

Enhancing Students' Descriptive Text Writing Ability by Utilizing Indonesia Virtual Tour Website

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Abstract

Writing is one of the essential language skills that students must learn and master. However, it is also considered the most difficult skill to acquire. Students encounter various challenges when composing written texts because there are many aspects to address in the writing process. For this reason, the teacher should be more creative and innovative in teaching writing to help students overcome those problems and enhance their writing ability. This study aims to investigate the use of Indonesia Virtual Tour website as visual media to improve students' descriptive writing ability. A quantitative approach with a pre-experimental (One-Group Pretest-Posttest) design was employed. The subjects of this study were 33 seventh-grade students of a private junior high school in Surabaya. The sample was selected using purposive sampling. To collect data, the research instruments were pre-test and post-test on descriptive writing. The test results were subsequently analyzed using SPSS statistical software version 25. The findings demonstrated that using Indonesia Virtual Tour website in the descriptive learning process had positive impacts on students' descriptive text writing abilities. This was indicated by the higher mean score of the post-test (81.12) compared to the pre-test (66.45). Furthermore, the result of the paired sample t-test showed that there was a significant difference in the students' descriptive text writing ability before and after getting the treatment. In conclusion, utilizing Indonesia Virtual Tour website as visual media in the teaching and learning process effectively enhanced students' writing ability in descriptive text.

Keywords: *descriptive text, learning media, Indonesia Virtual Tour website*

INTRODUCTION

Writing is an essential productive skill that must be mastered by students in learning English. It serves as a medium for expressing a wide range of emotions, thoughts, personal insights, as well as information. According to Suparman (2019), writing allows students to convey their thoughts, ideas and feelings in written form. It is also supported by Nurfidoh & Kareviati (2021), who said that writing is a form of communication which enables students to express their ideas, feelings and knowledge in sentences conveyed through well-structured text. This mean that writing acts as a powerful tool for communication, allowing individuals to organize and deliver their opinions, perspectives, and experiences to others. Therefore, gaining proficiency in writing is crucial for students, as it is a fundamental skill for both academic achievement and professional contexts.

However, mastering writing is considered the most difficult language skill for students compared to other language skills (Anggraeni, 2022). Foreign language learners face various challenges in writing. One of the challenges in the writing process is the students' struggle to generate and develop ideas (Siregar et al., 2022). The difficulty faced by students in formulating ideas in writing poses a hindrance for them to acquire writing skills because generating ideas is the main source in

producing writing. Alisha et al, cited in Hidayati & Rosyid (2023), stated that the challenges students face in writing are also related to students' difficulties in organizing text, grammar, and lack of vocabulary when composing sentences or paragraphs. In addition, students' difficulties in writing are often attributed to the less innovative teaching strategies implemented by teachers (Trisusana & Susanti, 2020). Those writing issues are also experienced by students when composing descriptive text (Purnamasari et al., 2021). In the Indonesian curriculum, several types of English texts must be taught in junior high school; including descriptive text. Descriptive text is a genre of writing that aims to provide information to readers regarding a detailed description of a particular object, such as a place, person, animal, or thing (Saifudin et al., 2020).

The writing challenges described previously were also encountered by the seventh-grade students of a private middle school in Surabaya, particularly when tasked with composing descriptive texts. Observations reveal that many students struggle to determine the content of their writing and often feel uncertain about how to begin. This problem seems to arise from lessons that are mainly focused on textbook activities, which fail to engage students and spark their interest. As a result, students often lack creativity and ideas when it comes to writing. Moreover, their lack of motivation to learn further hinders their understanding of key writing concepts, making it difficult for them to produce organized and coherent texts. As teachers, they need to find effective ways to teach writing to facilitate the enhancement of students' writing ability. An alternative that can be used by teachers in writing classes is to utilize media in the learning process. According to Rachmaida (2022), one of the efficient ways to establish a dynamic classroom environment, attract students' interest in the subject matter, and stimulate students' cognitive engagement in the classroom is through the use of media during the learning process. In this instance, using media has positive effects and benefits on learning. One type of media that is suitable to be applied in descriptive text writing classes is visual media. Visual media can help students find ideas from the visualizations they see. This is in line with the statement made by Maming et al., (2023) that visual media is one of the learning media used to increase students' writing skills because it can help students explore their ideas in written form. Furthermore, integrating technology into the teaching and learning process is an important aspect of this digital era (Hikmah, 2019).

