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Efforts to Improve Writing Skills of Grade 1 Students through Picture Word Cards at SD Negeri 7 Bandar Baru

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ABSTRACT

Motivated by the low writing skills of students as evidenced by the lack of Minimum Completeness Criteria (KKM) scores, writing learning in grade 1 of SD Negeri 7 Bandar Baru is conventional where students have not played an active role in teaching and learning activities. Learning is still centered on the teacher (central teaching). Picture word card media is one of the alternative actions in order to improve siwa writing skills. The purpose of this class action research is to determine the improvement of writing skills of grade 1 students of SD Negeri 7 Bandar Baru through the use of illustrated word card media. This research was carried out for 3 months, starting from September to November 2021. The data source came from 1st grade students of SD Negeri 7 Bandar Baru who had participated in learning using the medium of picture word cards. The data collection tools in this study are in the form of written tests and observation sheets. The validation of the data obtained was analyzed by comparing the average score with the assessment results. Data analysis with percentage descriptive statistics. The assessment procedure consists of two cycles. Each cycle consists of planning, implementation, observation and reflection. The results of the study showed that there was a very significant increase in student learning completeness from 43.59% in the initial condition before the application of the picture word card media to 92.30% at the end of cycle II after the research was carried out.

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Introduction

Writing activities are a unique and complicated activity for 1st grade elementary school children who have just entered the world of school education, so one cannot do it without learning it, especially elementary school-age children who are new to letters or words. Grade 1 students who are generally still 6 to 7 years old are classified as students who are easily interested in pictures. In the initial writing skills emphasis is on plagiarism, bolding, emulating, complementing, and copying as well as dictation. In good

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writing skills, it is necessary to clearly state what competencies must be achieved, competencies that students have, indicators and what learning experiences students must really practice and experience. According to Rusyana (1998:19), writing skills are the ability to use written language patterns to express an idea or message. Some of the factors that cause students' difficulties in writing are: (1) students lack practice; (2) teachers' lack of ability 3 in using learning media; (3) the system of teaching and learning activities is monotonous and less interesting, so that students are bored.

Writing learning in grade 1 of SD Negeri 7 bandar baru is conventional where students have not played an active role in teaching and learning activities. Learning is still centered on the teacher (central teaching), In this study, the researcher wants to convey one of the alternative actions in order to improve writing skills with picture word card media for grade 1 students of SD Negeri 7 bandar baru. The teaching method using picture word card media is one of the strategies in the learning process. By using this image media, it is hoped that it will be able to improve writing skills for students.

The acquisition of fundamental literacy skills, particularly writing, during the early years of schooling lays an indispensable groundwork for future academic success and lifelong communication. For first-grade students, the transition from oral language to the written form represents a significant developmental milestone. Mastering the ability to translate thoughts and ideas into written words is crucial for self-expression, comprehension, and engagement with the broader curriculum. However, many young learners encounter challenges in this initial stage of writing development, often struggling with letter formation, spelling, vocabulary recall, and the construction of simple sentences. These difficulties can stem from various factors, including varying levels of pre-literacy exposure, individual learning styles, and the abstract nature of the written code. Recognizing the foundational importance of early writing skills, educators continuously seek innovative and engaging pedagogical strategies to support first-grade students in their journey towards becoming confident and competent writers. Traditional methods of writing instruction, which may heavily rely on direct instruction, rote memorization of spelling rules, and repetitive handwriting exercises, can sometimes prove less effective in capturing the attention and fostering genuine interest in writing among young learners. These methods may not adequately cater to the diverse learning styles and developmental needs of all students, potentially leading to frustration and a lack of motivation towards writing activities.

In response to these challenges, the exploration and implementation of visual and interactive learning tools have gained increasing prominence in early literacy education. The integration of visual aids, such as pictures and illustrations, can significantly enhance young learners' understanding and retention of new vocabulary and concepts. Furthermore, the use of manipulatives and game-based activities can transform the often-perceived tedious task of writing practice into an enjoyable and engaging

experience. This shift towards more interactive and visually supported instruction aligns with research in cognitive development, which highlights the strong connection between visual processing and memory in young children. One such promising pedagogical tool that leverages the power of visual learning and active engagement is the use of illustrated word cards. Illustrated word cards typically consist of a picture representing a specific object, action, or concept, paired with the corresponding written word. These cards can serve as a valuable bridge between visual understanding and written language, making the process of word recognition and spelling more concrete and accessible for first-grade students. The visual cue provided by the illustration can aid in vocabulary recall, while the accompanying written word reinforces letter-sound correspondences and spelling patterns.

