

The Effectiveness of Using Picture Series Media on Students' Writing Narrative Text

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Abstract: Developing writing skills is an important objective in English language learning because it enables students to express ideas, organize information, and communicate effectively through written texts. Nevertheless, many junior high school students encounter difficulties in writing narrative texts, particularly in generating ideas, arranging story events logically, and constructing complete narrative structures. This study investigated the effectiveness of Picture Series Media in improving the narrative writing ability of eighth-grade students at SMPN 4 Monta. The research adopted a quantitative method using a true experimental pre-test–post-test control group design. 41 students participated in the study, comprising 21 students in the experimental group and 20 students in the control group. Students' writing ability was assessed through narrative writing tests, and the data were analyzed using descriptive statistics together with the Shapiro–Wilk normality test, Levene's homogeneity test, paired samples t-test, and independent samples t-test. The analysis revealed that students who learned through Picture Series Media achieved higher narrative writing scores than those who received conventional instruction. Greater improvement was also observed in students' ability to develop the orientation, complication, and resolution of narrative texts. The independent samples t-test showed a significant difference between the two groups ($t = 3.604$, $p < 0.001$). These findings demonstrate that Picture Series Media is an effective instructional medium for improving students' narrative writing ability.

Keywords: *Narrative writing, Picture Series Media; Writing ability*

1. INTRODUCTION

Writing proficiency constitutes a fundamental component of English language learning, particularly in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) contexts, as it enables learners to communicate ideas, experiences, opinions, and information through written language (Kadhim & Kamil, 2024; Sari, 2022). Through writing, learners are required not only to convey meaning but also to employ appropriate linguistic structures to ensure that their intended messages can be understood effectively. Producing meaningful written discourse requires the integration of various language components, including grammar, vocabulary, punctuation, and text organization (Baghdadi & Ouidani, 2022). Consequently, writing is widely recognized as a complex language skill that involves both linguistic knowledge and cognitive processes (Khudaverdiyeva, 2025). Learners need to generate ideas, select appropriate vocabulary, establish relationships among ideas, and organize information into coherent written texts. In this regard, writing proficiency serves as an important indicator of students' overall language competence because it reflects their ability to use English to communicate

ideas in an organized and meaningful manner (Paz, 2021). Therefore, the development of writing competence remains an essential objective of English language teaching and learning (Phothongsunan, 2024).

The complexity of writing is also associated with the cognitive processes involved in producing written discourse. Unlike receptive skills such as listening and reading, writing requires learners to actively generate and transform ideas into an organized linguistic form. Effective writing involves a recursive process of planning, drafting, revising, and editing, through which learners develop, evaluate, and refine their written work. (Siddiqui, Ahamed, Chowdhury, Mishu, & Monira, 2023). During this process, students are expected to manage both the content of their writing and the linguistic resources required to express it appropriately. Such demands can become particularly challenging for EFL learners who have limited linguistic resources and insufficient experience in organizing ideas in English. Călinescu, (2024) emphasizes that writing represents one of the most demanding language skills because learners must simultaneously manage ideas, language, and textual organization. Therefore, effective writing instruction requires appropriate pedagogical support that enables students to overcome these linguistic and cognitive challenges. Ramasari, (2021) found that the writing warm-ups strategy was effective in improving students' writing skills. This finding indicates that appropriate instructional strategies can support students in developing their writing performance.

One genre that provides an important context for developing students' writing competence is narrative text. Narrative text is commonly taught in junior high school English instruction because it provides learners with opportunities to communicate stories through a sequence of related events (Nabella & Rini, 2023). Narrative writing also encourages students to utilize imagination and creativity when developing fictional stories or representing experiences through written language (Mas'amah, Koriatin, Mascita, & Gloriani, 2024). Through narrative writing activities, students learn not only to express ideas but also to establish relationships among characters, settings, conflicts, and events. This makes narrative writing a potentially meaningful context for developing students' ability to organize information and communicate ideas coherently. Furthermore, narrative texts allow learners to engage with language through contextualized events rather than isolated sentences, thereby providing opportunities for students to apply their linguistic knowledge in meaningful written communication (Kamila & Wahyudi, 2025).

