

THE EFFECT OF COOPERATIVE LEARNING MODEL ON STUDENTS WRITING DESCRIPTIVE TEXT ASSISTED BY PICTURES BASED MEDIA AT GRADE ELEVEN OF SMAN 5 TANJUNGBALAI IN 2025/2026 ACADEMIC YEAR

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ABSTRAK

This study aimed to investigate the effect of the Cooperative Learning model assisted by picture-based media on students' ability in writing descriptive texts. This research applied a quantitative method with a quasi-experimental design involving two groups, namely an experimental group and a control group. The experimental group was taught using the Cooperative Learning model assisted by picture-based media, while the control group was taught using a conventional teaching method. The data were collected through pre-test and post-test and assessed using a writing rubric covering content, organization, vocabulary, grammar, and mechanics. The data were then analyzed using an independent sample t-test to determine the significance of the difference between both groups. The results showed that the mean score of the experimental group was higher than that of the control group. The t-test result also indicated that there was a significant difference between the two groups at the 0.05 level of significance. This finding proves that the implementation of the Cooperative Learning model assisted by picture-based media can improve students' writing ability. In conclusion, the use of the Cooperative Learning model assisted by picture-based media has a significant effect on improving students' ability in writing descriptive texts, and it can be considered as an effective strategy in teaching writing.

Kata Kunci: Cooperative Learning, Picture-Based Media, Writing Descriptive Text.

INTRODUCTION

English is widely recognized as an international language that plays an important role in communication across countries. In the Indonesian educational context, English is taught as a compulsory subject, especially at the secondary school level. The main objective of learning English is not only to understand the language structure but also to develop students' ability to communicate ideas effectively, both in spoken and written forms. Among the four language skills, writing is considered one of the most challenging skills for students to master because it requires a complex process of thinking and organizing ideas.

Writing requires students to generate ideas, organize them logically, and express them using appropriate vocabulary and grammar. It is not only about producing sentences but also about conveying meaning clearly and effectively. In the learning process, students often need guidance and practice to develop their writing skills gradually. In particular, writing descriptive text is an essential part of English learning at the senior high school level. It aims to help students describe people, places, or objects clearly so that readers can easily imagine them.

Descriptive text also plays an important role in developing students' creativity and imagination. Through descriptive writing, students learn how to express details, use appropriate adjectives, and construct sentences that create a clear picture in the reader's mind. However, in reality, many students still face difficulties in writing descriptive texts.

Based on preliminary observations, students often have problems in developing ideas, organizing paragraphs, and using appropriate vocabulary and sentence structures. These difficulties make their writing less clear and less effective.

In addition, students often feel confused when they are asked to start writing. They may have ideas in their minds, but they do not know how to express them in written form. This condition shows that students need more support and guidance in the learning process, especially in generating ideas and organizing their writing. Without proper guidance and appropriate learning strategies, students may lose motivation and become less interested in writing activities.

One of the factors that contributes to these difficulties is the teaching method used in the classroom. Conventional teaching methods tend to be teacher-centered and provide limited opportunities for students to actively participate in the learning process. In such situations, students usually depend on the teacher's explanation and have fewer chances to explore their own ideas. As a result, students become less motivated and less engaged in writing activities. Therefore, it is important to apply an effective and student-centered learning model to improve students' writing ability. Cooperative learning is one of the instructional models that can be used to address this problem. This model encourages students to work together in small groups, share ideas, and support each other during the learning process. Through interaction and collaboration, students can exchange knowledge, give feedback, and improve their understanding. In addition, cooperative learning can also increase students' confidence because they are not working alone, but with their peers.

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In cooperative learning, students are given opportunities to actively participate in discussions and problem-solving activities. This active involvement helps students to better understand the material and develop their skills. Moreover, cooperative learning creates a more positive learning atmosphere where students feel more comfortable expressing their ideas. This condition is very important in writing activities, where students need confidence and creativity.

In addition to the learning model, the use of appropriate learning media also plays an important role in supporting students' learning. One of the effective media for teaching descriptive writing is picture-based media. Pictures can help students visualize objects more clearly, stimulate their imagination, and make it easier for them to express their ideas in written form. By using pictures, students can observe details and describe them more effectively.