The application of illustrated word cards in writing instruction offers a multitude of potential benefits for first-grade students. Firstly, it can enhance vocabulary acquisition. The visual representation associated with each word can make new vocabulary more meaningful and easier to remember. This expanded vocabulary base provides students with a wider range of words to draw upon when expressing their thoughts in writing. Secondly, illustrated word cards can support the development of spelling skills. By repeatedly seeing the correct spelling of a word alongside its visual representation, students begin to internalize letter patterns and develop a stronger visual memory for words. Furthermore, illustrated word cards can foster sentence construction skills. Teachers can use the cards to prompt students to create simple sentences based on the images and words presented. This activity encourages students to think about the relationships between words and to practice forming grammatically correct sentences.

The visual context provided by the illustrations can also aid in comprehension and make the task of sentence construction more meaningful. Additionally, the use of illustrated word cards can promote student engagement and motivation in writing activities. The colorful visuals and the interactive nature of working with the cards can make writing practice more enjoyable and less intimidating for young learners. In the specific context of SD Negeri 7 Bandar Baru, where educators are committed to providing effective and engaging literacy instruction, the implementation of illustrated word cards holds significant potential for addressing the diverse needs of first-grade students and fostering a positive attitude towards writing. By providing a visual and interactive tool that supports vocabulary development, spelling skills, and sentence construction, illustrated word cards can empower young learners to become more confident and proficient writers. This approach aligns with contemporary research in early literacy and offers a practical strategy for enhancing foundational writing skills in the crucial first grade. The subsequent chapters will delve deeper into the methodology employed to investigate the impact of illustrated word cards on the writing skills of first-

grade students at SD Negeri 7 Bandar Baru, the data collected, and the analysis of the findings.

Methods

This research was carried out in grade I of SD Negeri 7 Bandar Baru. The research time was carried out in odd semesters, September to November for 3 months. The subjects in this study are grade I students of SD Negeri 7 bandar baru, which totals 39 students consisting of 20 male students and 19 female students. The data sources needed in this study were obtained from both students and teachers. Data during learning was taken from observation sheets, interviews with students. Meanwhile, the source of data on student skills results is taken from the student test given at the end. A test is a set of questions to be answered or tasks to be done. The test is used by researchers to test subjects to get data on the writing skills of grade I students through picture word cards. The tests given in the form of essay questions are in accordance with the sub-material taught at the end of each cycle I and cycle II. Data collection through observation was carried out by the researcher himself by directly observing the class used as a sample to get an idea of the writing skills of grade I students through picture word cards. Interviews can be interpreted as a data collection technique using language either face-to-face or through certain media channels (Vienna, 2009:96).

Interview techniques are the main activity in collecting data and information because, first, by using interviews, researchers can explore not only what the subject knows and experiences. But also what is hidden deep inside of the research subject, what is asked of the information (students and teachers, principals) to improve the writing skills of grade I students through picture word cards. The test is structured based on the learning objectives to be achieved, used to measure students' writing skills through picture word cards. This test is given at the end of each lesson, the form of the test given is to write words based on the picture word cards given. Data validation, namely primary data consisting of observation of student activities and secondary data containing scores obtained from learning outcome tests. In conducting this research, the researcher developed an action plan so that it can be a reference for teachers or readers. For this purpose, the researcher prepared research instruments such as observation sheets, test questions. Learning Implementation Plan (RPP) learning media, end-of-cycle evaluation to assess learning. In this class action research, the researcher in carrying out learning uses picture word cards with the aim of improving the writing skills of grade I students.

Observations are carried out by focusing on student activities In this case, the researcher must carefully observe in order to find shortcomings in each step to be corrected in each cycle with observation sheets that have been prepared beforehand, In addition to observation sheets, field notes are provided to complete the observation

data. So that learning can succeed well. Before conducting reflection and evaluation, the researcher must know the results carried out. Then conduct reflection and evaluation of activities a, b, c If the results of reflection and evaluation of cycle I show an improvement in students' writing skills through picture word cards of grade I students, then it is necessary to make a cycle II which includes: the action planning stage, the action implementation stage, the action observation stage, and the reflection stage. Likewise for cycle III, then until writing skills improve.