The effectiveness of narrative writing is closely related to students' understanding of its generic structure. Narrative texts are generally organized into three principal stages: orientation, complication, and resolution (Kurniawan, 2024). The orientation introduces the characters, setting, and background of the story; the complication presents the conflict or problem encountered by the characters; and the resolution describes the outcome or solution to the conflict. These structural components provide a framework through which individual events can be connected into a meaningful and coherent narrative. Consequently, students' ability to recognize and appropriately construct these stages is essential to producing complete narrative texts. When students understand how each component functions and how the components are related, they are better able to develop their ideas systematically and arrange story events in a logical sequence. Conversely, insufficient understanding of narrative structure may result in incomplete stories, abrupt transitions, or narratives in which the relationship among events is unclear (Anggraeni, Sunendar, & Cahyani, 2024).

Ideally, junior high school students are expected to construct narrative texts in which orientation, complication, and resolution are presented clearly and coherently. The orientation should establish the essential elements of the story, including its characters and setting, so that readers can understand the context of subsequent events (Wongsasawat & Waewchimplee, 2025). The complication should develop a logical and meaningful conflict that advances the story, while the resolution should appropriately conclude the conflict and provide a satisfactory ending (Nurhayati, 2024). In addition, students are expected to organize events chronologically and establish logical connections between one event and another (Rosalina, Nugraha, Guntur, Fiana, Hakim, & Hidayatullah., 2025). Achievement of these competencies indicates that students are able to apply their knowledge of narrative structure to the production of coherent and meaningful written texts (Rajendra & Kaur, 2022). Such competence represents an important expected outcome of narrative writing instruction at the junior high school level.

In actual classroom contexts, however, students do not always demonstrate the expected level of competence in constructing narrative texts. Many students encounter difficulties when initiating a story, developing the conflict, and determining an appropriate resolution. Some students produce narratives that contain only an orientation without sufficiently developing the complication, whereas others introduce a conflict but conclude the story abruptly without a clear resolution. Difficulties in arranging events chronologically may also result in narratives that lack coherence and logical progression. These problems suggest that students' difficulties are not limited to grammatical or lexical accuracy but also involve their ability to organize ideas according to the structural conventions of narrative texts. Al-Jarf, (2026)notes that students continue to experience difficulties in maintaining coherence and organizing story events systematically in narrative writing. Therefore, strengthening students' understanding and application of narrative structure represents an important consideration in writing instruction.

In addition to organizational difficulties, students may experience challenges in generating ideas and translating those ideas into English. Limited vocabulary, inappropriate word choice, and spelling difficulties can constrain students' ability to elaborate their ideas and develop a complete story. When students are required to compose a narrative without sufficient contextual support, they may spend considerable cognitive effort determining what to write, how to develop the sequence of events, and how to express those events in English. These difficulties can subsequently result in short, incomplete, and poorly organized narratives. Rofi, (2022) identified students' difficulty in organizing ideas and arranging story events in a logical sequence as an important problem in narrative writing. Such findings highlight the need for instructional approaches that provide students with concrete support during the processes of generating, developing, and organizing ideas.

The instructional environment and the use of learning media may also influence students' ability to address these challenges. In some classroom settings, writing instruction continues to rely heavily on conventional practices in which teachers explain writing materials verbally and students are subsequently instructed to compose texts independently. Although such practices can provide students with conceptual information, they may offer limited assistance when students are required to visualize events, generate story ideas, and determine an appropriate sequence for those ideas. Seechaliao, (2024) argues that appropriate instructional strategies and learning resources can facilitate students' learning processes, while Chisunum & Nwadiokwu, (2024)

emphasize the role of instructional media in attracting students' attention and providing contextual support for learning. In writing instruction, therefore, the incorporation of appropriate media may help reduce the cognitive demands associated with generating and organizing content. Visual media are particularly relevant because they can provide learners with concrete representations that serve as stimuli for developing written ideas.

One instructional medium that has received attention in writing research is picture series. Picture series consists of a sequence of images arranged to represent related events within a developing story (Maula Romadlona & Khofshoh, 2023). Unlike a single picture, a picture series provides multiple visual cues that represent the progression of events, thereby offering students a framework for constructing a story from its beginning to its conclusion. The chronological arrangement of images can assist students in identifying what happens first, what problem develops subsequently, and how the story may be concluded (Izah & Cahyaningtyas, 2025). In this way, picture series can provide students with visual scaffolding for developing the orientation, complication, and resolution of narrative texts. Wang & Gao, (2024) also indicate that sequential visual information can support learners in establishing relationships among events and organizing narrative content. Thus, picture series has the potential to address the organizational difficulties encountered by students by providing concrete stimuli from which story ideas can be generated and sequenced.