Picture-based media also makes the learning process more interesting and enjoyable. When students are given visual materials, they tend to be more engaged and motivated to participate in the activity. This can reduce students' boredom and increase their interest in writing. As a result, students can produce better writing because they have clearer ideas and stronger motivation.

The integration of cooperative learning and picture-based media is expected to create a more engaging and meaningful learning environment. By working collaboratively and using visual prompts, students can generate ideas more easily and construct descriptive texts more effectively. This combination not only improves students' writing performance but also increases their motivation and participation in the learning process. Therefore, the use of both strategy and media is considered important in achieving better learning outcomes.

Based on the problems identified, students at SMA Negeri 5 Tanjung Balai still experience difficulties in writing descriptive texts, particularly in developing ideas, organizing paragraphs, and using appropriate vocabulary. In addition, cooperative learning has not been optimally implemented, and picture-based media have not been effectively utilized in teaching writing. These conditions indicate the need for an alternative teaching strategy that can improve students' writing ability.

Therefore, this study aims to investigate whether the use of the Cooperative Learning model assisted by picture-based media has a significant effect on students' writing descriptive texts. It is expected that the results of this study can provide useful insights for teachers in selecting appropriate teaching strategies and contribute to the improvement of students' writing skills.

In today's globalized world, English has become an essential means of communication in various fields such as education, technology, business, and international relations. The ability to use English effectively allows students to access a wider range of information and opportunities. Therefore, mastering English is not only important for academic purposes but also for students' future careers and global competitiveness. This makes English learning a crucial component in the education system, especially at the secondary school level.

Among the four language skills, writing plays a significant role in developing students' ability to express ideas in a structured and meaningful way. Writing is not only a productive skill but also a complex process that involves critical thinking, creativity, and language mastery. Students are required to organize their thoughts logically, choose appropriate vocabulary, and apply correct grammatical structures. However, many students still find writing to be a difficult and challenging task, particularly when they are asked to produce a complete and well-organized text.

In the context of descriptive text, students are expected to describe objects, places, or people in a clear and detailed manner. This requires not only language competence but also the ability to observe and imagine the subject being described. In reality, students often struggle to begin writing because they lack ideas or do not know how to develop them into paragraphs. As a result, their writing tends to be limited, unclear, and less engaging.

Previous studies have shown that the use of appropriate teaching strategies can significantly improve students' writing ability. Student-centered approaches are considered more effective because they actively involve students in the learning process. One of the approaches that has been widely recommended is Cooperative Learning, as proposed by Robert E. Slavin. This approach emphasizes collaboration among students, allowing them to learn from each other and develop their skills through interaction.

Furthermore, the use of visual media in teaching writing has also been proven to be effective. According to Andrew Wright, pictures can serve as a powerful tool to stimulate students' imagination and help them generate ideas more easily. By providing visual support, pictures enable students to better understand the topic and express their ideas in a more organized way.

Therefore, combining Cooperative Learning with picture-based media is expected to address the common problems faced by students in writing descriptive texts. This combination not only supports students cognitively but also increases their motivation and engagement during the learning process. It creates a more interactive classroom environment where students are encouraged to actively participate and collaborate with their peers.

Another important point observed in this study is the change in students' learning behavior during the teaching process. In the experimental group, students showed greater enthusiasm and willingness to participate in classroom activities. They were more engaged in discussing ideas, asking questions, and responding to their peers' opinions. This active participation contributed to a more dynamic and supportive learning atmosphere.

The collaborative activities also allowed students to learn from one another. Students who had better understanding were able to assist their peers, while those who had difficulties could receive immediate support within their groups. This interaction not only improved their comprehension but also reduced their anxiety in writing, as they did not feel isolated in the learning process. Such a condition is essential in developing students' confidence, especially in expressing ideas in a foreign language.

In addition, the presence of picture-based media helped students focus more on the topic given. Instead of spending too much time thinking about what to write, students could directly observe the pictures and begin describing them. This made the writing process more efficient and less stressful. Students were able to produce ideas more quickly and organize them into meaningful sentences and paragraphs.