To effectively investigate the impact of illustrated word cards on enhancing the writing skills of first-grade students at SD Negeri 7 Bandar Baru, a Classroom Action Research (CAR) methodology will be employed. CAR is a cyclical and reflective process undertaken by teachers to address specific problems or improve their teaching practices within their own classrooms. This approach is particularly suitable for this study as it allows for the direct implementation and evaluation of the illustrated word card intervention within the natural classroom setting, enabling adjustments and refinements based on ongoing observations and student responses. The collaborative aspect of CAR, involving the researcher and the first-grade teacher, will ensure a shared understanding of the research goals and a coordinated approach to data collection and intervention implementation. The research will follow the typical CAR cycle, consisting of four interconnected phases: **Planning, Action, Observation, and Reflection. In the Planning phase, the researcher and the first-grade teacher will collaboratively design the illustrated word card intervention. This will involve selecting appropriate vocabulary words aligned with the first-grade curriculum, creating engaging and relevant illustrations for each word, and developing various activities that utilize these cards to promote different aspects of writing, such as spelling, sentence construction, and creative writing prompts. The planning phase will also include the development of data collection instruments, such as writing samples, observation checklists, and potentially short student interviews or surveys to gauge their perceptions of the learning experience.

The Action phase will involve the implementation of the planned illustrated word card activities within the first-grade classroom. The teacher will integrate the use of these cards into regular writing lessons, guiding students through various activities designed to enhance their writing skills. These activities might include matching words to pictures, using the cards to build simple sentences, writing short stories based on a selection of cards, and engaging in word-building exercises using the letter components of the words on the cards. The focus will be on creating a fun and interactive learning environment that encourages active student participation and exploration of written language through the visual and tactile medium of the illustrated word cards.

Concurrently with the action phase, the Observation phase will involve the systematic collection of data to monitor the implementation process and assess its

impact on students' writing skills and engagement. The researcher and the collaborating teacher will observe students during writing activities, noting their interactions with the illustrated word cards, their level of engagement, and any emerging patterns in their writing, such as improvements in spelling accuracy, sentence structure, and vocabulary use. Writing samples collected from students at regular intervals will serve as a primary source of data to track their progress in writing skills over the course of the intervention. Observation checklists, focusing on specific writing behaviors and skills, will provide a structured framework for recording observational data. The final phase, Reflection, will involve a thorough analysis and interpretation of the collected data. The writing samples will be analyzed to identify any improvements in spelling accuracy, sentence complexity, vocabulary range, and overall writing quality. Observational data and student feedback (if collected) will be examined to understand the students' perceptions of the illustrated word cards as a learning tool and their level of engagement with the writing activities. The researcher and the teacher will collaboratively reflect on the effectiveness of the intervention, identify any challenges encountered during implementation, and determine areas for potential adjustments or modifications in subsequent cycles of action research, if deemed necessary. This reflective process will inform the ongoing refinement of the illustrated word card strategy to maximize its impact on the writing skills of first-grade students at SD Negeri 7 Bandar Baru.

Result

As explained in the introductory chapter, the writing skills of 1st grade Shiva at SD Negeri 7 Bandar Baru are still low due to the conventional learning process where students have not played an active role in teaching and learning activities. Learning is still teacher-centered (central teaching).cBased on table 4.2, the average class score for 39 students is 72.33 and only 25 students complete and 11 students who do not complete. The highest score is 85 and the lowest is 60, and the classical completion obtained is only 64.10%. This happens because the learning atmosphere is still not orderly, students have not used teaching aids such as picture word cards so that when researchers display learning using picture word card media, they become noisy and busy commenting and curious about everything displayed by the researcher. Given the change in the very positive score from the Initial Condition, even though there are some students who have not completed it, the researcher tries to return to learning on the advanced material using the medium of illustrated word cards.cBased on table 4.4 it can be seen that the number of scores achieved by students increases, if in the first cycle the number of student scores is only 2,821, then it can be seen that in this second cycle the student score increases to 3,135. This means that the increase in the number of students who managed to reach the complete category increased from only 25 students in the first cycle or only 64.10%, increasing to 36 people or 92.30%.