The potential effectiveness of picture series in writing instruction has been examined in a number of empirical studies, although the findings need to be interpreted in relation to the instructional conditions and outcomes investigated. Several studies have reported positive effects of picture series on students' writing performance. Gayatri & Gaffar, (2023), for example, found that image-based instructional materials facilitated students' ability to generate ideas and organize story events logically. Similarly, Amelia & Natasha, (2023) reported that the implementation of picture series increased students' motivation and supported their ability to produce narrative texts. Erniwati, Mertosono, S. R., Rofiqoh, & Gente, (2022) also found that students who received instruction through picture series achieved better writing performance than those who received conventional instruction. Comparable findings have been reported in other EFL contexts.

However, the empirical evidence does not establish a uniformly consistent effect of picture series across instructional conditions. For example, a comparative study conducted by (Wildayati, 2021) found no significant difference between students who learned narrative writing through picture series combined with written questions and those who learned through a vocabulary-list and headings technique. Although the mean score of the picture-series group was slightly higher than that of the comparison group (63.33 and 62.95, respectively), the obtained t-value of 0.304 was lower than the critical value, indicating that the difference was not statistically significant. This finding is important because it suggests that the presence of picture series alone does not necessarily guarantee superior writing outcomes and that its effectiveness may depend on how the medium is integrated with instructional strategies and the learning support provided to students. Thus, the existing evidence presents a more complex picture than a simple assumption that picture series is inherently effective for all writing contexts.

The variation in findings also reveals an unresolved pedagogical issue concerning the specific function of picture series in writing instruction. Previous studies have predominantly evaluated its effectiveness through students' overall writing achievement, general writing ability, or motivational responses. Although such measures demonstrate whether students' performance improves, they provide less

specific information about which aspect of narrative writing is facilitated by the use of sequential visual media. In particular, limited attention has been given to whether picture series directly supports students in organizing the essential structural components of a narrative text, namely orientation, complication, and resolution. This issue is pedagogically important because an increase in overall writing scores does not necessarily demonstrate that students have developed the ability to construct a complete and logically organized narrative structure.

A related methodological issue concerns the way the effectiveness of picture series has been examined in previous research. Several studies have employed general writing scores as the primary outcome measure, combining multiple dimensions such as content, vocabulary, grammar, organization, and mechanics. While this approach provides a broad assessment of writing proficiency, it may obscure the specific contribution of picture series to students' ability to organize narrative events and construct the generic structure of a narrative text. Consequently, it remains unclear whether the improvement reported in previous studies is primarily attributable to enhanced idea generation, increased motivation, improved linguistic accuracy, or greater ability to organize narrative events. More focused investigation of the structural dimension of narrative writing is therefore necessary to clarify the pedagogical mechanism through which sequential visual media may support students' writing development.

From a pedagogical perspective, the unresolved issue is not simply whether picture series can improve writing, but under what instructional conditions and for which aspects of narrative writing it is most beneficial. Picture series provides students with sequential visual information that may reduce the cognitive demands of generating and arranging story events independently. Nevertheless, previous findings do not sufficiently explain whether this visual support enables students to systematically translate the sequence of images into the three structural stages of narrative text. Investigating this relationship is important because students' difficulties in narrative writing are frequently associated with their inability to organize ideas and arrange events coherently. Therefore, examining the effect of picture series specifically on students' construction of orientation, complication, and resolution may provide more precise evidence regarding its pedagogical value.

The present study addresses these unresolved empirical, methodological, and pedagogical issues by examining the effectiveness of Picture Series Media in improving students' narrative writing ability, with particular attention to the construction of orientation, complication, and resolution. Rather than treating writing performance solely as a general outcome, this study focuses on the organizational dimension of narrative writing and investigates whether sequential visual support can facilitate students' ability to construct the essential stages of a narrative text. In addition, the study provides evidence from eighth-grade students at SMPN 4 Monta, thereby extending existing research to a context that has received limited empirical attention. The SMPN 4 Monta setting is therefore positioned as a contextual extension of the study rather than as the primary justification for the research gap.

