Improving Students' Interest and Ability in Writing Essay through Picture Media at MI Miftahul Huda Kertosono

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ABSTRACT

One of the very important roles of teachers is to create a quality, high-quality and enjoyable learning process. The purpose of this classroom action research is to find out how much impact the increase in student interest in the use of image media is interpreted into a composition. Increasing student interest can be seen from several aspects, namely: student activity, teacher activity and the effectiveness of the learning process, and student achievement scores. The techniques used are the classroom action research approach, observation data collection techniques, and student learning outcome tests. The data obtained from both student activity and student learning outcome scores in cycles I and II in classroom action research can be interpreted as follows; (1) Student interest and ability in learning to write compositions are very good. (2) Image media really helps students in improving their imagination so that they are able to make simple sentences that become the framework of the composition and then develop them again. (3) Students are able to interpret simple sentences by linking the series of images they observe. (4) Students are able to communicate their writing based on the results of observations to their friends and to the teacher. (5) The learning process is more varied so that children become creative, active and enjoyable. (6) Learning is more effective, because it focuses on image media. (7) Learning will be conducive, because students' attention is focused on the provided image media. (8) Teachers can easily evaluate the results of children's activities, especially in terms of student interest and ability. (9) Can be used as a benchmark for subsequent learning.

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Introduction

In the world of elementary education, language skills are a fundamental aspect that influences the intellectual and emotional development of students. Language is not only a means of communication, but also a means of self-expression and thought. Therefore, learning Indonesian, especially writing skills, plays an important role in forming a generation that is able to think critically and communicatively. Among the four language

skills identified by experts—listening, speaking, reading, and writing—writing skills are considered one of the most complex skills. Writing requires not only mastery of vocabulary and grammar, but also the ability to organize ideas and convey ideas logically and systematically.

However, the reality in the field shows that many elementary school students still have difficulty in expressing their ideas into writing. Limited vocabulary, lack of motivation, and weak imagination often become obstacles in the process of learning to write. Students tend to have difficulty starting essays because they are not used to organizing thoughts into coherent paragraphs. This is exacerbated by learning methods that are still monotonous and do not utilize interesting learning media. Therefore, innovative strategies are needed that can stimulate students' interest and creativity in writing.

One solution that can be applied to improve students' interest and writing skills is through the use of image media. Images, as visual media, have the power to attract attention and stimulate students' imagination. By observing images, students can more easily understand the context and develop ideas related to a particular theme. Image media can also help students in composing a storyline based on the logical sequence of the series of images observed. Thus, the use of images can be a bridge between students' abstract thoughts and concrete writing skills.

Piaget's cognitive development theory states that elementary school children are in the concrete operational stage, where they tend to understand concepts that are real and visual. Therefore, the use of image media in learning to write is very appropriate with the characteristics of elementary school students' cognitive development. Images are not only a stimulus for creativity, but also a tool to organize ideas and develop coherent and communicative writing skills.

In the context of learning Indonesian in class III MI Miftahul Huda Kertosono, the application of image media as a means of learning to write essays is very relevant. Initial observations showed that most students had difficulty writing essays independently. The average value obtained in the initial competency test has not yet reached the minimum completion standard. Therefore, Classroom Action Research (CAR) was conducted to improve the learning process and increase student learning outcomes in writing skills. This study not only aims to improve students' writing skills quantitatively, but also aims to arouse their interest in writing activities. By using images as stimulus media, it is expected that students will be more active, enthusiastic, and confident in developing their ideas into written form. In addition, teachers are also expected to be able to create a more interactive and enjoyable learning atmosphere so that the learning process becomes more meaningful.

In addition to providing a positive impact on students, the use of image media also provides benefits for teachers in managing classes and conducting learning evaluations. Through images, teachers can more easily observe the level of student participation, identify difficulties experienced, and provide constructive feedback. Image media also allows teachers to develop varied and non-monotonous learning, so that they can reach various student learning styles.

The use of image media in writing learning also has a strong theoretical basis. Education and language experts state that visual media can increase the absorption of information, strengthen conceptual understanding, and improve students' memory. In the context of writing learning, image media helps students understand the structure of the story, recognize characters, settings, and plots, and develop conflicts and resolutions in their compositions. In other words, images are an effective tool in guiding students to compose complete and meaningful compositions.

This research was conducted systematically through two cycles of action that included planning, implementation, observation, and reflection. Each cycle was designed to address the problems that emerged in the previous cycle and improve the quality of learning gradually. Data were collected through observations of student and teacher activities, as well as through learning outcome tests. The results of the study showed a significant increase in both interest and students' writing skills after using picture media in the learning process.

