

Efforts to Improve Descriptive Writing Skills Using Magic Card Media for Ninth Grade Students in Junior High School

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Abstract

Descriptive writing skills are essential competencies that students at the junior high school level must possess, especially to develop critical thinking skills and language abilities. Descriptive texts provide students with the opportunity to describe objects, places, or situations in detail, which in turn trains students in organizing ideas and enriching vocabulary. However, challenges in teaching these skills are still frequently encountered in the field. This study aims to improve descriptive writing skills among ninth-grade junior high school students through the use of Magic Card media. The research employs a Classroom Action Research (CAR) method conducted in two cycles. Each cycle includes stages of planning, implementation, observation, and reflection. Data were collected through observations, interviews, and writing tests conducted at the end of each cycle. The results show that the application of Magic Card media can significantly enhance students' descriptive writing skills. In Cycle 1, the average student score was only 65, with issues such as limited vocabulary, difficulty in organizing ideas, and lack of creativity. After reflection and adjustments in Cycle 2, which included providing more detailed guidance, staged practice, and individual work, the average student score increased to 75. This improvement was evident in the increased use of varied vocabulary, more logical organization of ideas, and creativity in writing descriptive texts. Thus, Magic Card media proves to be effective in improving descriptive writing skills among ninth-grade junior high school students. This study suggests that teachers should utilize creative and interactive learning media, such as Magic Cards, to help students develop their writing skills optimally.

Keywords: writing skills; descriptive text; magic cards; classroom action research; cycle.

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Introduction

Writing is one of the essential language competencies that plays a crucial role in formal education. This skill not only sharpens critical and analytical thinking abilities but also enhances students' capacity to express ideas and feelings in writing. In the context of the Indonesian language curriculum at the junior high school level, descriptive texts are one of the types of texts that students need to master. Descriptive texts help students depict an object, place, or event in detail, allowing readers to experience or imagine what is being described. However, many students still face difficulties in composing good descriptive texts. Descriptive writing skills are essential competencies that students at the junior high school level must possess, particularly to develop critical thinking skills and language abilities. Descriptive texts provide students with the opportunity to describe objects, places, or situations in detail, which in turn trains them in organizing ideas and enriching vocabulary. However, challenges in teaching these skills are still frequently encountered in practice.

Ninth-grade students often struggle with writing descriptive texts due to a lack of understanding of text structure, limited vocabulary, and a lack of interest in writing activities (Fitriana, 2023). These difficulties often result in monotonous writing, a lack of clarity in depicting objects, and texts that do not meet the criteria for good descriptive writing. In this context, the role of engaging and interactive learning media becomes very important. Magic Card media has proven to be an effective tool for increasing student motivation and learning outcomes, particularly in writing skills. Magic Cards, which contain images, keywords, or phrases that stimulate imagination, can help students visualize the objects they will describe more easily and create more structured and engaging paragraphs.

The use of Magic Card media in descriptive writing instruction significantly improves the quality of students' writing. Students using Magic Cards tend to be more creative in composing descriptions and more capable of structuring their ideas (Saraswati & Nugraheni, 2022). Additionally, research by Rahmawati (2023) also shows that Magic Cards can enhance active student participation during the learning process, which has implications for overall learning improvement.

A pleasant and student-centered learning approach such as this also supports the principles of inclusive and responsive teaching. By integrating Magic Card media into descriptive writing instruction, teachers can create a more dynamic learning environment and motivate students to be more active and creative in their writing. Based on literature and existing research, the use of Magic Cards in descriptive writing instruction for ninth-grade students shows great potential in addressing the challenges faced by students. Therefore, this research is important to explore further the effectiveness of Magic Cards in a broader context and to provide practical recommendations for teachers in implementing this method in the classroom.