Accordingly, the present study seeks to contribute empirical evidence to the ongoing discussion concerning the effectiveness of picture series in EFL writing instruction. By examining both the instructional use of sequential visual media and the specific organization of narrative texts, the study is expected to clarify whether picture series can provide meaningful support for students in developing coherent narrative structures. Specifically, this study investigates whether the use of Picture Series Media is effective

in improving the narrative writing ability of eighth-grade students at SMPN 4 Monta, particularly their ability to construct the orientation, complication, and resolution of narrative texts.

2. METHOD

This study employed a quantitative approach using a true experimental research design in the form of a pre-test and post-test control group design. The design incorporated both an experimental group and a control group, which were randomly assigned prior to the treatment. Both groups undertook a pre-test and a post-test to assess the students' writing skills prior to and following the intervention (Sugiyono, 2023). A quantitative methodology was utilized in this study to investigate the impact of picture series media on students' narrative writing skills, relying on numerical data and statistical analysis (Sugiyono, 2023). The researcher selected the true experimental design because it enabled the researcher to investigate the causal effect of picture series media on students' ability to write narrative texts, particularly in developing orientation, complication, and resolution. Furthermore, this design enabled the researcher to manage external variables and assess the learning outcomes of both the experimental and control groups.

This design was deemed suitable as it allowed the researcher to assess the effectiveness of the instructional media by comparing students' writing performance prior to and following the treatment. The implementation of both a pre-test and a post-test enabled the researcher to ascertain if any enhancement in students' writing skills could be linked to the use of picture series media, as opposed to being influenced by external factors. Furthermore, the juxtaposition of the experimental and control groups enhanced the credibility of the results by offering proof of the disparities in learning outcomes following the intervention. The study's population comprised all eighth-grade students from SMPN 4 Monta during the academic year 2025/2026. The researcher selected the sample using a random sampling technique to provide every student with an equal opportunity to be selected as a research participant (Sugiyono, 2023). Two classes were chosen at random to form the research sample. Class VIII-C, which included 21 students, acted as the experimental group, whereas Class VIII-B, comprising 20 students, functioned as the control group. The experimental group received instruction through picture series media, whereas the control group received conventional teaching. The use of two groups was consistent with the true experimental design, which compares learning outcomes between an experimental group and a control group.

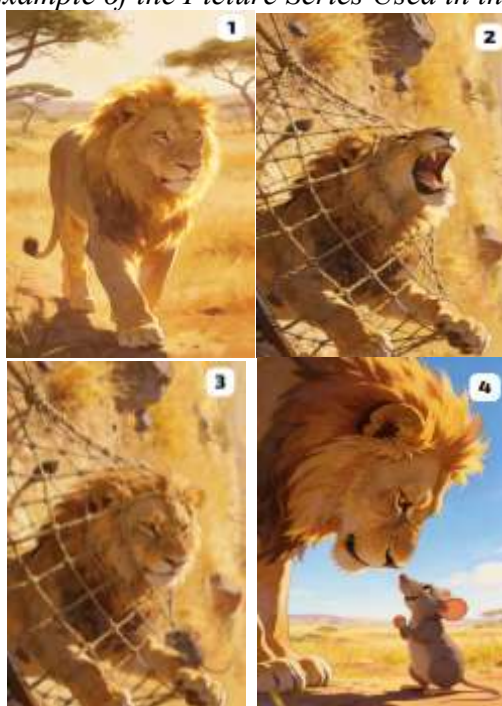
Both classes were selected because they had relatively similar learning characteristics and followed the same English curriculum. During the research, both groups studied the same learning objectives, materials, and time allocation. The only difference between the two groups was the instructional media used during the teaching process. This condition ensured that the differences in students' learning outcomes were primarily influenced by the treatment rather than by other instructional factors.

This study involved two variables. The independent variable was the use of picture series media in teaching narrative writing, while the dependent variable was students' narrative writing ability, particularly in developing orientation, complication, and resolution. The researcher measured students' writing ability through a narrative writing test administered as both the pre-test and post-test for the two groups. In the test, students wrote a narrative text based on the prompts provided by the researcher. The researcher assessed students' writing using a scoring rubric that focused on the narrative

generic structure, including the clarity of orientation, the development of complication, and the completeness of resolution.

