



Improving Reading and Writing Skills in Essay Writing through the Use of Comic Strips among 5th Grade Elementary School Students

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to support students' ability to read and write essays by utilizing comic strips in Indonesian language learning. This study employs the Classroom Action Research (CAR) method, using the Kemmis and McTaggart model. The study subjects were fifth-grade students at Pondok Benda 01 Elementary School, with data collected through tests, observations, and documentation. Data analysis was carried out in a descriptive, quantitative, and qualitative manner. The study was conducted in two cycles: Cycle I and Cycle II. The study's results showed an increase in students' reading and writing abilities, as evidenced by the comparison of the average percentage score in Cycle I, 41.37% (value range: 44-81), which increased to 100% (value range: 80-98) in Cycle II. The use of comic strip media in education has been proven to enhance students' reading and writing skills.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Language functions as a communication tool, enabling humans to interact in verbal or written form, conveying ideas, desires, and emotions (Devianty, 2017). Therefore, mastery of Language is a fundamental matter that every individual must study through formal and non-formal education (Aini & Nugraheni, 2021). Speaking skills refer to someone's ability to apply language (Widyantara & Rasna, 2020). In learning Indonesian, students used the four skills of speaking, listening, reading, and writing (Johan, 2020). Of the four skills, speaking, reading, and writing are sufficient for the Language.

Reading is an activity for capturing and understanding content, ideas, or expressed thoughts implied in a text, so that the reader is capable of understanding the meaning of the information conveyed by the author (Sukma & Puspita, 2023). Reading is also a thinking process that involves understanding, telling, and interpreting the meaning of symbols written, involving vision, movement of the eyes, inner dialogue, and memory (Harianto, 2020). Meanwhile, reading skills are the ability to read text correctly and effectively, so that one can catch the message contained therein (Putri et al., 2023). Reading skills are the main capital for students. With the ability, they can learn various knowledge, convey ideas, and express themselves (Suparlan, 2021). In addition to speaking skills, the next skill is writing. Writing is a skill that students in learning Indonesian must master, after they have control of the skills of listening, speaking, and reading (Pahrun, 2021). Writing cannot be separated from other aspects of the learning process faced by participants when learning at school (Fahmi, 2021). Writing also helps participants educate themselves to feel and appreciate aspects, strengthening their ability to understand or interpret, find solutions to problems faced, and compile experiences in a regular way (Widyantara & Rasna, 2020). Meanwhile, writing skills are also essential for students, besides skills in listening, speaking, and reading, both in the educational process and in life in society (Sahno, 2022).

Writing a text essay is one of the steps to increase reading and writing ability. One of the materials for learning Indonesian is a text essay. An essay is one of the types of work writing that conveys ideas and emotions by the writer cohesively and comprehensively (Musyawir & Loilatu, 2020). An essay is a simple early writing used as a step in the learning process of writing (Prasetyo et al., 2023). An essay is also interpreted as an arrangement of thoughts or expressing emotions presented through structured writing (Musyawir & Loilatu, 2020). An essay is a form of communication that involves a written explanation or depiction of an object in a detailed and in-depth manner, by the conditions, actually, of objects that have ever been experienced (Chandra et al., 2022). Essays play an important role in the practice of reading and writing skills for students, because through activities, they can develop ideas, express ideas, and strengthen the language skills required throughout their lessons, especially in Indonesian lessons.

For developing skills in reading and writing, students need to understand and practice them, one of which involves writing a text essay, which has become an important part of learning Indonesian. One of the reasons the ability to write is still low is that they have not yet understood the method to write an essay correctly. Participants are not yet fully ready to write essays, especially when it comes to finding a suitable idea for the theme that will be described. In addition, they often feel confused and in need, for example, formerly. For trigger thinking, they. (Qadaria et al., 2023). One of the main problems in learning to write an essay in Indonesian is the difficulty for students in translating their thoughts into writing. Difficulties often occur, including word choice, determination of theme, and development framework

(Sahno, 2022). The ability to write an essay must be kept sharpened sustainably, because disturbance or difficulty will be seen in poor and unrelated writing results that are readable. This shows that the inability to control skills written since early can cause delays in the learning process at school (Utari & Rambe, 2023). The low level of writing ability in students is also caused by a lack of habit of writing and a lack of use of tools to help teaching, causing students to be too passive and inclined to be passive in the learning process. (Aziezah, 2022).