Visual media on Indonesia Virtual Tour website stands out as an interesting media option for those purposes. Through this media, students can observe an object from a 360-degree perspective, thus increasing their comprehension of the object's characteristics more authentically compared to printed images. Indonesia Virtual Tour website can be accessed by everyone in their respective electronic devices. On this website, students can virtually observe several locations across Indonesia in 360 degrees, where the landscapes have been captured. It is interesting that the students only need to move their cursor to get a more realistic view, unlike just looking at the object in a still image (Devista, 2022).

Utilizing Visual Media on Indonesia Virtual Tour website in teaching descriptive writing has several advantages such as: (1) the visuals provided by Indonesia Virtual Tour website can help students gain a more detailed understanding of the objects to be described, (2) the availability of dynamic and interactive visuals can increase students' level of motivation and involvement in the

learning process, (3) the use of Indonesia Virtual Tour website reflects the application of technology in learning which all students can access it easily. Devista (2022) stated that the advantage of this site is that students can see objects in detail compared to using video or Google Maps where students only see the outside of a place. This site allows students to see details of parts of the place virtually.

There are several previous studies related to this research. The first study was carried out by Pratama & Hartono (2020) regarding improving students' writing skills on descriptive text by using Instagram posts as visual media. The research's findings indicate that there is a significant enhancement in students' descriptive text writing scores after using Instagram posts as visual media in the teaching process. The second research was conducted by Amalia et al (2023) regarding the efficacy of employing Pinterest media in teaching written descriptive text to seventh-grade students. The results of this research show that students' writing ability in descriptive text is significantly impacted by the use of photos from Pinterest media. The third research was conducted by Devista (2022) regarding the use of *Indonesia Virtual Tour* website on middle school students' ability to write descriptive text for Indonesian language subjects. The study's findings demonstrate that utilizing the visualization of objects on Indonesia Virtual Tour website, students' writing ability in descriptive text generally obtained grades in good category. Furthermore, the use of this media elicited positive responses from students during the learning process.

From these previous studies, it can be observed that visual media on digital platforms has the potential to improve students' writing skills, and Indonesia Virtual Tour website can be utilized as a tool in teaching descriptive text writing. To address the existing research gap, this study intends to explore new approaches in improving English writing instruction, particularly given the challenges posed by textbook-based learning, which often fail to captivate students. By examining the influence of innovative tools, specifically the visual media on Indonesia Virtual Tour website, the research investigates how digital media can enhance students' writing abilities. The findings could offer valuable insights into how these tools can enrich learning experiences and contribute to the development of more effective educational strategies. In this case, the objective of this research is to find out whether the ability of junior high school students in writing descriptive text can increase after utilizing visual media on Indonesia Virtual Tour website in the learning process.

Writing

Writing is one of the English language skills that is used to convey ideas, thoughts, feelings and knowledge to other people in written form. According to Nunan (2003), writing is a cognitive process of generating ideas, considering how to articulate them, and arranging them into sentences and paragraphs that are understandable to readers. It shows that through writing, someone means communicating indirectly with the other. This is in line with Liando & Martha (2019) statement that writing provides an opportunity for someone to share their thoughts and ideas without interacting directly with the reader. Saifudin et al., (2020) also state that writing plays an important role in human life because it allows us to communicate and interact with other people. From those definitions, it can be inferred that writing is the process of transferring information regarding thoughts,

ideas, and feelings onto paper in the form of sentences and paragraphs while paying attention to several aspects of writing to ensure that the message is understood by the readers.

Writing is often considered the most difficult skill to master among other skills, as it involves a systematic process to produce coherent and accurate text. According to Deane (2022), writing is often challenging due to the multitude of tasks writers must manage: generating ideas, structuring them from clarity, choosing precise words for expression, transferring thoughts onto paper physically or digitally, and continuously reviewing and revising to refine the text. According to Harmer (2007), there are four main aspects in the writing process, which are planning, drafting, editing, and final version. At the planning stage, the writer formulates several main points of their writing, including purpose, audience, and organization of ideas; at the drafting stage, the writer organizes the writing ideas into a coherent paragraph; at the editing stage, the writer reads the draft they have produced and checks whether any errors need to be corrected; and at the final version stage, the writer can send their product of writing to the readers.