The treatment was conducted in several meetings. Before the treatment, both groups undertook a pre-test to assess their initial writing skills. Throughout the treatment sessions, the experimental group was instructed in narrative writing utilizing picture series media, whereas the control group received instruction through traditional teaching methods that did not incorporate picture series media. After the conclusion of all treatment sessions, both groups participated in a post-test designed to assess the enhancement of their narrative writing skills.

Figure 1. *Example of the Picture Series Used in the Treatment*



The writing assessment was created to evaluate students' capacity to generate a comprehensive narrative text derived from the sequence of events outlined in the writing prompt. Students were expected to organize their ideas logically and develop the story by applying the generic structure of narrative texts appropriately. The identical writing task and evaluation criteria were applied in both the pre-test and post-test phases to maintain uniformity in the assessment procedure. This method allowed the researcher to objectively assess the writing performance of students both prior and following the application of the treatment.

The collected data were analyzed quantitatively using descriptive and inferential statistics. Descriptive statistics were used to calculate the mean, minimum score, maximum score, and standard deviation of both groups. The hypothesis was accepted when the significance value (Sig. 2-tailed) was lower than 0.05.

Table 1: *True Experimental Pre-test and Post-test Control Group Design*

Group	Pre-test	Treatment	Post test
Experiment	O ₁	X	O ₂

al			
Control	O ₃	-	O ₄

Source: (Sugiyono, 2023)

Where:

E: Experimental group

K: Control group

O₁: Pre-test of experimental group

O₂: Post-test of experimental group

O₃: Pre-test of control group

O₄: Post-test of control group

X: Treatment

3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Figure 2: Descriptive Statistics of Students' Writing Scores

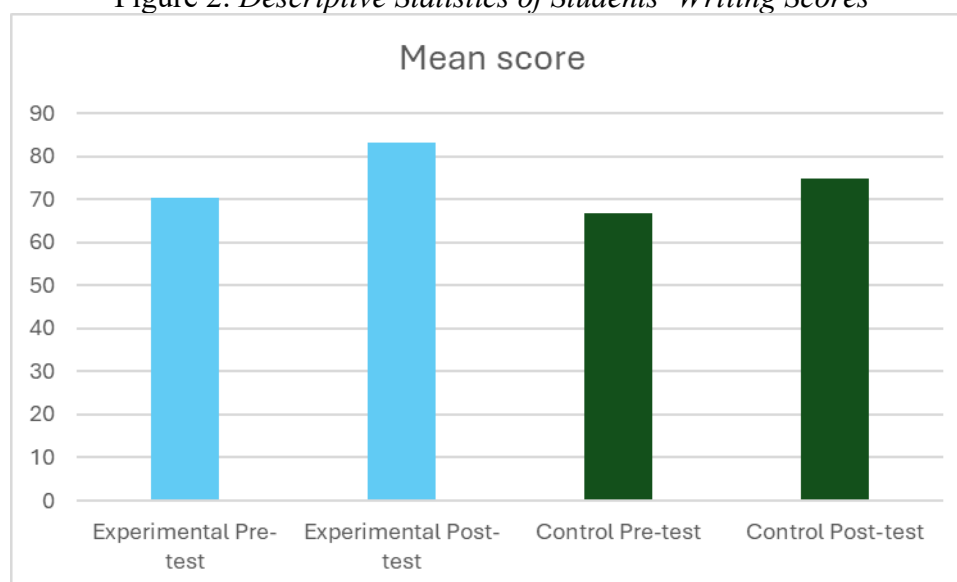


Figure 2 shows descriptive statistics on students' narrative writing scores in the experimental and control groups. The experimental group obtained an average of 70.33 points on the pretest, which, after the treatment, increased to 83.10. Meanwhile, the control group also increased from an average of 66.70 points on the initial test to 74.80 points on the final test. Although both groups showed progress, the increase in the experimental group was clearly higher than in the control group. The results of this study indicate that the use of picture series helps students improve their narrative writing skills.

Table 2: Test of Normality (Shapiro-Wilk)

Group	Test	Statistic	df	Sig.
Experimental	Pre-test	0.914	21	0.066

Experimental	Post-test	0.975	21	0.830
Control	Pre-test	0.957	20	0.488
Control	Post-test	0.976	20	0.864

Table 2 demonstrates that every significance result from the Shapiro-Wilk test is above 0.05. This implies that the data for both groups, the data obtained from both the pre-test and post-test were normally distributed. Therefore, the assumption of normality was fulfilled, allowing the use of parametric statistical tests, such as the t-test, for further analysis.

