

Efforts to Improve Descriptive Writing Skills Using Realia Media in Grade V

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Abstract

This study was motivated by the low descriptive writing skills of fifth-grade elementary school students, characterized by limited student participation, low motivation, and difficulties in expressing ideas in written form. The purpose of this study was to improve students' descriptive essay writing skills through the use of realia media in Grade V of SDN JUNTI 2. This research employed a Classroom Action Research (CAR) design conducted in three cycles consisting of planning, action, observation, and reflection stages. The participants of the study were 29 fifth-grade students. Data were collected through observation, writing tests, and documentation, then analyzed descriptively to determine improvements in learning outcomes and classroom activities. The results revealed a significant improvement in students' descriptive writing abilities in each cycle. The average student score increased from 5.89 in Cycle I to 6.41 in Cycle II and reached 8.00 in Cycle III. Student participation, motivation, and creativity in the learning process also improved through direct interaction with real objects. The findings indicate that the implementation of realia media effectively enhances students' descriptive writing skills and creates more active and meaningful learning experiences. This study contributes to the development of innovative language learning strategies, particularly in improving elementary students' writing competence through contextual and concrete instructional media.

Keywords

descriptive essay, realia media, writing skills.



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INTRODUCTION

A teacher's primary duty is to educate, teach, and train their students. To effectively carry out these duties, a teacher must master various skills. One such skill is professional self-

development. This means that teachers are not only required to master teaching materials or present them accurately but also to assess and evaluate their own performance. This skill relates to research, which in this context is focused on the classroom, specifically research conducted within the classroom itself. Based on the description above, classroom action research is a form of research that itself has various rules and steps that must be followed. Classroom action research is a translation of classroom action research, a form of action research conducted in the classroom. Based on the description above, the author discusses a problem related to Indonesian language learning, namely writing, one of the four language skills. According to Tarigan (2008), "Language skills have four components: listening skills, speaking skills, reading skills, and writing skills," (p. 1).

One of the subjects taught in elementary schools is Indonesian, a language that plays a crucial role in education. The primary goal of language learning is its importance in students' intellectual and emotional development. It also supports success in Indonesian language learning in school, helping students understand themselves, their culture, and the culture of others, learn to express ideas, and utilize their imaginative and analytical skills. Furthermore, language learning can enhance our ability to communicate with others and share experiences to learn from each other. One aspect of this skill is writing. Writing essays requires effective learning media. One practical learning medium that can be used in writing essays, particularly descriptive essays, is realia. With this medium, writers are required to photograph objects or situations as objectively as possible, reflecting the situation they see. This approach, like a camera, allows for detailed, authentic, and authentic images that readers perceive as natural. In connection with the above description, the author conducted a study entitled "Efforts to Improve Descriptive Writing Skills Using Realia Media in Grade V of SDN JUNTI 2."

The need for the aforementioned research is also based on empirical facts about writing among elementary school students, which still require attention. According to the author, the ability and enthusiasm for writing essays among elementary school students still need to be fostered and improved in terms of quality and quantity to create the desired conditions: students who are skilled, active, and enthusiastic about writing essays.

METHODS

According to Furchan (in Ihat Hatimah, 2009), the research method is a general strategy adopted in collecting and analyzing data needed by teachers to answer the problems faced.¹ To obtain the necessary data, the author used a descriptive method with a classroom action research (CAR) approach, namely all action research carried out by teachers in the classroom during their learning process, where teachers provide actions to students by applying realia media as an effort to improve the descriptive essay writing skills of fifth-grade students at SDN JUNTI 2.

This classroom action research (CAR) uses a collaborative model that prioritizes cooperation between the principal, teachers, and researchers. This CAR is an effort to examine what happened and what has been produced or not yet completed in the previous step. According to E. Mulyasa, the purpose of CAR is to improve and enhance the conditions and quality of learning in the classroom and to improve professional services in the context of classroom learning, especially services to students. Essentially, CAR has the following characteristics: (1) situational, meaning it attempts to diagnose problems within a specific

context; (2) collaborative and participatory; and (3) self-evaluative, meaning modifications are continuously evaluated in a cyclical situation with the goal of improving actual practice.

At this stage, the researcher observes the problems that are occurring. Then, the researcher implements actions within the learning process that has been designed for implementation. Simultaneously with these actions, the researcher observes the learning process carried out by the teacher. This is a consequence of the principle of integrated stimulation. The goal is to solve practical problems in learning and to generate scientific knowledge in the field of classroom learning. Teachers are involved in classroom action research, particularly in the aspects of action and reflection on classroom learning practices.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The implementation of this classroom action research was in accordance with a pre-prepared plan. The researcher's presence did not disrupt the learning process or distract the students. This was because the researcher was a teacher at the school. The research results describe the stages, in the form of learning cycles, carried out during the teaching and learning process in the classroom. In this study, learning was implemented in several cycles, each consisting of four stages: planning, action, observation, and reflection.

