

Enhancing Descriptive Writing Skills of Tenth-Grade Students at Pondok Pesantren Syariful Hidayah: A Material Development Approach

Cici Arina Siregar¹, Anna Leli Harahap^{2*}, Shopiah Anggraini Rambe³, Jaka Jaya⁴, Fatimah Siregar⁵

^{1,2,3,4,5}FKIP, English Education Study Program, Al-Washliyah University

Abstrak

Penelitian ini berfokus pada pengembangan bahan ajar yang bertujuan untuk meningkatkan keterampilan menulis deskriptif siswa kelas sepuluh di Pondok Pesantren Syariful Hidayah. Penelitian ini dilatarbelakangi oleh tantangan yang dihadapi siswa, seperti kesulitan dalam mengembangkan ide, keterbatasan kosakata, dan kebingungan dalam penggunaan tata bahasa, yang menghambat kemampuan mereka dalam menghasilkan teks yang koheren dan padu. Analisis kebutuhan dilakukan melalui survei dan wawancara dengan guru untuk mengidentifikasi kesenjangan belajar yang spesifik. Bahan ajar yang dikembangkan mengintegrasikan pendekatan ilmiah, meliputi aktivitas pra-menulis, latihan pengembangan kosakata, dan tugas-tugas tata bahasa yang dirancang sesuai dengan minat dan kebutuhan belajar siswa.

Implementasi bahan ajar yang disesuaikan ini di kelas menunjukkan peningkatan yang signifikan dalam performa menulis siswa. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan adanya peningkatan sebesar 35% dalam kemampuan siswa untuk mengatur dan mengembangkan teks deskriptif, dengan umpan balik yang menunjukkan bahwa bahan ajar tersebut menarik dan memberikan dukungan yang jelas, sehingga meningkatkan kepercayaan diri dan motivasi siswa. Meskipun intervensi ini terbukti berhasil, beberapa siswa dengan dasar bahasa yang lebih lemah memerlukan dukungan tambahan dalam tata bahasa. Penelitian selanjutnya dapat mengeksplorasi integrasi sumber daya tambahan, seperti bimbingan teman sebaya dan aplikasi pembelajaran digital, untuk membantu siswa ini. Studi ini menyoroti pentingnya bahan ajar yang disesuaikan dengan tantangan spesifik siswa, yang berkontribusi pada hasil menulis yang lebih baik dan efektivitas pengajaran bahasa secara keseluruhan.

Kata Kunci: menulis deskriptif, bahan ajar, dukungan tata bahasa, pengembangan kosakata.

Abstract

This research focuses on the development of instructional materials aimed at improving the descriptive writing skills of tenth-grade students at Pondok Pesantren Syariful Hidayah. The study was motivated by the observed challenges these students face, including difficulties in idea generation, limited vocabulary, and confusion with grammar, which impede their ability to produce coherent and cohesive texts. A needs analysis was conducted through surveys and teacher interviews to pinpoint specific learning gaps. The developed materials incorporated a scientific approach, featuring pre-writing activities, vocabulary-building exercises, and grammar-focused tasks designed to align with students' interests and learning needs.

The implementation of these customized materials in the classroom led to a noticeable enhancement in students' writing performance. Results indicated a 35% improvement in students' ability to organize and develop descriptive texts, with feedback suggesting that the materials were engaging and provided clear support, boosting students' confidence and motivation. Although the intervention proved largely successful, some students with weaker language foundations required additional grammar support. Future research could explore the integration of supplementary resources, such as peer tutoring and digital learning aids, to further assist these learners. The study highlights the importance of tailored teaching materials that address students' specific challenges, contributing to better writing outcomes and overall language instruction effectiveness.

Keywords: descriptive writing, instructional materials, grammar support, vocabulary development.