Table 3: *Test Homogeneity*

Variable	Levene statistics	df1	df2	Sig.
Writing scores	3.314	1	39	0.076

Table 3 reveals that the significance value for Levene's test is 0.076, exceeding the threshold of 0.05. The homogeneity test shows that there is no significant difference in the variance of the two groups, which indicates that the assumption of equal variances is met. Therefore, the independent t-test can be appropriately used for further statistical analysis.

Figure 3: *Result of the Paired Sample T-test*

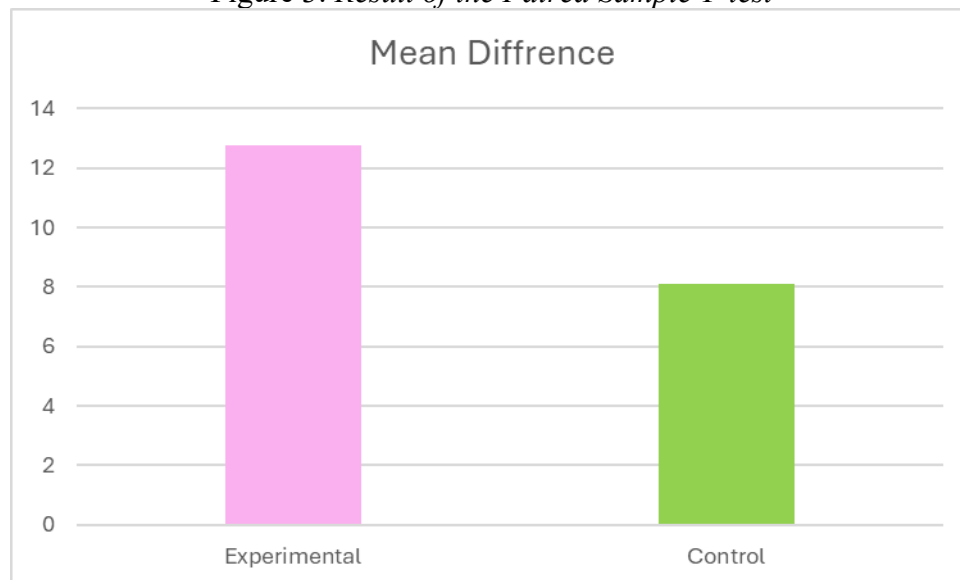


Figure 3 shows the comparison of the average differences between the pre-test and post-test results of the experimental and control groups based on the paired t-test analysis. The experimental group had a greater average difference (12.762) than the control group (8.100), as the results indicate. This finding indicates that students who learned through Picture Series Media experienced greater improvement in their narrative writing ability than those who received conventional instruction. Therefore, Picture Series Media can be considered an effective instructional medium for enhancing students' narrative writing ability.

Table 4: *Independent Sample T-test Results*

variable	Assumption	t	df	Sig (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error difference	95 % CI Lower	95 % CI Upper
Writing scores	Equal variance assumed	3.604	39	<.001	8.295	2.302	3.636	12.954

Table 4 shows the results of the independent t-test. Since the data meet the assumption of homogeneity, the analysis was conducted using the "Equal Variances Assumed" row. The study results indicate a statistically significant difference between the experimental group and the control group ($t = 3.604$, $df = 39$, $p < 0.001$). The mean difference is 8.295, with a 95% confidence interval ranging from 3.636 to 12.954. These results demonstrate that students in the experimental group achieve significantly higher scores in narrative writing compared to students in the control group. Therefore, the null hypothesis (H_0) is rejected, while the alternative hypothesis (H_1) is accepted. These results show that the use of picture series has a significantly positive impact on students' narrative writing skills. The students in the experimental group achieved much better final exam scores than their peers in the control group, demonstrating that the picture-series medium is more effective than traditional teaching methods in improving students' narrative writing skills.

One possible explanation for this finding is that Picture Series Media provided visual support that helped students understand the sequence of events in a story. Through a series of related pictures, students were able to organize their ideas more logically and develop narratives in a coherent manner. The visual representations also reduced students' difficulties in determining how to begin, develop, and conclude a story. Consequently, students were able to construct more complete narrative texts, particularly in developing the orientation, complication, and resolution. The Cognitive Theory of Multimedia Learning (Astiantih, S., & Akfan, 2023), provides a theoretical basis for interpreting these findings by explaining that learning becomes more effective when visual and verbal information are processed together, enabling learners to organize and retain information more efficiently.