The classroom action research conducted in grade V of SDN JUNTI 2 from Cycle I to Cycle III yielded the following test results:

Table 1. Results of the Summary of Student Learning Activity Test Scores in Descriptive Writing Using Realia Media for Grade V of SDN JUNTI 2 from Cycle I to Cycle III.

No	Name	VALUE		
		Cycle I	S Cycle II	S Cycle III
1	SS	8	8	8
2	SP	4	6	9
3	AR	6	6	9
4	ST	4	6	8
5	EI	6	7	9
6	NA	5	6	7
7	RR	4	6	8
8	SM	5	6	8
9	AS	6	6	8
10	MB	7	7	9
11	M.R	4	5	8
12	HK	6	6	8
13	EM	7	7	8
14	MS	9	9	8
15	AG	7	7	8
16	DH	5	6	8
17	LS	6	6	7
18	EA	5	6	8

19	LY	7	7	8
20	RA	5	5	7
21	RK	8	8	8
22	AA	6	6	8
23	IA	5	6	8
24	CR	6	7	8
25	EL	6	6	9
26	SN	5	6	8
27	ML	6	6	7
28	DS	6	6	7
29	SH	7	7	8
Average		171	186	232
Amount		5,89	6,41	8,0

From the table above, you can see a graph like the one in the image below.

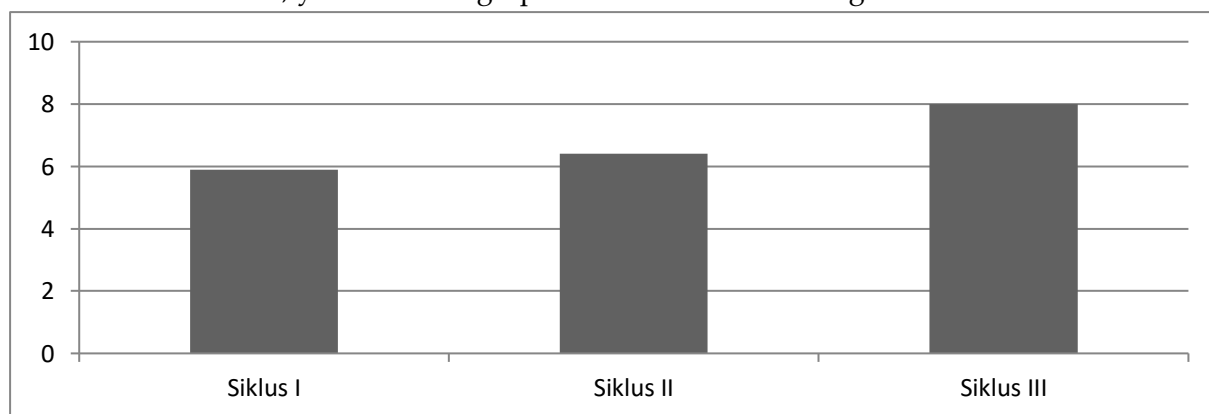


Figure 1. Post-Test Score Graph of Research Results

Based on the classroom action research data in the table above, the following descriptions can be obtained:

a. Cycle 1 Research Results

The implementation activities in the pre-cycle phase yielded the following results:

First, the learning process was still considered low. This was based on observations of the descriptive essay writing process, with the average score remaining low.

Second, student activity did not meet the assessment criteria based on the learning aspect of descriptive essay writing using realia. Student test scores were unsatisfactory.

b. Cycle II Research Results

The results of the research during the implementation of Cycle II were:

First, student understanding of the descriptive essay writing learning using realia generally did not meet the existing criteria. However, the average final test score increased compared to the previous cycle (cycle I). Second, student activity in the learning process generally increased. This was because the teacher began to explore students' initial conceptions, resulting in increased student creativity compared to the previous cycle.

c. Cycle III Research Results

The results of the research during the implementation of Cycle III actions were as follows: First, students' understanding of the descriptive essay writing learning process using realia media generally met the existing criteria. The average final test scores increased compared to the previous cycles (cycles I and II). Second, students' overall engagement in the learning process increased. This was because the teacher began exploring students' initial conceptions, resulting in increased student creativity compared to the previous cycle.

