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Improving News Text Writing Skills Using Photo Story Media for Junior High School Students

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Abstract
This study aims to improve news text writing skills through the use of photo story media in class VII-1 students of SMP Negeri 36 Makassar. The type of research used is Classroom Action Research (CAR) which is carried out in two cycles, including the planning stage, action implementation, observation, and reflection. The research subjects were 32 students, consisting of 15 male students and 17 female students. Data collection techniques were carried out through tests and non-tests in the form of observation, questionnaires, and documentation. Data were analyzed quantitatively and qualitatively. The results of the study indicate that the use of photo story media can improve students' news text writing skills. This can be seen from the increase in students' average scores, namely from 37.56% in cycle I to 71.34% in cycle II. In addition, student activity and participation in the learning process also increased. Students became more active, more focused on paying attention to teacher explanations, more enthusiastic in asking questions, and calmer when participating in the learning process and doing assignments. Thus, this study can conclude that photo story media is effectively used to improve news text writing skills of class VII-1 students of SMP Negeri 36 Makassar.

Keywords: Writing Skills, News Text, Photo Story Media

INTRODUCTION

Writing skills are a crucial aspect of Indonesian language learning that students must master. Writing serves not only as a means of communication but also as a medium for developing critical, creative, and systematic thinking skills.

In addition to its functional aspects, the development of language learning in the modern era demands mastery of critical thinking and literacy skills as part of

advanced linguistic skills. These skills emphasize not only the ability to understand and produce language but also the ability to analyze, evaluate, and interpret information critically and reflectively (Zainurrahman, 2018; Wardhani dan Rosadi, 2022) Therefore, mastery of writing skills is crucial because it serves as a means for students to develop critical thinking skills and improve their literacy competency.

Writing is a language skill that enables students to express ideas, thoughts, experiences, and information in writing while adhering to proper and correct linguistic rules (Imran, 2022; Nadilah, Selvi dan Erniati, 2024; Pakalessy *et al.*, 2024). In line with this, (Dalman, 2018) stated that writing is the process of conveying messages or information in writing using language as the medium. Based on these two opinions, it can be understood that writing skills are not merely mechanical but also require thinking skills and adequate language proficiency. Therefore, writing skills need to be practiced continuously so that students can develop optimally.

One of the writing skills competencies taught at the junior high school (SMP) level or equivalent is writing news texts. News texts contain information about an event or incident that is current, factual, and important to be conveyed to the public through specific media. In the writing process, students are required to present information clearly, concisely, and systematically, paying attention to news elements such as what, who, when, where, why, and how (5W+1H). (Karisna, 2020) stated that news texts convey information about current events to the public through specific communication media.

In Indonesian language learning, writing news texts is an important form of language skills practice for students to develop. Through these activities, students not only learn to convey factual information but also develop critical thinking, organize ideas coherently, and use effective language (Syukriady, D., & Pada. (2022; Syukriady, Jumriati, Sari, 2026). However, writing news texts remains a challenging skill for some students. This difficulty is evident when students must develop ideas, organise information systematically, and convey facts in a communicative and easily understood form (Dahlan dan Wahid, 2023; Selviana, Wikanengsih dan Kartiwi, 2025)

However, in reality, students' news text writing skills are still relatively low. Based on initial observations in class VII-1 of SMP Negeri 36 Makassar, it was found that most students experienced difficulty developing ideas, identifying news elements, choosing appropriate diction, and constructing effective sentences in news texts. Furthermore, students tended to be less active and motivated in participating in writing lessons. Conventional learning and minimal use of learning media led to students feeling bored and uninterested in the learning process.

Learning Indonesian in the 21st century requires educators to utilize learning media creatively and innovatively. However, in reality, the learning process still tends to be teacher-centered as the primary source of information, thus suboptimal student engagement (Febriyanto dan Yanto, 2019). Furthermore, the development of digital technology also significantly influences student behavior and learning patterns (Munawaroh, Umayah dan Qomariyah, 2023). Therefore, teachers are required to be able to select and utilize learning media that are not only engaging,

but also effective, educational, and tailored to the needs of students in the digital era (Syukriady *et al.*, 2023)

Recent studies on multimodal literacy emphasize that visual-based instructional media can significantly enhance students' meaning-making processes and support written text production by bridging observation and linguistic expression (Mayer, 2021; Serafini, 2022). Multimodal learning theory suggests that students comprehend information more effectively when verbal explanations are supported by meaningful visual representations. Visual stimuli help learners process concrete details, organize information logically, and transform observations into coherent written expressions. In the context of news text writing, visual-based media can assist students in identifying factual elements, understanding event sequences, and constructing texts systematically based on observable evidence. Therefore, integrating visual narrative media into writing instruction is considered a relevant pedagogical strategy for improving students' writing competence in the digital learning era.