1. INTRODUCTION

Effective communication is not solely reliant on spoken language. While speaking is often seen as the primary mode of communication, written language is equally crucial in conveying messages and ideas. In contemporary society, written communication permeates everyday life, from emails and text messages to social media posts and blogs. Thus, the ability to write well is essential for both academic and professional success. Writing skills are increasingly becoming important, not only for communication but also as a tool for learning and reflection. Raimes (1983) emphasizes that writing helps reinforce students' grammatical understanding, vocabulary acquisition, and idiomatic expressions, all while providing opportunities for learners to explore new ways to express their thoughts.

However, writing is often regarded as one of the most challenging skills for language learners to master. Unlike speaking, writing demands a higher level of organization, coherence, and control over various linguistic

elements, such as grammar, sentence structure, punctuation, and spelling. Bell and Burnaby (1989) argue that writing is a complex activity because it requires a writer to manage content, format, and structure while paying attention to vocabulary and accuracy in language use. Students must also develop the ability to organize their ideas logically and cohesively, which can be particularly difficult for those at the early stages of language acquisition.

In Indonesia, English is introduced at the senior high school level, where students are expected to produce various written texts, such as descriptive, recount, and narrative essays. However, many students face significant challenges in writing effectively. At Pondok Pesantren Syariful Hidayah, for instance, students in the tenth grade have been observed to struggle with key writing skills. They face difficulties in generating ideas, often unsure of how to begin or continue writing a text. Additionally, many students lack the necessary vocabulary to express their thoughts clearly and are often confused by the grammatical structures they are required to use. These challenges hinder their ability to produce coherent and grammatically correct written texts, leading to frustration and low motivation to improve their writing.

To overcome these difficulties, the development of engaging and relevant materials tailored to students' needs is crucial. Materials that cater to learners' interests and linguistic requirements can help motivate students and improve their writing skills. According to Tomlinson (2011), effective materials should not only meet the learners' needs but also encourage active engagement with the content, thereby fostering a positive learning experience. In the case of Pondok Pesantren Syariful Hidayah, appropriate writing materials are needed to help students develop their ability to write descriptive texts. These materials should be designed to address the common issues faced by students, such as difficulty in idea development, lack of vocabulary, and issues with grammar and sentence construction.

This study aims to develop writing materials that can effectively address the challenges faced by tenth-grade students at Pondok Pesantren Syariful Hidayah. By focusing on the development of descriptive text writing, this research will explore the needs and characteristics of the learners, designing materials that align with their interests and language development needs. As noted by Richards and Schmidt (2013), well-designed materials can enhance students' learning experiences by providing the necessary support to bridge the gap between language theory and practical application. The goal of this research is to improve students' writing competence, thereby contributing to the overall effectiveness of English language instruction at the institution.

2. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results of this study are centered around the analysis of the needs of tenth-grade students at Pondok Pesantren Syariful Hidayah and the development of suitable writing materials aimed at improving their descriptive text writing skills. The findings were derived from a combination of observations, interviews with teachers and students, and assessments of student performance in writing tasks. This section discusses the outcomes in detail, focusing on the learners' needs, the effectiveness of the developed materials, and their impact on students' writing skills.

1. Learners' Needs Analysis

The needs analysis revealed that students at Pondok Pesantren Syariful Hidayah face several challenges when writing descriptive texts. Firstly, they struggle to generate and organize ideas, which often leads to incomplete or disorganized writing. Students expressed difficulty in knowing how to start a piece of writing and how to maintain coherence throughout their work. Secondly, a significant number of students cited a lack of vocabulary as a major obstacle, impacting their ability to convey their thoughts clearly and effectively. Lastly, issues with grammar usage were prevalent, with students frequently making mistakes in sentence structure, verb tense agreement, and punctuation.

The input from teachers corroborated these findings, as they noted that existing materials used in class, such as basic worksheets (LKS), did not adequately support the development of comprehensive writing skills. Teachers reported that students often became disengaged due to repetitive and uninspiring exercises that failed to challenge their creativity or build their confidence in writing.

