second phase is usually done in class during the learning process. The third step is observation. At this stage, the researchers observe the effects of the actions already taken. This stage is commonly referred to as the stage of data collection on the field, as well as what happens afterwards. The fourth step is reflection, the stage of reflection or evaluation of changes based on actions already taken.

The subject of the research is the students of X TO 3 at SMK Negeri 4 Semarang, which has a total of 36 students. The data collection method involves observation, testing, and documentation. This research uses qualitative descriptive data analysis and quantitative descriptive data analysis. In determining the level of success, the criteria used are as follows: The first criterion is the cognitive value; this value is taken from the implementation of the pre-test, post-test 1, and post-test 2, and is shown with the successful acquisition of the average score of the class. The second is the assessment of the skills of the student; this assessment is taken from the results of the student's writing and the achievement of the successful presentation.

From the results of the successful achievement of the research, the research is stopped, considered able to meet the criteria of success, and the actions performed successfully.

### 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

#### Preliminary Cycle

It is a description that explains the early state, or pre-cycle period. This initial condition is a real-field condition before action is applied. The observation was done to identify the problems experienced by students in learning English. Pre-cycle time

is a natural condition, and it is necessary to take action when a researcher finds a problem that needs to be solved so that the quality of learning or a particular situation can change for the better.

Before performing cycle I, the researchers performed pre-tests on the pre-cycle. It is done to know the early ability of participants to write descriptive text without using media picture series.

Based on the results of the reflection of the initial conditions of the students of classes X TO 3 at SMK Negeri 4 Semarang before the action on the cycle, I obtained the following results:

**Table 1.** Test Result Pre-cycle

Score	Respondents	Percentage	Desc.
90-100	0	0	Very good
80-89	2	6	good
70-79	5	14	Good enough
60-69	9	26	less
0-59	19	54	Very less
Total	35	100	

Based on the above data, of the total 35 students who took the pre-cycle test, none got an excellent score. There are 2 students who got a score in the good category, or 6%, and 5 students, or 14%, get a good enough score. The other students, 19 or 54%, got a score in a very low category. The KKM score for English subjects is 75 with a minimum level of proficiency of 80%, while the above percentage shows that only 14% of students reach a level above KKM.

#### Cycle I

The pre-cycle test results showed that the percentage of tightness was still low, at only 14%. Therefore, the researcher took action on cycle I to implement picture series media in order to improve the ability to write descriptive text. This cycle is done to find out the improvement in writing skills after applying action.

Based on the implementation of the cycle I obtained the test results as follows:

**Table 2.** Test Result Cycle I

Score	Respondents	Percentage	Desc.
90-100	1	2	Very good
80-89	4	12	good
70-79	12	35	Good enough
60-69	10	29	less
0-59	7	21	Very less
Total	34	100	

Based on Table 2, it can be understood that there has been an improvement in the writing skills of

students with media picture series compared to pre-cycle learning results. In the I cycle this time, 1 student, or 3%, got an

excellent score. 4 students, or 12%, got a score in a good category, and 12 students, or 35%, got a rating in a sufficient category. There were 7 students, or 21%, who got a lower score. The number of students who followed the test on the I cycle was 34, with two other students not present. Based on the results of these students who obtain a score with a sufficient category or KKM that is still a little or only 35%, the researchers do the reflection to do the second cycle with the aim of improving the ability to write descriptive text in classes X to 3.

### Cycle II

Learning in the second cycle used the same course as in the first cycle, but there were changes with picture series replaced with other images; this was done based on input from other teachers or peers. Hopefully, by making these changes, there will be an improvement in the quality of learning and the skills of writing descriptive text. The results of the second cycle were as follows:

**Table 3.** Test Result Cycle II

Score	Respondents	Percentage	Desc.
90-100	21	58	Very good
80-89	8	22	good
70-79	3	38	Good enough
60-69	4	11	less
0-59	0	0	Very less
Total	36	100	