Meanwhile, the limited interaction in the control group affected students' engagement during the lesson. The learning process tended to be more passive, and students had fewer opportunities to explore their ideas. As a result, their progress in writing was relatively slower and less noticeable compared to the experimental group.

These findings indicate that both instructional strategy and learning media play a crucial role in shaping students' learning outcomes. When students are actively involved and supported by appropriate media, they tend to achieve better results and show more positive attitudes toward learning.

In addition to the use of appropriate teaching strategies and media, the role of the teacher is also crucial in facilitating students' writing development. Teachers are expected to create a learning environment that encourages students to explore their ideas and express them freely without fear of making mistakes. In many classrooms, however, the teaching of writing is still focused on the final product rather than the process. Students are often asked to produce a text without sufficient guidance, which makes them feel confused and less confident in completing the task.

A process-oriented approach to writing can help students understand that writing is not an instant activity but a gradual process that involves planning, drafting, revising, and editing. When students are guided through these stages, they are more likely to produce better writing outcomes. In this context, collaborative learning can support the writing process by allowing students to discuss their ideas before writing and receive feedback from

their peers.

Furthermore, the challenges faced by students in writing descriptive texts are not only related to linguistic aspects but also to their lack of experience in observing and describing objects in detail. Many students tend to write general and limited descriptions because they do not have enough input or stimulation. This condition shows that students need concrete support to help them develop their ideas more effectively.

The use of picture-based media can address this issue by providing clear and specific visual input. When students are exposed to pictures, they can observe details such as shape, color, size, and other characteristics of the object. This helps them produce more specific and vivid descriptions. As stated by Andrew Wright, visual materials can make abstract ideas more concrete and easier to understand, especially for language learners.

In addition, combining Cooperative Learning with visual media not only supports cognitive development but also enhances students' social interaction. Students learn how to communicate their ideas, respect others' opinions, and work together to achieve a common goal. These skills are important not only for academic success but also for their personal development.

Considering these advantages, it is important to implement innovative teaching strategies that integrate both collaborative learning and appropriate media. This study focuses on examining how the combination of Cooperative Learning and picture-based media can improve students' writing descriptive texts, particularly in overcoming their difficulties in generating ideas and organizing them into a well-structured text.

METHOD

This study employed a quantitative approach with a quasi-experimental design. This design was chosen because it allows the researcher to examine the effect of a particular treatment on students' learning outcomes by comparing an experimental group and a control group. The research was conducted at SMA Negeri 5 Tanjung Balai, located in Tanjung Balai, North Sumatra, during the 2025/2026 academic year.

The population of this study consisted of all eleventh-grade students of SMA Negeri 5 Tanjung Balai. The sample was selected using a purposive sampling technique, in which two classes were chosen based on certain considerations such as similarity in ability and learning conditions. The total number of students involved in this study was 63. Class XI-2, consisting of 31 students, was assigned as the experimental group, while class XI-1, consisting of 32 students, served as the control group. Both groups were taught by the same English teacher to ensure consistency in the teaching process.

This research applied a pre-test and post-test control group design. Before the treatment, both groups were given a pre-test to measure their initial ability in writing descriptive texts. After that, the experimental group received treatment using the Cooperative Learning model assisted by picture-based media, while the control group was taught using a conventional teaching method. The treatment was conducted over several meetings following the regular class schedule. At the end of the treatment, a post-test was administered to both groups to measure students' improvement in writing descriptive texts.

The instrument used in this study was a writing test. Students were asked to write descriptive texts based on given topics. The pre-test topic was "Lapangan Pasir Tanjungbalai," while the post-test topic was "Pelabuhan Tanjungbalai Asahan." These topics were selected because they are familiar to the students, making it easier for them to generate ideas and express their thoughts.

Students' writing was assessed using a scoring rubric that covered five aspects, namely content, organization, vocabulary, grammar, and mechanics. Each aspect was evaluated to determine the overall quality of students' writing. The use of a rubric helped ensure that the assessment was systematic and consistent. In addition, the instrument was validated through content validity to ensure that it measured what it was intended to measure. Reliability was also maintained by applying the same scoring criteria for all students' work.