The results of observations at SDN Pondok Benda 01 found that the interest of reading and writing students in grade 5 is still classified as low, especially in writing text essays. Many students feel difficulties and lack motivation to write due to a lack of learning media interesting and engaging learning media. However, the reality is that interest-read and write Indonesian children are still classified as low. Problems with literacy have become an important issue that needs attention from Indonesian society. This is supported by PISA data, which shows that the ability of Indonesian children to read is still below standards set by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) (Nabila et al., 2024). Indonesia ranks 62nd out of 70 countries, among the 10 countries with the lowest literacy rates (Hijjayati et al., 2022). In addition, the results of the survey from the Most Literate Nation in the World 2016 revealed that interest in reading in Indonesian society is very low, if compared to other countries (Novelita et al., 2023).

Therefore, the required tool helps various learning media to awaken students' interest and increase their interest in reading and writing. One of them is using learning media. Learning media convey a message or information to the student as the recipient. Some media are also capable of processing messages and responses from students, thus being known as interactive media (Zulfitria & Kartikasari, 2018). Learning media in the form of comics is thought to be able to increase students' interest in reading and writing essays. Comics are a type of cartoon that depicts characters and presents a story sequentially through interconnected images, and are created to entertain readers (Putra & Milenia, 2021, in Putri & Sari, 2025). The media used are comic strips. Comic strips are a type of comic consisting of several panels, where the story involves several characters with dialogue within it (Mahardhika et al., 2022). However, research on the use of comic strips in writing essay learning in elementary schools is still minimal and has not been studied in depth. Learning media comic strip contains a picture or a series of images that form A story (Pritandhari, 2016). By utilizing comic strip media, students can more easily understand the structure of a story and develop their ideas creatively when writing essays. Based on the description, the formulation problem in the study is: Can comic strip media increase the ability of students to read and write in a text essay?

This study aims to increase the ability of students in the 5th grade to read and write by using comic strips to write text essays. Comic strips are suspected to help students control the content of their stories visually and easily, allowing them to develop ideas and compile essays with more interesting and creative content. Therefore, the researcher will conduct research entitled "Increase Reading and Writing Skills with Writing Composition Text Using Learning Media Comic Strips for Students in Grade 5 Elementary School."

2. METHODS

Research methods are procedures systematically carried out scientifically to obtain relevant data and achieve a specific objective. The type of research used in these studies is Classroom Action Research (CAR), which is a method that involves activities conducted within the classroom to address problems identified by teachers, thereby improving quality and

outcomes. The study also applies new methods to help improve the quality and results. Place implementation study: This is SDN Pondok Benda 01. As for the sample research used, it is a student class from V SDN Pondok Benda 01. With the subject 'Study', there are 29 students, comprising 14 boys and 15 girls. In this study, researchers use instrument evaluation in the form of module learning, Instrument Assessment, and LKPD.

Data collection techniques used include tests, observations, and documentation. Test write used for known improvement ability write student before and after actions, the instruments used in the test. This is a grid test that contains indicators that you want to achieve. Question test written composition to measure students' skills in compiling a text essay, to evaluate the results, researchers use a rubric evaluation writing that includes aspects of content, text structure, language, and students' creativity. Observation was done to observe the activities and involvement of students during the learning process. The instruments used are sheet observation, taking notes on the behavior of students, including activeness, enthusiasm, cooperation, and how students use learning media. The following documentation was used to gather proof of the physical activity learning, such as student essays and photos of the activity.

As for the design, his research used Kemmis and Mc. Taggart's research model is a result of Kurt Lewin's model. There are four components in every cycle of this model, namely planning, action, observation, and reflection. Each cycle is done with adjustments to achieve the desired target. If a student still has not yet reached cycle 1, then the student's ability to write a text essay is still not according to expected results, so cycle II must be implemented, and so on. Cycle. This will stop when the student's ability to write a text essay is marked. The average is 75%. The system here is a spiral system, where the entire system is continuous. An illustration of this model is shown in the figure below.

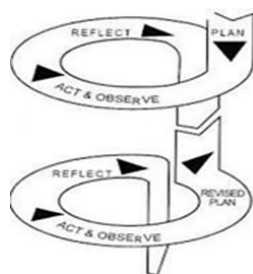


Figure 1. PTK Cycle Model Kemmis & Mc.Taggart

This Classroom Action Research (CAR) uses the Kemmis & McTaggart method. Each cycle has four stages: planning, implementing actions, observing, and reflecting (Farhana et al., 2019).