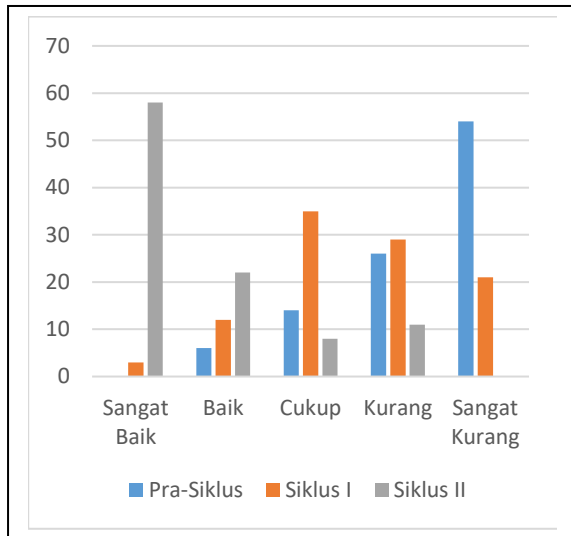
The table above shows the development of descriptive text writing skills using media picture series in class X TO 3. This increase is very drastic because of the 36 students, there were only 21, or 58%. 8 students, or 22%, score in good

categories; 3 students, or 8%, score enough; and only 4 students, or 11%, score less. It can be concluded from the table data above that 88% of students obtained a fairly good score. The comparison data between cycles can be seen in the following table:

**Table 4.** Summary test result

	Nilai		
	Pre-Cycle	Cycle I	Cycle II
Average	50	65	90
Highest	80	93	100
Lowest	13	46	65

In addition to the presented data in the form of tables, the students improvement in their writing skills using media picture series can be seen in the following diagram image:



**Picture 1.** Student score comparison

The average score of writing skill descriptive text increased from the previous one on the pre-cycle, where only 50 increased to 65 on cycle I; a drastic increase can be seen on cycle II, reaching an average of 90 after using media action picture series. The highest score achieved by students after using the media picture series also increased from 80 in the pre-cycle to 93 in cycle I and to 100 in cycle II. The increase was also seen in the lowest score that improved by a drastic amount in the second cycle, which was the lower score of 65, while in the first cycle it was the smallest score of 46. Very different from the pre-cycle lowest score of 13. This is proof that by changing the media picture series, the skills of the students in writing descriptive text have improved significantly.

The study was conducted in two cycles, and each cycle consists of two meetings. Before cycle 1, a pre-cycle meeting was held to observe the problems experienced by the students when writing. Cycle I was conducted based on the results of observations at pre-cycle meetings. Based on the observation results, of the 36 students, no one at all got a very good predicate, and only 2 students (6%) got a rating above KKM, while the other 33 students (94%) received a rating below

KKM, and there was 1 student not present. The average is 50 out of 100. Based on the results, we carried out Cycle I with material and descriptive text, with the results showing that in terms of competence in knowledge and skills, there are still many students who are not accustomed to the value below KKM of 75. The results of cycle I are as follows: Of the 36 students, there were two who were not present, so only 34 students followed the test. 10 students (29%) received a rating above KKM, while the other 24 students (71%) did not get a rating according to the boundary. From these results, cycle I shows an average student score of 65 out of 100. The less-than-maximum results in this cycle are due to the fact that the students have not been able to use the image series properly to help them write descriptive text. In addition, students still do not properly understand the use of the present tense. Based on the results, the study was continued into cycle II to find improvements.

The implementation of Cycle II showed that there was an improvement in the ability of the student to write, both in terms of knowledge and skills. Out of 36 students, they managed to get an average score of 90. Based on this result, it was stated that the success criterion has been reached, which is that 83% of the total number of students obtained a score above KKM 75. As for the details, there are 30 students (83%) who got a score above 75, while there are 6 students (17%) who have not obtained a score. The increase in cycle II is due to the use of the picture series, which is well applied by the students. This is a follow-up to the improvement of the reflection results in cycle I. Therefore, it can be concluded that by using media picture series skills, students in classes X TO 3 at SMK Negeri 4 Semarang in writing descriptive text experienced a significant improvement.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the research, it can be concluded that the writing skills of students experienced improvement with the use of media learning picture series in class X Automotive Engineering 3, SMK Negeri 4 Semarang. Increased quality of

learning can be demonstrated by increased enthusiasm, pleasure, and motivation among students. In addition, the teacher's media picture series is also more comfortable in carrying out the learning process because this media makes the class situation more enjoyable and exciting. The increased value of knowledge and skills in writing descriptive text using this media picture series is demonstrated by an increase in the average score on each cycle. Starting from the pre-cycle, the average score achieved by the students was 50, while in cycle I the average score was 65, and in Cycle II the average achievement was 90. The improvement in descriptive text writing skills in cycle I was 77% of the pre-cycle average. Cycle II increases by 72% compared to Cycle I.

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