Another important finding was related to students' ability to generate ideas. Before the treatment, many students experienced difficulties in developing story content and organizing events logically. After learning through Picture Series Media, students became more capable of connecting events and expressing their ideas in written form. The pictures functioned as contextual cues that stimulated students' imagination and supported the writing process. As a result, students produced narrative texts that were more coherent and systematically organized.

The results of the present study support the findings of Gayatri & Gaffar (2023), who found that Picture Series Media significantly improved students' writing achievement by helping them generate ideas and organize story events more effectively. Similarly, Amelia & Natasha (2023) reported that Picture Series Media increased students' motivation and enhanced their ability to construct narrative texts. In addition, Lestari and Sholichah (2022) revealed that students who were taught through Picture Series Media achieved better writing performance than those who received conventional instruction. The current research findings are consistent with previous studies, which

show that picture series media are an effective teaching tool for improving students' narrative writing skills.

Moreover, earlier studies have demonstrated that visual media provides substantial benefits for language learning. Zirak, Chicho, Omer, and Zrary (2022) explained that visual media facilitate students in understanding story sequences and expressing ideas more clearly. Through visual representations, students are able to arrange events chronologically and produce more coherent texts. Likewise, Marbun, Sinaga, and Purba (2023) reported that Picture Series Media encouraged students to become more active and creative during the writing process. In addition, Marbun et al., (2024) found that Picture Series Media reduced students' difficulties in generating ideas and increased their confidence in writing narrative texts. These findings further support the results of the present study, indicating that Picture Series Media positively contributes to students' narrative writing ability.

However, not all previous studies reported similar findings. Maula Romadlona & Arifah Khofshoh (2023), to conclude that the use of image series media did not lead to a statistically significant improvement in students' writing achievement relative to conventional classroom instruction. Likewise Fikni, Usuluddin, Marzuki, and Aini (2025) reported that students still encountered difficulties in vocabulary use and grammatical accuracy despite the implementation of Picture Series Media. Similarly, Pramilaga, Putra, and Suprianti (2023) argued that some students focused more on interpreting the pictures than on developing appropriate language structures. Tri Junita (2021) also found that students with limited vocabulary mastery continued to experience difficulties in constructing narrative texts even when visual media were used.

The differences between the findings of the present study and those reported in previous studies may be attributed to variations in research participants, learning environments, treatment duration, instructional procedures, and students' English proficiency (Jubhari, Sasabone, & Nurliah, 2022). In the present study, students received systematic guidance in organizing ideas based on sequential pictures and were provided with sufficient opportunities to practice writing during the treatment sessions. These instructional conditions may explain why the experimental group demonstrated greater improvement than the control group.

The overall results also support previous research that has shown that picture series media are an effective teaching tool for improving students' writing narrative skills.. Besides improving students' writing achievement, Picture Series Media helped students organize ideas, understand the sequence of events, and produce more coherent narrative texts. Furthermore, the present study enriches the existing body of empirical evidence by demonstrating the implementation of Picture Series Media in the context of eighth-grade students at SMPN 4 Monta. The findings suggest that Picture Series Media effectively supports students in developing the essential components of narrative texts, namely orientation, complication, and resolution. Nonetheless, the conflicting results observed in various prior studies suggest that the efficacy of Picture Series Media might also be influenced by the characteristics of the students, the conditions within the classroom, and the manner in which the media are utilized during teaching.

4. CONCLUSION

This study shows that serial visual media have indeed improved the ability of eighth graders at SMPN 4 Monta to write stories.. Compared with students who received conventional instruction, those taught through Picture Series Media showed better writing performance. The results demonstrate that Picture Series Media helped students

organize ideas more systematically and develop the essential components of narrative texts, namely orientation, complication, and resolution.

The evidence from this study shows that the Picture Series materials are effective in improving the narrative writing skills of eighth graders at SMPN 4 Monta. The results imply that English educators could consider utilizing Picture Series Media as a viable instructional tool to aid students in honing their narrative writing abilities. Future scholars are urged to explore the application of Picture Series Media in various educational tiers, text types, or learning environments to gather more comprehensive evidence concerning its efficacy.

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