- a. Planning is the process of designing actions to be taken as a solution to increase the ability of students to write text essays. Activities: This is done after analyzing problems and identifying the root cause. At this stage this, researcher designing Plan Implementation Learning (RPP) with integrating comic strip media, preparing material learning, composing instrument study in the form of rubric evaluation writing that includes aspect content, structure text, language, and creativity, as well as prepare the worksheet Students (LKPD) and worksheets observation For observe activity student during learning ongoing.

- b. Implementation action is a teacher's process in operating step repair, improvement, or directed modification to reach goals that have been set. Stage: This is the implementation of plans that have been designed previously. In the core activity, the teacher introduced comic strip media to the students. Students, guiding students to identify elements of a story in a comic strip, explaining the structure of text essays, and guiding students to train in writing text essays based on comic strips that have been observed. Learning ended with an activity closing, where students presented their results in an essay they and the teacher gave a reflection and strengthened the ongoing learning.
- c. Observation or observation done to monitor implementation actions taken for students. Activities are ongoing during the learning process to obtain data directly related to implementation action. Data covering the results of students' work is collected in the form of a text essay, documentation of learning activities through photos and notes, and behavior-relevant observations of students with an objective study.
- d. Reflection is a process of evaluating, examining, and considering the way actions, as well as their impact on the process and results of learning. From the results reflection, it can be determined that steps can be taken to overcome problems faced by teachers and students during learning. At this stage, the analysis results test write student based on rubric assessment, evaluation, and improvement of writing ability from before and after actions, as well as observational data analysis about activities and involvement of students. Based on the results, the reflection said that it was determined whether the cycle needs to be continued or if the criteria for success have been met, at the same time designing improvements for the cycle, if required.

Criteria for success action, minimum learning, or KKM, namely with a score of 70. Therefore, it is said that students can succeed in writing a text essay when they reach a mark of 70 or at least meet the criteria for a good grade. Determination in determining the ability to write a text essay, students, namely, with adapted marks and average reading and writing abilities in categories below :

Table 1. Categorization Ability Writing Composition Text

Criteria	Range
Very well	80-100
Good	66- 79
Enough	56- 65
Not enough	40- 55
Not enough	<40

Participant education is said to be complete if they fulfill the minimum score of 70. Then, the class is also said to have passed when 75% of the students have completed it. As for the formula value completeness, namely :

$$\text{Completion} = \frac{\sum \text{students who completed}}{\sum \text{all student}}$$

If the indicator This Already can be achieved, then the cycle will stop, and the analysis results can be studied.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1. Results

The results of this study were obtained from an action research project conducted in Grade V of Pondok Benda 01 Elementary School, utilizing comic strips as a learning medium. This research was conducted in two cycles, each consisting of a single meeting.

3.1.1 Results of Cycle I Actions

In cycle I, learning to write essays using comic strips was introduced and implemented. Based on observations, "students appeared enthusiastic and interested in the learning media used because of its attractive appearance and attractive visuals." However, evaluation results showed that many students still struggled to organize ideas into complete and logical paragraphs. Some students were also unable to effectively align the essay content with the flow of the comic strips. Additionally, time management during the lesson was suboptimal, resulting in some students not having sufficient time to complete their essays.



Figure 2. Learning Media "Comic Strip"

3.1.2 Results of Cycle II Actions

Based on the reflections from Cycle I, the researcher made improvements to the lesson plan in Cycle II by adding examples of compositions that matched the comic images, preparing more structured student worksheets (LKPD), and refining time management strategies. The researcher also provided individual guidance to students experiencing difficulties.

In cycle II, "students appeared to have a better understanding of the steps for writing essays based on comic strips." Evaluation results showed that most students were able to construct coherent paragraphs, with more focused ideas and a wider range of vocabulary. The approach of using essay outlines significantly assisted students in composing their texts, and the provision of individual guidance made students more confident and active. Time management was also improved, allowing almost all students to complete their writing assignments.

3.1.3 Student Learning Outcomes Data

The data on student learning outcomes in the Pre-Cycle, Cycle I, and Cycle II are as follows:

Table 2. Results of Students' Reading and Writing Skills

No.	Indicator	Pre Cycle	Cycle 1	Cycle 2
1.	Students Complete	3	12	29
2.	Students Not Yet Completed	26	17	0
3.	Total Score	1590	1932	2699
4.	Highest Score	80	81	98
5.	Lowest Score	40	44	80
6.	Average value	54.82759	66.62069	93.06897
7.	Completion Percentage	10.34%	41.37%	100%
8.	Percentage of Incompleteness	89.65%	58.62%	0%

Table 2 presents the results of the reading and writing skills in Cycle I. Overall, the results of Cycle I are still incomplete, as the percentage completion index has only reached 41.37%.