The data were collected through pre-test and post-test procedures in both groups. The scores obtained from these tests were then analyzed using an independent sample t-test. This statistical analysis was used to determine whether there was a significant difference between the experimental and control groups after the treatment. The level of significance used in this study was 0.05. If the t-value was higher than the t-table, it indicated that the alternative hypothesis (H1) was accepted and the null hypothesis (H0) was rejected.

In conducting the treatment, several teaching sessions were carried out in both the experimental and control groups. Each group received four meetings, excluding the pre-test and post-test sessions. The duration of each meeting was approximately 90 minutes.

In the experimental group, the teaching process was implemented using the Cooperative Learning model assisted by picture-based media. At the beginning of each meeting, the teacher introduced the topic and showed pictures related to the material. These pictures were used as visual stimuli to help students understand the context and generate initial ideas.

After that, students were divided into small groups consisting of four to five members. Each group was given a set of pictures and asked to discuss the objects shown. During the discussion, students shared their ideas, described the details of the pictures, and helped each other in finding appropriate vocabulary and sentence structures.

Next, students were asked to write a descriptive text based on the results of their group discussion. Although the discussion was conducted collaboratively, each student was required to write their own text individually. This was done to ensure that all students were actively involved and able to develop their own writing skills.

During the writing process, the teacher monitored each group, provided guidance when necessary, and gave feedback on students' work. At the end of the session, some students were asked to present or read their writing in front of the class, followed by feedback and discussion.

Meanwhile, in the control group, the teaching process was conducted using conventional methods. The teacher explained the material, provided examples of descriptive texts, and asked students to write individually without group discussion or the use of picture-based media. The interaction in this group was more limited, and students mainly relied on the teacher's explanation.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The results of this study were obtained from the pre-test and post-test scores of both the experimental and control groups. Before the treatment was conducted, the pre-test results showed that the students in both groups had relatively similar abilities in writing descriptive texts. Most of the students still faced difficulties in developing ideas, organizing paragraphs, and using appropriate vocabulary and grammar. This indicates that both groups started from a comparable level of writing ability.

After the treatment was given, there was a noticeable improvement in students' writing ability, particularly in the experimental group. The students who were taught using the

Cooperative Learning model assisted by picture-based media showed better performance compared to those in the control group. They were more able to generate ideas, organize their writing more systematically, and use more appropriate vocabulary and sentence structures. In addition, their writing became clearer and more detailed.

The improvement in the experimental group can be seen not only from the quality of their writing but also from their participation during the learning process. Students became more active in discussing topics with their group members, sharing ideas, and giving feedback to each other. This active involvement helped them understand the material better and express their ideas more confidently in written form.

The mean score of the experimental group in the post-test was higher than that of the control group. Based on the result of the independent sample t-test, it was found that the t-value was higher than the t-table at the 0.05 level of significance. This indicates that there was a statistically significant difference between the two groups. In other words, the use of the Cooperative Learning model assisted by picture-based media had a significant effect on students' ability in writing descriptive texts.

This finding is consistent with the theory of Robert E. Slavin, who states that Cooperative Learning can improve students' achievement through group interaction and collaboration. In this study, students in the experimental group were more actively involved in the learning process. They were encouraged to share ideas, discuss problems, and work together to complete tasks. This collaborative environment helped students build their confidence and improve their writing skills.

Furthermore, the use of picture-based media also contributed significantly to students' improvement. The pictures provided visual support that helped students understand the topic more easily. Students were able to observe details from the pictures and use them as a reference when writing. This made it easier for them to generate ideas and describe objects more clearly. This finding supports the opinion of Andrew Wright, who explains that pictures can stimulate students' imagination and make learning more meaningful.

On the other hand, students in the control group, who were taught using conventional methods, tended to be less active during the learning process. They mostly relied on the teacher's explanation and had limited opportunities to express their own ideas. As a result, their improvement in writing ability was not as significant as that of the experimental group. Their writing still showed weaknesses in organization, vocabulary use, and clarity of ideas.

In addition, the difference between the two groups also reflects the importance of using appropriate teaching strategies in the classroom. A student-centered approach, such as Cooperative Learning, allows students to be more involved in the learning process. When combined with appropriate media, such as pictures, it can create a more effective and engaging learning environment. This combination helps students not only understand the material better but also apply it in their writing.