The main challenges faced by ninth-grade students in writing descriptive texts include a lack of ability to organize ideas and limited vocabulary (Prasetyo & Indrawati, 2023). This often results in descriptive texts that are less vivid and less engaging for readers. Additionally, many students lack interest in writing activities because they view writing as monotonous and boring (Putri & Santoso, 2022). To address these issues, teachers need to implement innovative and interactive learning media that can stimulate students' interest and engagement in the writing process. One such media is Magic Cards. Magic Cards are learning tools that contain images, keywords, or specific phrases that can

spark students' imagination in writing. By utilizing Magic Cards, students can more easily develop ideas and write more detailed and engaging descriptions.

The use of Magic Cards in descriptive writing instruction can significantly enhance the quality of students' writing. Students using Magic Cards show improvement in creativity, organization of ideas, and use of varied vocabulary (Dewi & Handayani, 2023). These findings are supported by studies from Aulia and Hidayati (2022), which reveal that Magic Cards not only improve writing skills but also enhance students' attitudes towards writing activities themselves. Students become more motivated and enthusiastic about participating in writing instruction.

Magic Cards also support a student-centered learning approach, where students can learn independently or collaborate with peers in developing descriptive texts. Through varied activities, students can exchange ideas and receive feedback from classmates, ultimately improving their learning outcomes. This aligns with the constructivist learning concept, which emphasizes the importance of social interaction in knowledge formation (Vygotsky, 1978). Therefore, this research focuses on the effectiveness of using Magic Card media to improve descriptive writing skills among ninth-grade junior high school students. This study is expected to contribute to the development of more creative and student-centered teaching methods and provide solutions to the challenges faced in descriptive writing instruction.

Literature Review

Writing is one of the complex language skills that is crucial for students to master, especially at the junior high school level. The goal of descriptive texts is to depict an object, place, or event with words so that readers can clearly imagine what is being described. This skill involves not only linguistic abilities but also imagination and critical thinking (Suparno & Yunus, 2021). Descriptive texts require students to describe something in detail and vividly, which can stimulate the development of vocabulary and better sentence structures.

Writing skills are fundamental in language education, particularly in the context of junior high school (SMP) instruction. Descriptive texts, which aim to describe objects, places, or events in detail, are one of the types of texts that students must master at this level (Harintama, 2022). Descriptive writing skills require a rich vocabulary, a deep understanding of the described object, and the ability to construct clear and detailed sentences.

Learning media play a crucial role in enhancing writing skills. Magic Cards are one such media that can be used to stimulate creativity and imagination in writing. This media typically consists of cards containing images or keywords that help students start and develop their writing ideas. Research conducted by Hariani (2021) shows that using Magic Cards in writing instruction can increase student motivation and assist them in composing more structured and creative descriptive texts.

Magic Card media is an innovative and interactive learning tool that can help students develop their writing skills. Magic Cards, which generally contain images or keywords, can stimulate students' imagination and assist them in creating more vivid and structured descriptive texts. The use of Magic Cards has been proven effective in increasing student motivation and participation during the writing learning process (Maming et al., 2022). Recent studies indicate that using visual media in instruction can

significantly enhance students' writing skills. The use of Magic Cards as a visual tool helps students better understand concepts and connect their ideas in descriptive writing. Research by Purnamasari et al. (2023) shows that students using visual media, including Magic Cards, in writing instruction show significant improvements in their ability to develop coherent and engaging texts. The Culturally Responsive Teaching (CRT) approach can enhance the effectiveness of using Magic Card media by aligning the materials used with students' cultural backgrounds. This approach helps students feel more connected to the material and more motivated to express themselves in descriptive texts. Studies by Meletiadou (2023) affirm that integrating local cultural values into learning media, such as Magic Cards, can increase student engagement and learning outcomes.

Relevant research includes Fitriana, N. (2023), with the title "Student Difficulties in Writing Descriptive Texts in Indonesian Language Learning at Junior High School," which also focuses on descriptive writing skills among junior high school students. However, this research differs in that it focuses on identifying student difficulties without specific interventions such as the use of Magic Cards. Additionally, research by Saraswati, D., & Nugraheni, R. (2022), titled "The Effect of Magic Card Media on Junior High School Students' Descriptive Writing Skills," directly examines the effectiveness of Magic Card media in improving descriptive writing skills, similar to my research. However, the differences in this study might include the use of experimental design or other approaches besides Classroom Action Research (CAR).