Descriptive Text

Descriptive text is one of the types of writing that contains a detailed description of an object. According to Anggraeni (2022), written descriptions that detail the shapes, qualities, quantities, and other characteristics of an object are referred to as descriptive text. The meaning of descriptive text is also defined as text that has the aim of describing someone, a place, or something (Syifa et al., 2022). From these definitions, it can be interpreted that descriptive text is a type of writing that contains information related to the depiction of a specific object so that other people can visualize the object by reading the descriptive text. A descriptive text will be considered good if it presents a complete text structure.

In composing a descriptive text, it is important to present a generic structure comprising identification and description (Saifudin et al., 2020). Identification provides general information about the object being described, while description offers detailed characteristics and attributes, ensuring that the text effectively conveys a vivid and comprehensive portrayal of the object. In addition, writers must also pay attention to the language features involved in writing descriptive text. According to Fiqri Fauzi et al., (2023), there are four key language features of descriptive text: specific object, simple present tense, adjectives, and action verbs. A thorough understanding and application of both the structural elements and language features are essential for producing descriptive texts that are clear, accurate, and effective.

Indonesia Virtual Tour Website

Indonesia Virtual Tour website is a web page dedicated to providing users with the opportunity to experience virtual tours or explore various destinations in Indonesia through digital means that offer a 360-degree perspective. According to the information on Indonesia Virtual Tour page, which is managed by PT Visual Anak Negeri and the Visual Anak Negeri Foundation, the creation of virtual tour content is used as a means of promotion and information that contains educational and entertainment value. Indonesia Virtual Tour website provides free virtual tour

content for everyone. They can access this website using their respective electronic devices without registering and subscribing. Indonesia Virtual Tour site has provided visualization of objects from 12 provinces, including West Java, East Java, Central Java, DKI Jakarta, DI Yogyakarta, West Sumatra, South Sumatra, Bangka Belitung, Lampung, Bali, South Sulawesi, and East Kalimantan. Users who choose one of the objects available on Indonesia Virtual Tour website can explore the visualization in 360 degrees just by moving the cursor. In this case, they can see a visualization of the object clearly as if it were in the original location where the object was located.

Indonesia Virtual Tour website is interesting and easy to operate for everyone. This site also presents a clear and detailed visualization of objects. Therefore, using this website as a medium for learning to write descriptive text will make it possible for students to more easily describe an object because they can explore the object in detail without having to go to that location. Besides, students will also be enthusiastic about learning because the media used is interactive and fun.

METHOD

Research Design

This study applied a pre-experimental research design with a quantitative approach. A pretest–posttest design with one group was carried out without a control or comparison group (Dubey & Kothari, 2022). The application of pre-experimental design with one group pretest-posttest in this study is used to identify the initial cause-effect relationships between the variables. By employing this approach, a deeper understanding of the potential impact of the independent variables on the dependent variable can be gained without introducing additional unwanted influences. The researcher administered treatment to one experimental group and then measured the results after the treatment was given.

To determine the effect of the treatment given, the researcher carried out a pre-test at the beginning of the meeting to assess the initial condition of the subject before being given treatment and conducted a post-test at the end of the meeting after the subject was given treatment. The treatment was conducted over four meetings, with each meeting lasting 80 minutes. During the treatment, students engaged with the visual media on Indonesia Virtual Tour website, utilizing the platform to enhance their understanding of descriptive text writing. The platform allowed them to explore visual elements that helped develop their skills in creating more detailed and creative texts. This approach aimed to incorporate the media into the learning process, providing a visual context to support students' writing abilities.

Population and Sample

The population of this study was the seventh-grade students of a private middle school in Surabaya. Purposive sampling was the sampling technique employed in this research. Purposive sampling was chosen for this study to ensure that the selected participants were specifically suited to address the research objective. In purposive sampling, the researcher deliberately or purposively selects participants or samples that were believed to be representative of the population (Dubey & Kothari, 2022). The sample selection in this study was based on one class

that had equal levels of English learning achievement. This was expected to provide insights that were representative of the wider population. Since this study applied a pre-experimental design with one group of pre-test and post-test, the researcher took one seventh-grade class from a private junior high school in Surabaya to be the sample for this research. One of the classes selected as a sample was VII-B class, comprising 33 students.