Considering these results, this study makes an important contribution to the development of Indonesian language learning methods at the elementary school level. The use of picture media has proven to be effective not only in improving writing skills, but also in forming students' positive attitudes towards writing activities. Therefore, this strategy is worth considering as part of an innovative and enjoyable learning practice. It is hoped that through this more creative approach, the teaching and learning process will be more meaningful, students will be more actively involved, and the overall quality of learning can be improved.

Methods

The method used in this Classroom Action Research is Descriptive Analytical, which is a study used to collect data, describe, process, analyze, conclude and interpret data to obtain a systematic picture. This classroom action research was conducted at MI Miftahul Huda Kertosono, Ngamprah District, West Bandung Regency. The subject of this study was class III with 30 students. The class was used as a research subject because the average result of the student competency test that reached the KKM was only 43.33% and the learning outcomes were still unsatisfactory. Therefore, it requires immediate handling.

This research was conducted in the first semester of the 2009-2010 school year. The time required for learning the Writing Essay material is 8 teaching hours. In one week 4 teaching hours, each hour takes place face to face for 35 minutes. To obtain the data required by the author, the following data collection instruments were used:

1. Competency Test

The competency test was used to obtain data on student learning outcomes carried out after learning took place, namely by using image media. The test was in the form of giving a simple writing assignment.

2. Observation Sheet

The observation sheet was compiled to obtain a direct picture of the implementation of image media in class III. Action observations were carried out by other teachers who acted as observers. The observation sheet was compiled to observe researchers in carrying out classroom actions, class conditions and student activity in the learning process.

This Classroom Action Research (CAR) was carried out in four stages according to John Elliot's model (Muslihuddin, 2010:72) which starts from planning, implementation, observation and reflection. In general, the stages of Classroom Action Research are described as follows: The planning stage is the operational details of the actions to be carried out or changes to be made with the stages; 1) preparing a Learning Implementation Plan on Writing Essays with image media and the necessary evaluation tools, 2) preparing the tools and materials needed in the learning process, 3) Preparing image media, 3) preparing an observation format to see the learning process and student activities.

Implementation of the action is the implementation of the planning. The implementation of the action is; 1) the teacher motivates students with questions that lead to writing essays, 2) the teacher conveys the learning objectives, 3) the teacher provides an explanation to students about Writing Essays with Image Media, 4) students compile and write essays, 5) the teacher and students conclude the lesson material that has been discussed.

The observation stage is carried out in detail and carefully. The aspects observed are as follows; 1) the existence of an active, creative, effective and enjoyable learning process, 2) There is cooperation between students in carrying out tasks, 3) There is Q&A and participation of all students in carrying out tasks, 4) Mastery of learning materials by students.

The reflection stage is a stage of assessing actions that are carried out comprehensively starting from planning, implementing actions to observation. If a problem occurs, it will be reflected so that in the next meeting the problem can be

resolved properly. Thus the activity stage continues to repeat itself so that it forms a cycle from one to cycle two and so on until a problem is considered resolved.

The steps for processing data in this study are as follows 1) Processing collected data such as: Student activity data during the learning process, namely from observation sheets, data in the form of values obtained from competency test results, and observer observation sheet data; 2) Selecting data: This step is carried out to find out whether the collected data can be processed or not; 3) Clarifying and tabulating data: The data clarification step is carried out to group data according to the alternative answers listed in the questionnaire. While the data tabulation step is carried out to obtain an overview of the number of frequencies and tendencies in the questionnaire; 4) Calculating Percentage: Percentage is used to see the percentage of each alternative answer to each question so that the data obtained can be analyzed; 5) Conclude the results of the study after the data has been analyzed.

The data analysis used in this study is a quantitative technique in the form of calculations and a qualitative technique in the form of descriptions. After the data has been collected and checked, if it meets the requirements, the data is tabulated in a table that is ready for processing. After that, the accuracy is checked and the percentage is calculated.

Result

This classroom action research was conducted in two cycles to observe the extent to which the use of picture media can increase students' interest and ability in writing essays. At the beginning of the implementation, observations were made on students' initial abilities in writing essays through simple writing assignments without the help of picture media. The results of the observation showed that the majority of students were not yet able to write essays with good structure, adequate vocabulary, and correct spelling. Of the 30 students observed, only 8 students (26.66%) achieved the Minimum Completion Criteria (KKM), which was a score of 65. The class average was still at 59, far from expectations. These results are an early indicator that improvements are needed in learning methods.

In the first cycle, picture media began to be used as the main tool in learning to write. The teacher introduced a series of pictures to students and directed them to observe the pictures, describe the events that occurred, and express their ideas in writing. It turned out that the use of picture media began to show a positive impact. Student interest increased, as indicated by students being more active in discussing and responding to teacher questions. Class activities became more lively and interactive. From the evaluation results, students who achieved the KKM increased to 17 students (56.67%) with an average score of 67.33. This shows a significant increase compared to the pre-cycle.