The findings of this classroom action research indicate that the use of realia media significantly improved students' descriptive writing skills in Grade V of SDN JUNTI 2. The increase in students' average scores from 5.89 in Cycle I to 6.41 in Cycle II and finally 8.00 in Cycle III demonstrates that realia media contributed positively to students' understanding and engagement during the learning process. This improvement shows that students became more capable of organizing ideas, describing objects in detail, and expressing observations in written form after experiencing direct interaction with concrete objects.

These findings are in line with the theory proposed by Arsyad (2019), who states that instructional media can enhance students' motivation and facilitate understanding by making learning experiences more concrete and meaningful. Realia media provides authentic objects that stimulate students' senses and imagination, allowing them to produce richer and more detailed descriptive essays. Similarly, Heinich et al. (2020) explain that learning media involving direct experiences can improve students' cognitive engagement because learners are actively involved in observing and interpreting real-world objects. In this research, students were not only passive recipients of information but also active participants who explored objects directly before transforming their observations into written descriptions.

The results of this study also support Tarigan's (2018) theory that writing skills develop effectively when students are given meaningful and contextual learning experiences. Descriptive writing requires students to observe details carefully and transfer sensory impressions into language. Through the use of realia media, students were able to connect their visual and sensory experiences with vocabulary and sentence construction more effectively. This condition encouraged students to become more creative and confident in expressing ideas in written form.

Furthermore, the findings are consistent with previous studies conducted by Lestari and Pebriana (2019), which found that innovative learning models could improve descriptive writing skills among elementary school students. Their research showed that active learning approaches increase students' participation and writing performance. Likewise, the current study demonstrates that the implementation of realia media created a more interactive classroom atmosphere, reducing boredom and increasing students' enthusiasm during learning activities. Students became more focused and motivated because they learned through concrete objects rather than relying solely on verbal explanations from the teacher.

This study is also supported by the findings of Eri Dia and Ardana (2022), who emphasized that increased student attention and engagement during classroom activities positively influence learning outcomes. In the present research, students showed greater participation in each cycle, especially during observation and discussion activities involving

realia objects. The gradual increase in student activity indicates that realia media successfully attracted students' attention and encouraged collaborative learning experiences. Additionally, Purba and Putri (2022) explain that positive classroom environments and stimulating instructional strategies contribute significantly to students' learning motivation. The use of realia media created a more enjoyable learning atmosphere that encouraged students to participate actively in descriptive writing tasks.

From the perspective of classroom action research theory, the improvement achieved in each cycle reflects the effectiveness of the reflective and cyclical process proposed by Kemmis and McTaggart (2018). Through planning, action, observation, and reflection, the teacher continuously evaluated and improved the learning process based on students' needs and classroom conditions. The gradual increase in learning outcomes suggests that continuous reflection and instructional improvement are essential in enhancing students' writing abilities.

The results of this study confirm that realia media is an effective instructional medium for improving descriptive writing skills in elementary school students. The findings strengthen previous theories and empirical studies emphasizing the importance of contextual, concrete, and student-centered learning approaches in language instruction. Therefore, teachers are encouraged to integrate realia media into Indonesian language learning, particularly in teaching descriptive writing, to create more engaging and meaningful classroom experiences.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the classroom action research conducted with fifth-grade students at SDN JUNTI 2, Jawilan District, Serang Regency, the following conclusions can be drawn: 1) Use of Realia Media in Descriptive Essay Writing Learning; (a) Teacher Activities in Learning. There has been an increase in teachers' ability to conduct learning in an effort to overcome student learning difficulties, namely the ability to implement learning using realia media in descriptive essay writing learning with the following learning steps: designing learning scenarios to streamline the teaching and learning process, striving to stimulate student motivation in learning, and using teaching aids in learning. (b) Student Learning Activities. There has been an increase in student learning activities in descriptive writing using realia as an alternative to improve student learning outcomes. In each cycle, the average student activity in the lesson increased. (2) Student Learning Outcomes; Based on the improvement in teacher skills and student learning activities in descriptive writing using realia, learning outcomes also improved. This can be seen from observations before the intervention (pre-cycle stage) until cycle 3, where the learning rate increased to 80%. Based on the data above, in the pre-cycle stage, teachers had not used realia in descriptive writing. This indicates that extensive teaching experience or the implementation of the learning process does not guarantee teacher mastery of various learning media. On a scale of 0-3, there was an increase in each cycle, reaching an average score of 5.89 in cycle I, 6.41 in cycle II, and 8.00 in cycle III. Based on the description above, it can be concluded that the implementation of learning to write descriptive essays using realia media will achieve quite satisfactory results if the learning planning is carried out well.

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