Instrument

The instrument in this study was pre-test and post-test writing test that aimed to assess students' writing ability. A rubric, adapted from Brown (2007), was used as a specific measurement while grading students' writing. The rubric assessed several writing aspects consisting of content, organization, grammar, vocabulary, and mechanics. Before using the instrument for data collection, it underwent assessment for validity and reliability to obtain valid and reliable research data. To confirm the validity of the instrument, content validity was employed and successfully verified. Subsequently, the instrument's reliability was assessed using Cronbach's Alpha in SPSS 25. The calculated reliability coefficient was 0.670, indicating that the instrument was reliable. The results showed that the value of Cronbach's Alpha exceeds 0.60.

Data Analysis

The paired sample t-test in SPSS Statistic 25 was used to analyze the data, as the sample only had one group pretest-post-test. The paired sample t-test was employed to determine whether there were significant differences in students' descriptive text writing scores before and after getting treatment using visual media of Indonesia Virtual Tour website during the teaching and learning process. Before conducting the paired sample t-test, a normality test was performed using the Shapiro-Wilk due to the sample size being less than 50. The pre-test and post-test yielded significant values of 0.096 and 0.151, indicating that the data is normally distributed as both values are greater than 0.05. After the normality test was completed, the parametric paired sample t-test would be conducted. If the t-value is less than 0.05, the alternative hypothesis will be accepted.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Research Results

The result of this research indicates that the use of visual media on Indonesia Virtual Tour website significantly enhanced students' writing skills in descriptive text. The researcher administered a pre-test and post-test to 33 students to evaluate their descriptive writing skills. The results from both tests were used to determine whether there was any improvement in the students' descriptive text writing abilities after the treatment. From the data analysis presented in Table 1, it can be inferred that the average pre-test score was 66.45 and the average post-test score was 81.12. These results indicated that the pre-test mean score was lower than the post-test mean score.

Table 1. The results of students' mean score on pre-test and post-test

		Paired Samples Statistics			
		Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pair 1	pretest	66.45	33	10.524	1.832
	posttest	81.12	33	8.131	1.415

The researcher performed a paired sample t-test to assess whether there was a significant improvement in students' pre-test and post-test scores after conducting treatment using visual media on Indonesia Virtual Tour website for teaching descriptive text writing. This test compares the mean scores of two different variables within the same group. The following is the paired sample t-test result:

Table 2. The result of the paired sample t-test

		Paired Samples Test							
		Paired Differences					t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
Pair					Lower	Upper			
1	pretest -	-	4.748	.826	-16.350	-12.983	-	32	.000
	posttest	14.667							

Based on Table 2 regarding the statistical analysis (paired sample t-test) above, it shows that the mean value difference between the students' pre-test and post-test scores was 14.667. Additionally, the significant difference (Sig. (2-tailed)) between pre-test and post-test scores was .000 less than 0.05, indicating there was a significant different between students writing scores before and after giving treatment using Indonesia Virtual Tour website in the teaching and learning process. To provide a clear understanding of how strong the intervention can impact students' capacity to write descriptive text, the researcher tested the effect size using the Eta square formula. The result of the size effect is presented in the following explanation:

$$\begin{aligned}
 \text{Eta Squared} &= \frac{t^2}{t^2 + (N1 - 1)} \\
 &= \frac{314.920516}{314.920516 + (33 - 1)} \\
 &= \frac{314.920516}{314.920516 + 32} \\
 &= \frac{314.920516}{346.920516} \\
 &= 0.908
 \end{aligned}$$

The calculation above reveals that the effect size result is 0.908 which is greater than 0.14. Therefore, the utilization of visual media on Indonesia Virtual Tour website had a large effect on students' descriptive text writing ability after getting treatment. Moreover, it is noteworthy that this study goes beyond only

analyzing the general improvement in students' writing abilities between the pre-test and post-test assessments. By employing a comprehensive approach, the researcher also evaluates key elements such as content, organization, grammar, vocabulary, and mechanics. This in-depth analysis aims to provide a detailed understanding of how different factors contribute to the enhancement of students' writing skills.