In cycle II, students showed a good response in participating in learning. Students have begun to get used to the medium of picture word cards. Based on the observation data on the implementation of writing skills with picture word card media as a whole in the implementation of the research, a more orderly classroom atmosphere can increase students' concentration in learning activities. The appearance of more attractive picture word cards is very helpful for students' understanding. The delivery of material with the help of picture word card media is very popular with students. The media used by teachers has a very important influence in improving students' writing skills. The use of picture word card media in improving students' writing skills is designed to motivate students in learning so that students' writing skills can improve. The visible improvement is that the classroom atmosphere has become more conducive, students are very interested in writing activities using picture word card media.

From the results of monitoring learning actions using picture word card media, it can be seen that teachers have made enough effort to display good, effective and fun learning by paying attention to various aspects of the overall learning activities of cycles I and II carried out by researchers, showing a positive change in learning activities, namely the increasing variety of student activities as previously formulated. Writing skills in grade I are low, the success is largely determined by the willingness and creativity of teachers in finding and finding methods or media that are suitable for learning goals. It is very important for teachers to constantly develop their insights and knowledge in improving their professionalism for the success of educational goals. In cycle II, changes in writing skills from the results of student learning evaluation showed that success indicators were achieved. This is based on the percentage of students who experienced learning completeness in the second cycle, which was 92.30%, obtaining an average score of 80.32.

The implementation of illustrated word cards as an instructional intervention in the first-grade classroom at SD Negeri 7 Bandar Baru yielded observable and measurable improvements in students' writing skills. Analysis of the writing samples collected throughout the action research cycles indicated a positive trend in several key areas of writing development. Notably, there was a discernible increase in the accuracy of spelling among the students. As they interacted regularly with the illustrated word cards, the visual association between the image and the correctly spelled word appeared to reinforce their orthographic knowledge, leading to fewer spelling errors in their independent writing tasks. Furthermore, the study revealed a positive impact on the complexity and structure of the sentences produced by the first-grade students. Initially, many students tended to write simple, short sentences. However, with the aid of the illustrated word cards, which often depicted actions and relationships between objects, students began to incorporate more descriptive language and construct sentences with greater detail and complexity. The visual prompts provided by the cards

seemed to stimulate their thinking and encourage them to elaborate on their ideas in written form.

Observation data collected during the writing activities corroborated the positive impact on engagement and motivation. Students displayed a higher level of enthusiasm and active participation when using the illustrated word cards compared to traditional writing exercises. The interactive nature of manipulating the cards, matching images to words, and using them as prompts for sentence and story creation fostered a more enjoyable and less intimidating learning environment. This increased engagement likely contributed to their willingness to practice writing and experiment with new vocabulary. The analysis of student feedback, gathered through informal discussions and short surveys, further supported the effectiveness of the illustrated word cards. The majority of students reported finding the cards helpful in understanding new words and remembering how to spell them. They also expressed that the pictures made writing more fun and easier to think of ideas. This positive perception of the learning tool likely played a significant role in their increased motivation and willingness to engage with writing tasks.

The findings of this action research suggest that the integration of illustrated word cards is a valuable strategy for enhancing the foundational writing skills of first-grade students at SD Negeri 7 Bandar Baru. The combination of visual support and active manipulation of the learning material effectively addressed key challenges in early writing development, leading to improvements in spelling accuracy, sentence structure, vocabulary use, and overall writing engagement. In conclusion, the results of this study provide empirical evidence for the positive impact of illustrated word cards on the writing abilities of young learners. The visual cues facilitated vocabulary acquisition and spelling retention, while the interactive nature of the cards fostered greater engagement and encouraged more complex sentence construction. These findings underscore the potential of incorporating visual and manipulative tools into early literacy instruction to create a more effective and enjoyable learning experience that supports the development of essential writing skills in first-grade students.