Method

This study uses a Classroom Action Research (CAR) design aimed at improving descriptive writing skills among ninth-grade students by using Magic Card media. CAR is chosen because it is suitable for addressing learning issues directly in the classroom, involving planning, action, observation, and reflection in two iterative cycles. The subjects of this research are ninth-grade students at SMP Negeri 33 Surabaya, totaling 31 students. They were selected because they are at a stage appropriate for developing descriptive writing skills and have experienced difficulties in this subject in the previous semester. The research is conducted at SMP Negeri 33 Surabaya during the odd semester of the 2024/2025 academic year. Each cycle is carried out over a period of 4 weeks, with two meetings per week. The research is conducted in two cycles, each consisting of four stages: planning, action, observation, and reflection.

Cycle 1:

1. **Planning:** In this stage, the researcher and the class teacher design a lesson plan using Magic Card media. The chosen material is about describing tourist attractions.
2. **Action:** The teacher implements the lesson using Magic Cards. Students are assigned to write descriptive texts based on the cards they randomly select.
3. **Observation:** During the action, the researcher observes student activities and notes their engagement and difficulties in structuring descriptive text.
4. **Reflection:** After the action, reflection is conducted to evaluate the success of the first cycle's learning. The reflection reveals that some students still struggle with developing ideas in depth and constructing effective sentences.

Cycle 2:

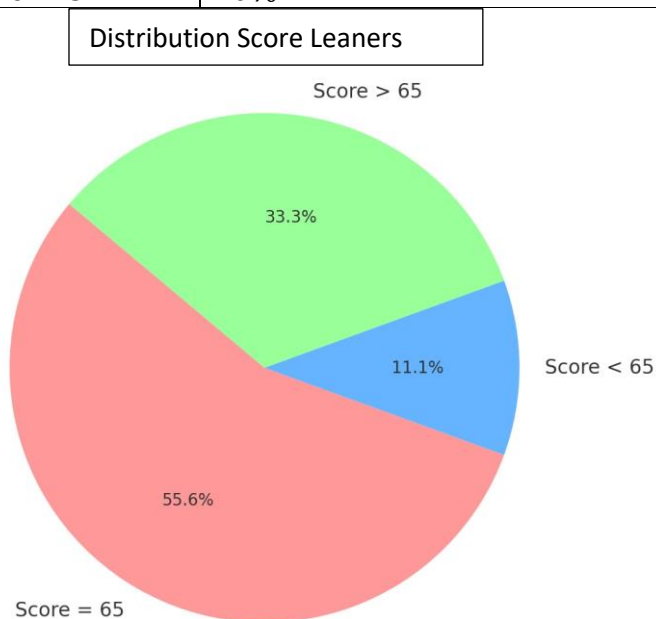
1. **Planning:** Based on the reflection results from Cycle 1, the researcher modifies the lesson plan by providing more guidance and concrete examples on how to describe objects in detail.
2. **Action:** The teacher re-implements the lesson with the adjusted approach, providing more practice with Magic Cards, and encourages students to work in small groups before writing individually.
3. **Observation:** Observation is conducted to assess whether there is improvement in students' ability to write descriptive texts, particularly in the writing process.
4. **Reflection:** In this stage, reflection is carried out to determine whether the use of Magic Cards has successfully enhanced students' descriptive writing skills

Results and Discussion

a) Results of Cycle 1

In Cycle 1, the researcher applied Magic Card media in teaching descriptive writing to ninth-grade students. The assessment results of students' writing show that most students still face difficulties in composing a well-structured descriptive text. The average score obtained by the students is 65, with several dominant issues. The analysis of the students' learning outcomes is as follows:

Score Category	Number of Learners (%)	Number of Learners
Score <65	10 %	3 Learners
Score =65	50 %	16 Learners
Score =70	20 %	3 Learners
Score >75	10%	3 Learners



Description:

50% of learners have an average score of 65.

10% of learners have a score below 65.