However, the results in the first cycle were not fully optimal. Several problems were still found, including the lack of appeal of the image media used, as well as the teacher's delivery which was considered too fast and did not emphasize linguistic aspects such as spelling and sentence structure. Some students still had difficulty composing paragraphs with the right logic. The teacher then reflected on the implementation of the first cycle and designed improvements in the second cycle. One of the changes made was the use of more attractive and colorful image media, as well as the delivery of material that was slower and more systematic.

In the second cycle, learning was carried out again by implementing improvements based on the results of the previous reflection. The teacher motivated students more intensively, provided examples of compositions based on images, and facilitated students with group discussions to develop the storyline. The image media used was also more relevant and stimulated students' imagination. The results showed a very significant increase. All students (100%) managed to achieve scores above the KKM, with the average class score increasing to 77.5. The highest score reached 95 and the lowest score was already at 70, indicating that there were no more students who experienced extreme difficulties in writing.

In terms of learning activities, there was a significant increase. Observation data showed that students became more active in expressing opinions, asking questions, and discussing. Their enthusiasm in completing assignments increased, and the classroom atmosphere became more conducive and enjoyable. This is in line with the objectives of the study, namely to create an active, creative, and effective learning process. This change is not only seen from the evaluation results, but also from changes in student attitudes and participation during learning activities.

In addition to increasing student interest and abilities, this study also showed a positive impact on teacher performance in managing learning. Teachers became more creative in choosing and using learning media. Teachers were also more sensitive in paying attention to student needs and were able to evaluate the approaches used. This is reflected in the increase in teacher activity observation scores, where aspects such as media use, ability to motivate students, and time management experienced significant improvements from the first cycle to the second cycle.

From the results of observations and other qualitative data, students appear more confident in presenting their compositions in front of the class. They are able to relate the contents of the images to personal experiences or imaginations, which are then poured into communicative writing. This proves that images are not only visual aids, but also triggers for creativity and self-expression. Students who were previously passive and unconfident began to show active participation in discussions and the writing process.

Overall, learning to write using image media has proven effective in improving the quality of Indonesian language learning, especially in the aspect of writing compositions. Students' skills develop, both in terms of grammar, composition structure, use of spelling, and the ability to compose logical paragraphs. Students' thinking processes become more systematic because they are helped by the visualization of the images used. Teachers also find it easier to evaluate students' work because the main ideas and storyline are more focused.

This study also provides insight that the use of appropriate learning media can create a fun and meaningful learning atmosphere. When students feel interested and appreciated in the learning process, they will be more motivated to show their best potential. Therefore, image media can be an alternative that is worthy of being applied in writing learning at the elementary school level. This strategy can also be adapted for other lessons or levels of education with appropriate adjustments.

Based on the results achieved, it can be concluded that the research objectives have been achieved well. Image media has succeeded in increasing students' interest and ability in writing essays significantly. This study also proves that innovative and student-centered learning has a positive impact on learning outcomes. In the future, a similar approach can be further developed by combining other media such as video, audio, or digital storytelling to further enrich students' learning experiences.

Discussion

The results of classroom action research conducted in class III MI Miftahul Huda Kertosono showed that the use of image media in learning to write essays was able to provide a significant positive impact on increasing students' interest and abilities. In the pre-cycle, only 26.66% of students achieved the KKM score, with an average class score of 59. However, after the application of image media through two learning cycles, the results increased drastically to 100% completion, with an average score reaching 77.5. These data indicate that the intervention carried out was effective and right on target in overcoming the initial problems found.

The interpretation of these results strengthens the working hypothesis in this study, namely that the use of image media can increase students' interest and ability to write essays. This hypothesis is proven correct by the increase both quantitatively (average score, percentage of completion) and qualitatively (student activity, involvement in discussions, and increased participation during learning). This increase not only reflects students' cognitive development, but also their intrinsic motivation which grows because learning becomes more meaningful and enjoyable.

This finding is also in line with Piaget's cognitive development theory which states that children aged 6-12 years are in the concrete operational stage, where visual-based

learning will be easier to understand because children prefer real and concrete objects compared to abstractions. Image media provides direct visual stimuli, thus helping students connect images with ideas, events, and emotions that are the main ingredients in writing essays.

In addition, this result is consistent with previous research conducted by Hidayat and Rahmina (2003), which stated that image media can create a more effective learning situation and can improve student learning outcomes. The function of media as a visual aid not only stimulates students' thoughts and feelings, but also helps students organize information more systematically. In the context of learning to write, series of images act as a guide in building a storyline and developing main ideas into complete paragraphs.