Table 3. Categories of Students' Reading and Writing Ability

Cycle	Average score	Category
Pre Cycle	10.34%	Very Low
Cycle I	41.37%	Low
Cycle II	100%	Tall

The table above provides information indicating that students' reading and writing skills improved from Cycle I to Cycle II after the implementation of the comic strip learning media, specifically from 41.37% initially to 100%. This indicates that when Cycle I was implemented, there were still many areas that had not been achieved and required improvements to help students enhance their reading and writing skills, aligning with the success index. Therefore, the researcher then conducted cycle II. In this second cycle, students' reading and writing skills experienced an overall increase, reaching 100% or the high category. It can be said that students have achieved the indicators of success for the action, making the entire process in Cycle II successful. Additionally, students' reading and writing skills have continued to increase from initially low to a high category.

3.2 Discussion

3.2.1 Effectiveness of Comic Strip Media in Learning

The results of the study showed that comic strip media was proven effective in improving the reading and writing skills of fifth-grade students of Pondok Benda 01 Elementary School. The increase in the percentage of completion from 10.34% in the pre-cycle to 100% in the second cycle showed a significant impact on learning. The effectiveness of this media can be explained through three main aspects: attractive visualizations help students understand the

storyline more easily, the sequential strip format facilitates understanding of logical story structures, and attractive visual stimuli increase students' motivation and enthusiasm in learning to write. The learning approach, which utilized essay outlines in the second cycle, also made a significant contribution, helping students organize their ideas systematically and overcome difficulties in composing complete and logical paragraphs.

The improvement in students' abilities from cycle I to cycle II indicates that improvements in learning methods have a positive impact, with more intensive individual guidance helping students who are experiencing difficulties. This is reflected in the increase in students' lowest scores, which rose from 44 in cycle I to 80 in cycle II. The results of this study are in line with the findings of Pratiwi (2018) who stated that strip-shaped media designs facilitate students in understanding the storyline and developing ideas independently, as well as research by Lenwening (2023) which showed an increase in the percentage of learning outcomes from 48% in cycle 1 to 84% in cycle 2, proving that comic strips facilitate understanding story structure and the development of creative ideas in Indonesian language learning.

3.2.2 Implications and Limitations of the Study

This research has significant practical implications for Indonesian language learning in elementary schools, demonstrating that comic strips can be an effective alternative learning medium for improving students' reading and writing skills. Implementing this medium requires careful planning, particularly in terms of preparing visual materials that align with learning objectives, effective time management, and providing intensive individual guidance to students who are experiencing difficulties. The approach of using an outline before writing has been shown to help students organize ideas systematically and produce more structured essays.

Although this study yielded positive results, several limitations should be noted. First, the suboptimal time management in cycle I demonstrates the importance of careful planning in implementing comic strip media. Second, this study was conducted in only one class at one school, so the generalizability of the results should be interpreted with caution. Third, the use of comic strips requires more intensive preparation from the teacher in preparing appropriate visual materials. Thus, it can be concluded that comic strips are effective in improving students' reading and writing skills, but their implementation requires careful planning and continuous improvement to achieve optimal results.

4. CONCLUSION

Based on the research results, it can be concluded that the use of comic strip media in learning has succeeded in improving the literacy skills of fifth-grade students in writing essays in Indonesian subjects. This can be seen from the results in the first cycle, which showed a percentage of 41.37% (value range 44-81), then increased to 100% (value range 80-98) in the second cycle, or from the low category to the high category. Additionally, students' literacy skills increased by 58.63% from Cycle I to Cycle II. Thus, the application of comic strip media has been proven to improve students' literacy skills in the Indonesian language learning process.

Teachers are encouraged to utilize this comic strip learning medium creatively and contextually in Indonesian language learning. Not only does it engage students, but it can also facilitate idea development, clarify storylines, and help them understand the structure and content of written texts. Teachers can also involve students in creating simple comic strips as part of an active and enjoyable learning experience.

Similar research should be conducted at different grade levels or school levels to determine the effectiveness of this media in various learning environments. Furthermore, other visual media, such as infographics and storyboards, should be developed. A board or simple animation can be a relevant alternative. Quantitative research can also be conducted to obtain more measurable data and broader generalizations regarding the impact of visual media use on students' literacy skills.

5. AUTHORS' NOTE

The authors declare that there are no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this article and confirm that it is free from plagiarism.

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