Overall, the findings of this study indicate that the integration of Cooperative Learning and picture-based media is effective in improving students' writing ability, especially in descriptive texts. Students become more active, motivated, and confident in expressing their ideas. Therefore, this method can be considered as an effective alternative strategy in teaching writing at the senior high school level.

A closer examination of students' writing results also reveals improvement in each component of writing. In the experimental group, students showed better development in content, as their ideas became more relevant and detailed. They were able to provide clearer descriptions and include specific information related to the topic. This indicates that the use

of pictures helped students focus on what to write and expand their ideas more effectively.

In terms of organization, students in the experimental group were able to arrange their paragraphs more systematically. Their writing showed a clearer structure, including an appropriate identification and description. This improvement can be linked to the group discussions, where students exchanged ideas and organized their thoughts before writing individually.

Vocabulary usage also showed noticeable progress. Students began to use more varied and appropriate words to describe objects. Through collaboration, they were able to learn new vocabulary from their peers and apply it in their writing. This process made their texts more interesting and meaningful.

Grammar and sentence structure improved gradually as well. Although some errors were still found, students in the experimental group were able to construct sentences more accurately compared to their initial performance. The feedback given by the teacher during the learning process also contributed to this improvement, as students were able to recognize and correct their mistakes.

On the contrary, students in the control group showed only limited improvement in these aspects. Their writing often lacked detail, and the organization of ideas was still unclear. Vocabulary use remained simple, and grammatical errors were more frequent. This suggests that the conventional teaching method did not provide enough support for students to develop their writing skills effectively.

In addition, the difference in learning outcomes between the two groups highlights the importance of active learning. Students who are directly involved in the learning process tend to understand the material better and retain information longer. The use of Cooperative Learning encourages students to participate actively, while picture-based media provides concrete support that facilitates understanding.

Another important finding is related to students' motivation. Students in the experimental group appeared more interested and enthusiastic during the lessons. They were more willing to complete tasks and showed a positive attitude toward writing activities. This increased motivation played a significant role in improving their performance, as motivated students are more likely to put effort into their learning.

These findings strengthen the assumption that effective teaching strategies should not only focus on delivering material but also on engaging students in meaningful activities. By combining interaction, collaboration, and visual support, the learning process becomes more effective and enjoyable for students.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the study, it can be concluded that the use of the Cooperative Learning model assisted by picture-based media has a significant effect on students' ability in writing descriptive texts. This is proven by the improvement of students' post-test scores in the experimental group, which were higher than those in the control group. The statistical analysis also showed that the t-value was higher than the t-table at the 0.05 level of significance, indicating that the difference between the two groups was statistically significant.

The implementation of Cooperative Learning encouraged students to be more active and involved in the learning process. Through group discussions and collaboration, students were able to share ideas, exchange opinions, and support each other in completing writing tasks. This collaborative environment helped students improve their understanding and

develop their confidence in expressing ideas in written form.

In addition, the use of picture-based media played an important role in supporting students' writing ability. The pictures provided clear visual representations that helped students generate ideas more easily and organize their thoughts more systematically. As a result, students were able to produce descriptive texts with better quality in terms of content, organization, vocabulary, grammar, and mechanics.

Overall, the combination of Cooperative Learning and picture-based media created a more effective, engaging, and meaningful learning environment. Therefore, it can be concluded that this method is effective in improving students' writing descriptive text at the senior high school level.

In addition, the results of this study highlight that the success of teaching writing is not only determined by students' individual abilities but also by the learning approach used in the classroom. An interactive and student-centered approach can create better learning opportunities for students to explore and develop their ideas. When students are actively involved, they tend to understand the material more deeply and are able to apply it more effectively in their writing.

Moreover, the integration of appropriate learning media supports students in overcoming their difficulties, particularly in generating ideas and organizing them into a coherent text. Visual support such as pictures can reduce students' confusion and help them focus on the topic, making the writing process more manageable and meaningful.

These findings reinforce the importance of combining effective teaching strategies with suitable learning media in order to achieve optimal learning outcomes. By creating a supportive and engaging learning environment, students can gradually improve their writing ability and develop greater confidence in expressing their ideas in written form.

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