Photo story is theoretically grounded in visual learning theory and multimodal literacy, which suggest that visual representations facilitate meaning construction by enabling learners to connect abstract concepts with concrete contextual cues. Visual narrative media can enhance students' comprehension, stimulate critical observation, and support idea generation during writing activities (Febriyanto dan Yanto, 2019; Storyteller, 2024). In news writing instruction, photo story media provides authentic visual stimuli that help students identify factual details, recognize chronological sequences of events, and construct news texts systematically based on observable evidence.

Indonesian language learning plays a crucial role in improving students' literacy skills, particularly in understanding and producing various types of texts. One of the skills junior high school students need to master under the Independent Curriculum is writing news texts. Through writing news texts, students not only learn to convey information based on facts and current events but also develop critical thinking, organize information systematically, and use effective and communicative language (Wafiroh dan Umaya, 2026).

However, the reality on the ground shows that students' news text writing skills are still relatively low. Many students struggle to identify news elements, develop ideas, organize information coherently, and use appropriate and communicative diction. Furthermore, the learning process still tends to utilize conventional teaching materials and methods that focus solely on theory and text structure, thus preventing students from gaining active, creative, and meaningful learning experiences.

In the Independent Curriculum, learning emphasizes the importance of active student involvement through the use of contextual media and learning resources. Therefore, learning to write news texts needs to be supported by media that can stimulate students' creativity, imagination, sensitivity to facts, and thinking skills, as well as effective language skills (Wafiroh dan Umaya, 2026).

One relevant medium is the photo story. Photo stories are visual media that utilize a series of images or photographs to convey a story or event in a more concrete and communicative manner (Sihombing dan Lubis, 2018; Febriyanto dan Yanto,

2019; Mifsud, 2022). Using this medium can help students understand news elements, develop information, and structure news texts more systematically.

The use of photo stories in news writing lessons is considered to increase student interest, motivation, and creativity. Through visual media, students are more active, innovative, and creative, easily observing events, discovering ideas, and expressing their thoughts in written form (Iswidayati, 2024). Furthermore, learning becomes more active and less monotonous because students are directly involved in the process of observing, discussing, and developing ideas based on the images presented (Sihombing dan Lubis, 2018). In fact, Sihombing & Lubis (2018) added that the use of photo stories can improve students' news writing skills because visual media helps students more easily understand information and develop ideas in writing. Therefore, photo stories are considered effective in supporting news writing learning for junior high school students.

Several previous studies have been conducted by several researchers regarding news writing in relation to photo stories. These previous studies are described

Research by Sihombing & Lubis (2018) shows that the use of photo stories can improve students' news writing skills. The results of this study demonstrate that visual media can help students understand news structure and facilitate the process of developing ideas in writing. Therefore, photo stories are considered relevant for use in teaching news writing for junior high school students (Sihombing dan Lubis, 2018).

Research by Febriyanto and Yanto (2019) shows that the use of photo stories can stimulate students' imaginations and increase motivation in learning Indonesian. The study concluded that learning Indonesian in elementary schools using photo stories can accommodate more meaningful learning, stimulate students' imaginations, motivate learning activities, and ultimately help students develop their language skills (Febriyanto dan Yanto, 2019).

Research by Mark Mifsud (2022) shows that photo stories enable students with little or no experience in photography techniques to take pictures on-site and then compile them as a group to produce a presentation that can impact the intended audience. Overall, the study concluded that photo stories proved highly effective in increasing students' knowledge, awareness, and attitudes toward climate change. Collaborative photo stories were found to be highly effective in developing the skills needed by prospective teachers and their students in implementing climate change education. This study identified the photo story methodology as an effective way to develop teachers and students who are not only knowledgeable and aware of climate change, but also able to positively influence students' knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors toward the environment in general and climate change in particular (Mifsud, 2022).

Research by Alyatalatthaf & Kusumawati (2023) demonstrated that the implementation of EDFAT in the creation of the photo story "Galeri Foto Jurnalistik Antara" (Between Photo Journalism Gallery) was very effective in practice. Both functions share the same purpose and intent: to record various aspects of life, events, phenomena, or objects in depth and comprehensively. The study concluded that photo stories not only aim to enable viewers to understand the context of events

but also to experience conditions on the ground. In addition, the EDFAT technique also creates a diverse series of photographs through different compositions, varying perspectives, and dynamic moments, ensuring a holistic and comprehensive photographic process at a location or event (Alyatalatthaf dan Kusumawati, 2023). Research by Selviana, Wikanengsih, and Kartiwi (2025) indicates that the use of the PBL model, supported by event photos, in this study falls into the "Very Good" category. The study concluded that students responded very well to the use of the PBL model, supported by event photos, in news writing activities. The questionnaire distribution revealed that learning using event photos facilitated students' development of ideas and improved their understanding of the material (Selviana, Wikanengsih dan Kartiwi, 2025)

Based on several previous studies presented, it can be concluded that photo stories have a positive effect on improving the quality of learning, particularly news writing skills. Photo stories can help students understand the structure and elements of news stories, develop ideas, increase learning motivation, and create a more active, creative, and meaningful learning environment. Furthermore, the use of photo-based visual media also provides a more concrete learning experience, making it easier for students to express information in written form.