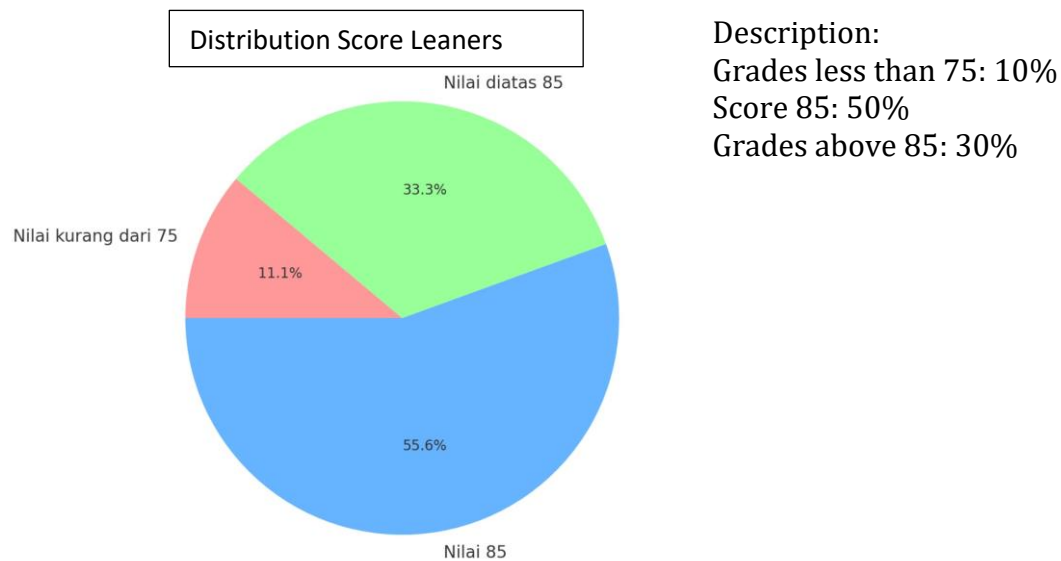
- a. Limited Vocabulary: Many learners still use limited and simple vocabulary, so the descriptions they make are less detailed and less interesting.
- b. Difficulty in Organizing Ideas: Learners had difficulty in organizing their ideas logically, resulting in less cohesive texts.
- c. Lack of Creativity: Learners tend to write descriptions that are monotonous and lack variety, without using their imagination to the fullest.

Although magic card media had been used, learners seemed to need more guidance and concrete examples to be able to utilize this media optimally.

b) Cycle 2 Results

After reflecting on the results of Cycle 1, some innovations were implemented in Cycle 2. The researcher added more guidance and examples, and encouraged learners to work in small groups before writing individually. The results of Cycle 2 showed a significant improvement in the quality of learners' writing:

Score Category	Number of Learners (%)	Number of Learners
Score <75	10 %	3 Learners
Score =85	50 %	16 Learners
Score=90	20 %	5 Learners
Score >95	20%	5 Learners



Conclusion

The application of Magic Card media in learning to write descriptive texts for Grade IX students showed positive results, although adjustments and innovations in teaching methods were needed. In Cycle 1, despite using the Magic Card media, students still experienced various difficulties, especially in terms of vocabulary, organization of ideas, and creativity. This was reflected in the average score of students who were still at 65, indicating that most students had not utilized this media optimally. After reflecting on the results of Cycle 1, adjustments to the teaching methods in Cycle 2, such as providing more detailed guidance, group work, and gradual practice, succeeded in significantly improving the quality of learners' descriptive writing. The average score of learners increased to 75, with clear improvements in vocabulary use, organization of ideas, and creativity in writing descriptive texts. The innovations applied in Cycle 2, such as the addition of concrete guidance, individual work, and gradual practice, proved effective in helping learners understand and utilize the Magic Card media better. These results show that with proper guidance and appropriate learning strategies, learners' description text writing skills can be significantly improved. Thus, the use of Magic Card media, if accompanied by appropriate teaching methods, is an effective solution in improving the writing skills of descriptive texts in grade IX students.

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