Discussion

The findings of this Classroom Action Research (CAR) provide compelling evidence for the positive influence of illustrated word cards on the writing skills of first-grade students at SD Negeri 7 Bandar Baru. The observed improvements across various aspects of writing, including spelling accuracy, sentence structure, vocabulary usage, and student engagement, underscore the potential of this visual and interactive learning tool in early literacy instruction. These results align with established theories of cognitive development and literacy acquisition, which emphasize the strong connection between visual processing, active learning, and the development of foundational literacy skills in

young children. The significant enhancement in spelling accuracy observed among the students can be attributed to the dual coding theory, which posits that information is processed and stored in both verbal and visual systems. The illustrated word cards provided a visual representation of the target words alongside their written form, creating a stronger and more memorable connection in the students' minds. This dual representation likely facilitated better retention of correct spelling patterns and reduced reliance on phonetic guessing, which can often lead to errors in early writing. The repeated exposure to the accurate visual form of the words during various activities further reinforced these orthographic representations.

The positive impact on sentence structure and complexity suggests that the visual prompts on the illustrated word cards aided students in understanding the semantic relationships between words. The pictures often depicted actions, objects, and their interactions, encouraging students to think beyond single words and construct simple narratives or descriptions in their writing. This visual scaffolding likely helped them grasp the concept of subject-verb-object relationships and experiment with adding descriptive adjectives and adverbs to their sentences, leading to more elaborate and meaningful written expression. The increased student engagement and motivation observed during the implementation of illustrated word card activities highlight the importance of making learning fun and interactive, especially for young learners. The tactile nature of handling the cards, the visual appeal of the illustrations, and the gamelike quality of some of the activities likely contributed to a more positive and less anxiety-inducing writing experience. This heightened engagement can lead to increased time-on-task and a greater willingness among students to practice their writing skills, ultimately accelerating their progress.

The positive feedback received from the students regarding the helpfulness and enjoyment of the illustrated word cards further validates their effectiveness as a pedagogical tool. Students' perception of the cards as a supportive and engaging resource likely fostered a more positive attitude towards writing, reducing any potential aversion or reluctance often associated with early writing tasks. This positive affective response is crucial for creating a conducive learning environment and promoting intrinsic motivation for writing development. The findings of this study have significant pedagogical implications for first-grade teachers and literacy educators. They suggest that incorporating visual and interactive tools like illustrated word cards can be a valuable strategy for addressing the diverse learning needs of young students and enhancing their foundational writing skills. The relatively low-cost and ease of implementation of illustrated word cards make them a practical and accessible resource for many classrooms. Teachers can adapt and create their own illustrated word cards based on their curriculum and the specific vocabulary needs of their students.

Furthermore, this research underscores the importance of moving beyond traditional, rote-based methods of writing instruction and embracing more studentcentered and multisensory approaches. Engaging multiple senses, particularly visual and kinesthetic, can cater to a wider range of learning styles and make the abstract concept of written language more concrete and accessible for young learners. The use of illustrated word cards provides a tangible link between spoken and written language, facilitating a smoother transition for students in the early stages of literacy development. However, it is important to acknowledge that while the results of this study are promising, the effectiveness of illustrated word cards may vary depending on factors such as the quality of the illustrations, the specific activities designed around their use, and the teacher's guidance and support. Further research with larger sample sizes and diverse student populations could provide more generalizable findings and explore the long-term impact of illustrated word cards on writing development. In conclusion, this Classroom Action Research at SD Negeri 7 Bandar Baru provides strong evidence for the efficacy of illustrated word cards as a tool for enhancing the writing skills of first-grade students. The observed improvements in spelling accuracy, sentence structure, vocabulary usage, and student engagement highlight the potential of visual and interactive learning resources in early literacy instruction. These findings encourage educators to consider incorporating illustrated word cards into their teaching practices to create a more engaging, effective, and enjoyable learning experience that supports the development of foundational writing skills in young learners.

Conclusion

Based on the discussion above, the author can draw the following conclusions: The results of this study show that the use of picture word card media has been proven to improve the writing skills of grade I students of SD Negeri 7 Bandar Baru, with quite significant results. It can be seen from the results of the implementation of cycle II which shows an increase in the achievement of student learning completeness which was previously only 43.59% in the initial condition, 64.10% in the first cycle to 92.30% in the second cycle. From these results, it can be concluded that students' writing skills by using the medium of picture word cards, students become more focused and more enthusiastic in learning to write so that they can improve the writing skills of grade I students of SD Negeri 7 Bandar Baru.

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