Table 3. Students' achievement in writing aspects

No.	Writing Aspects	Average Score		Increase
		Pre-Test	Post-Test	
1	Content	16.18	20.09	3.91
2	Organization	13.91	17.00	3.09
3	Grammar	13.48	16.06	2.58
4	Vocabulary	13.82	16.91	3.09
5	Mechanic	9.06	11.06	2.00
	Total	66.45	81.12	14.67

From Table 3, it is shown that the average scores of all writing aspects improved in the post-test. However, each aspect showed a different score increase. The results show that the highest increase occurred in the content aspect, reaching 3.91. The second highest increase was seen in the vocabulary and organization aspect, with a score rise of 3.09, followed by grammar, with an increased score of 2.58. In this case, the mechanic aspect showed the lowest average increase, with a score of 2.00.

Discussion

This research demonstrates that there was a significant improvement in students' descriptive text writing results after receiving treatment that has been specifically designed regarding the use of visual media on Indonesia Virtual Tour website in the teaching and learning process. The statistical analysis demonstrates that the treatment had a significant positive impact on the variable studied. The average score increased from 66.45 before the treatment to 81.12 after the treatment. Furthermore, the paired sample t-test results, with a Sig. (2-tailed) value of .000 (less than 0.05), confirm a significant difference between the pre-test and post-test scores, supporting the acceptance of the alternative hypothesis. Through the utilization of visual media, students can have visual references to assist them in understanding the concepts being taught (Katona et al., 2023) and develop their ability to compose descriptive text in more detail and creatively (Pratama & Hartono, 2020). Additionally, integrating technology-based media, such as websites or other digital platforms, into the learning process can make it more engaging and enable students to actively participate in learning, ultimately leading to better learning outcomes. As stated by Pribadi cited in Maming et al. (2023), using technology-based learning media that present knowledge and information makes classroom learning more captivating and boosts students' motivation. Fidiana (2020) also mentions that using digital media in the learning process can cultivate a positive attitude and increase students' engagement in learning English, thereby improving their writing skills. In this regard, using visual media on Indonesia Virtual Tour website can directly enhance students' ability to write descriptive text. This media supports students in producing higher quality of descriptive text, as they

have a visual context to guide their descriptions.

The utilization of visual media on Indonesia Virtual Tour website in the teaching-learning process has shown improvement across all aspects of writing, encompassing content, text structure, grammar, vocabulary, and mechanics. However, based on the results obtained in this study, the highest improvement scores were seen in the aspects of content, organization, and vocabulary. Visual media on Indonesia Virtual Tour website helps students develop richer and more well-structured ideas by providing visual context that increases their understanding of how to describe an object, which in turn helps them use language more effectively in their writing. It is supported by Devista (2022), who demonstrated that the use of 360 visualization on Indonesia Virtual Tour website showed good results in students' descriptive text writing skills. Based on her analysis, students exhibited strong abilities in writing descriptive text, particularly in terms of content relevance and text structure. In addition, research findings presented by Amalia et al (2023) also stated that the visual media on an application helped students generate ideas for writing descriptive text based on their visual observations and progressively expanding their vocabulary. As a result, incorporating digital visual media in teaching writing serves as an alternative tool to assist students in mastering aspects of writing.

From the explanation above, it can be summarized that employing visual media on Indonesia Virtual Tour website in teaching descriptive text writing provides benefits that support students' learning outcomes. Therefore, as the findings of this study indicate, implementing visual media on Indonesia Virtual Tour website during the teaching and learning process can enhance students' descriptive text writing ability.

CONCLUSION

This research aims to determine whether students' descriptive text writing ability can improve after using visual media on Indonesia Virtual Tour website in the teaching and learning process. Based on the findings of this study, it was found that the utilization of visual media on Indonesia Virtual Tour website significantly improved students' descriptive text writing ability. The results of the comparison between pre-test and post-test scores served as evidence. It has been demonstrated that the average of post-test scores increased after treatment was given during the teaching and learning process. Furthermore, the paired sample t-test results also showed that the p-value (2-tailed) was .000, indicating a significant difference between the pre-test and post-test scores. Therefore, it can be inferred that the use of visual media on Indonesia Virtual Tour website can significantly enhance students' writing ability of descriptive text.

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