When compared with Tarigan's opinion (1986) which states that writing is a complex skill and requires integration of listening, speaking, and reading skills, the use of image media becomes a concrete link that allows students to integrate the three skills before finally being expressed in writing. When students listen to the teacher's explanation and discuss the pictures, they are actually preparing the foundation for strong writing skills.

Learning with picture media also fosters students' confidence in expressing ideas and thoughts in writing. This is in line with research by Nurgiyantoro (1995) and Sa'adah (2003) which states that writing is a productive and expressive activity that cannot emerge optimally without motivation and enjoyable practice. In this study, picture media has been shown to reduce students' psychological barriers in starting to write and help them develop narratives more freely.

From the teacher's perspective, this study has a positive impact in terms of the ability to design more varied and student-centered learning. Teachers are not only facilitators, but also active guides in directing students to write based on visual stimuli. Observations of teachers show that learning activities become more structured, and the use of time becomes more effective because students grasp learning instructions more quickly.

Overall, learning with picture media can be interpreted as a form of constructivist approach in learning, where students build their own knowledge through concrete experiences. When students see images, they interpret meaning, form connections with personal experiences, and represent these ideas in writing. Thus, writing skills are no longer something abstract and difficult, but become activities that can be done through directed and enjoyable steps.

The implication of this study is that image media is not only an alternative, but can also be the main media in learning writing skills in elementary schools. Teachers can utilize series of images, cartoons, comics, or digital illustrations to design writing

assignments that are relevant to students' lives. The use of this kind of media can encourage student involvement as a whole and form productive writing habits from an early age.

Thus, it can be concluded that the results of this study not only confirm the proposed working hypothesis, but also enrich insight into the importance of a visual approach in learning Indonesian at the elementary level. This finding also strengthens the argument that the success of learning is not only determined by the material taught, but also by the methods and media used in the learning process.

From the teacher's perspective, the use of image media makes it easier to design more creative and contextual learning. Teachers can use images as a starting point for learning, guide students in composing paragraphs based on the flow of the image, and evaluate the results of their compositions in a more focused manner. Teachers also become more aware of the importance of visual media in accommodating different learning styles of students, especially at concrete development stages such as elementary school students.

This study also strengthens previous theories and findings which state that learning media, especially visual media, have a major influence on the effectiveness of the teaching and learning process. Within Piaget's theoretical framework, children aged 6–12 years are at the concrete operational stage and tend to learn better through real objects and visualizations. The images presented during the learning process have fulfilled the needs of this cognitive development and become a bridge between concrete reality and verbal expression through writing.

Furthermore, the results of this study also strengthen the previously formulated working hypothesis, namely that the use of image media can increase students' interest and ability in writing essays. This hypothesis has been strongly proven through quantitative data in the form of increased grades and learning completeness, as well as qualitative data in the form of observations of student and teacher activities during the learning process.

Thus, it can be concluded that image media is not only effective as a teaching aid for writing essays, but can also be a learning strategy that can be widely applied in various subjects and levels of elementary education. The use of image media in learning can encourage students to be more creative, confident, and motivated in learning. Learning becomes more meaningful because students feel directly involved in the process of creating and expressing ideas.

Finally, this study provides important recommendations for educators, especially Indonesian language teachers at the elementary school level, to continue to explore and develop innovative learning methods that are in accordance with student characteristics.

Image media can be used as the main alternative in overcoming the problem of low interest and ability to write, and become an integral part of an interesting and effective learning design. With this approach, learning is not only oriented towards results, but also towards the process and learning experience of students as a whole.

Conclusion

Based on the results of classroom action research that has been carried out for two cycles, it can be concluded that the use of image media as a learning aid has been proven to be able to increase students' interest and ability in writing essays in class III MI Miftahul Huda Kertosono. This increase is not only seen from the significant increase in academic scores, but also from changes in student learning behavior, a more dynamic classroom atmosphere, and increased active participation in the Indonesian language learning process, especially in the aspect of writing skills. In the early stages (pre-cycle), students' ability to write essays was still relatively low. This is reflected in the average score which only reached 59 and the learning completion rate which was still at 26.66%. However, after learning actions were carried out by integrating image media in two cycles, student learning outcomes increased very significantly. At the end of the second cycle, the average class score reached 77.5 and all students (100%) succeeded in achieving the Minimum Completion Criteria (KKM). This proves that image media functions effectively as a visual stimulus that can stimulate imagination, help students organize ideas, and develop logical and coherent essay structures. In addition to the cognitive aspect, this study also showed an increase in the affective and psychomotor aspects of students. Students' enthusiasm in participating in learning increased, their involvement in class discussions was more active, and they showed a high interest in writing. The classroom atmosphere, which was initially passive and monotonous, changed to be more interactive, fun, and centered on student activities. Image media has been proven to be able to eliminate students' initial obstacles in writing, such as confusion in determining the theme or difficulty in developing a storyline.

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