2. Development of Writing Materials

Based on the needs analysis, the writing materials were developed to include a variety of activities aimed at addressing the identified problems. These materials incorporated brainstorming exercises to help students organize their thoughts before writing. Vocabulary-building activities were integrated to expand students' word choices, featuring visual aids, thematic word banks, and synonym/antonym exercises. Additionally, grammar practice was embedded through contextual writing tasks, providing students with the opportunity to apply grammatical rules in meaningful ways.

A key aspect of the new materials was the inclusion of interactive and collaborative activities that encouraged peer feedback and group discussions. According to Tomlinson (2011), engaging and relevant materials are critical to maintaining learner interest and promoting active participation. These elements were designed to foster a more interactive learning environment, enabling students to learn from their peers and enhance their writing skills collectively.

3. Effectiveness of the Developed Materials

The implementation of the developed materials showed a marked improvement in students' writing performance. Pre- and post-intervention assessments were conducted to measure changes in writing ability. The results indicated that students demonstrated greater ease in developing their ideas and producing more coherent texts. The use of vocabulary-building activities resulted in richer and more varied word usage, while grammar-focused exercises helped reduce common errors. Teachers observed that students displayed more confidence when tasked with writing descriptive texts, which was attributed to the structured yet creative approach of the new materials.

Students' feedback further reinforced these findings. Many expressed that the new materials were more engaging and allowed them to practice writing in a way that felt relevant to their experiences and interests. Collaborative activities were highlighted as particularly helpful, as students felt more motivated when working with peers and receiving constructive feedback. This aligns with Vygotsky's (1978) theory of social interaction in learning, which suggests that learners benefit from collaborative environments that encourage active participation and the exchange of ideas.

4. Discussion of Challenges and Recommendations

While the results were largely positive, some challenges remained. Students with very limited vocabulary and those who struggled significantly with grammar needed additional support outside the main lessons. It was noted that supplementary one-on-one tutoring or targeted practice sessions could further aid these learners. Teachers also recommended the inclusion of multimedia elements, such as instructional videos and interactive online tools, to provide a more diverse learning experience.

Overall, the study highlighted the importance of tailoring materials to students' needs and creating an environment where writing is viewed as an engaging and manageable task. The success of the developed materials emphasizes that with well-designed resources, students can make significant progress in their writing skills, ultimately building their confidence and competence in the language.

In conclusion, the development of customized writing materials tailored to the needs of tenth-grade students at Pondok Pesantren Syariful Hidayah proved effective in enhancing their writing skills. The results reinforce the importance of creating materials that address specific learner challenges, align with their interests, and provide structured, scaffolded support. This aligns with Richards and Schmidt's (2013) and Tomlinson's (2011) views on effective material development, contributing valuable insights into best practices for writing instruction in similar educational contexts.

3. CONCLUSION

This study set out to identify the writing challenges faced by tenth-grade students at Pondok Pesantren Syariful Hidayah and to develop suitable materials to enhance their ability to write descriptive texts. The findings revealed that students struggled primarily with generating ideas, maintaining coherence, using an adequate range of vocabulary, and applying correct grammar. Existing materials used in the classroom were found to be insufficiently engaging and not tailored to the specific needs of the students, contributing to low motivation and limited progress in writing skills.

The development and implementation of customized writing materials effectively addressed these issues by incorporating a range of activities that supported idea generation, vocabulary expansion, and grammar practice. The interactive and collaborative elements of the new materials further engaged students, promoting a more positive and active learning experience. The results showed notable improvements in students' writing performance, with many demonstrating enhanced confidence and competence in creating descriptive texts. Teachers also observed increased student motivation and participation, reinforcing the value of materials that are both contextually relevant and stimulating.

Despite these positive outcomes, the study acknowledged certain challenges, such as the need for additional support for students with particularly limited language skills. Recommendations included supplementary tutoring and incorporating multimedia resources to further enrich the learning experience.

In conclusion, this research underscores the importance of designing writing materials that align with students' learning needs and interests. By adopting a structured and interactive approach, educators can significantly improve students' writing skills and foster an environment that encourages continuous learning and development. The findings of this study can serve as a model for other educational institutions aiming to enhance writing instruction through the use of customized teaching materials.

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