However, students' news writing skills at SMP Negeri 36 Makassar still need improvement because some students experience difficulty developing ideas, systematically organizing news elements, and using effective language in news writing. This situation indicates the need for learning media that can help students understand the material more easily and engagingly. Although previous studies have demonstrated the effectiveness of photo story media in enhancing students' motivation, creativity, and general writing performance, several important gaps remain. First, most prior studies focused on general language learning contexts or descriptive writing activities, with limited attention to the specific development of news text writing skills at the junior high school level within the framework of the Independent Curriculum. Second, existing studies have largely emphasized students' responses and general learning outcomes, while few have specifically examined how photo story media supports students in organizing factual information based on the 5W+1H structure required in news writing. Third, limited classroom action research has investigated the implementation of photo story media in authentic classroom settings in Indonesian secondary schools, particularly in eastern Indonesia such as Makassar.

This study addresses these gaps by investigating the use of photo story media to improve news writing skills among Grade VII-1 students at SMP Negeri 36 Makassar through classroom action research. The novelty of this study lies in its integration of photo story media with contextual news-writing instruction under the Independent Curriculum framework, focusing specifically on students' ability to identify news elements, organize factual information systematically, and construct effective news texts. This research is expected to provide empirical evidence regarding the pedagogical effectiveness of photo story media as an innovative visual-based learning strategy for improving news writing instruction in junior high school contexts.

Therefore, the researchers were interested in conducting classroom action research entitled "Improving News Writing Skills through Photo Stories in Grade VII-1 Students of SMP Negeri 36 Makassar." This research was conducted to improve students' news writing skills through the use of photo stories in the learning process.

METHOD

This study employed Classroom Action Research (CAR) using John Elliot's model, which was implemented cyclically through four stages: planning, action, observation, and reflection. Classroom action research was selected because it is designed to improve the quality of classroom learning while simultaneously solving practical instructional problems through reflective and systematic actions (Arikunto, 2014; Sadieli, 2020).

The study was conducted at SMP Negeri 36 Makassar during the even semester of the 2024/2025 academic year. The research subjects were 32 students of class VII-1, consisting of 15 male students and 17 female students. This class was selected purposively based on preliminary observations indicating that students' news writing skills were still relatively low, particularly in organizing news elements systematically, developing ideas based on factual events, and using effective language structures.

The research was carried out in two cycles, with each cycle consisting of two learning meetings and one evaluation meeting. Each cycle followed four systematic stages.

In the **planning stage**, the researcher prepared teaching modules, designed photo story learning media, developed observation sheets, student response questionnaires, and news-writing assessment rubrics, and determined indicators of action success.

In the **action stage**, the teacher implemented learning activities using photo story media. Students observed a sequence of photographs, identified the news elements (5W+1H), discussed the factual content of the images in groups, organized information systematically, and wrote news texts based on the observed events.

In the **observation stage**, observations were conducted collaboratively by the researcher and collaborating teacher to record student participation, engagement, interaction, and learning responses using structured observation sheets.

In the **reflection stage**, the results of each cycle were analyzed to identify strengths and weaknesses in the implementation process. The findings from reflection were used to formulate improvements for the subsequent cycle. Cycle I focused on introducing photo story media and training students to identify news elements from visual narratives. Reflection results from Cycle I were used to improve instructional strategies, including clearer guidance, additional examples, and more structured group discussions. Cycle II emphasized improving students' ability to develop complete and coherent news texts independently based on photo story analysis.

The research instruments consisted of test and non-test instruments. The test instrument was a news-writing performance task assessed using a scoring rubric covering five aspects: (1) completeness of 5W+1H elements, (2) accuracy of news

text structure, (3) language effectiveness, (4) coherence between paragraphs, and (5) accuracy of spelling and punctuation.

The non-test instruments included observation sheets to measure student learning activities, student response questionnaires to identify perceptions toward photo story media, and documentation in the form of field notes and photographs of learning activities.

Instrument validity was established through expert judgment involving two university lecturers in Indonesian language education and one Indonesian language teacher at SMP Negeri 36 Makassar. The validation process assessed content relevance, clarity of indicators, language appropriateness, and instrument feasibility. Revisions were made based on validator feedback before the instruments were implemented.

Data were collected through writing tests, classroom observations, questionnaires, and documentation. Quantitative data from students' writing scores were analyzed using descriptive statistical analysis by calculating mean scores and classical learning completeness percentages using the following formula:

Mean score = $\Sigma X / N$

Classical completeness = (Number of students achieving mastery / Total number of students) × 100%

Qualitative data from observations and questionnaires were analyzed descriptively through data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing to describe changes in student participation and responses during the learning process. The indicators of research success were determined as follows: (1) at least 80% of students achieved the minimum mastery criterion (KKM) of 75 in news-writing assessment, (2) student learning activity reached the "active" category with a minimum percentage of 80%, and (3) student responses toward photo story media were predominantly positive. If these indicators were not achieved in Cycle I, improvements were implemented in Cycle II.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Result

The results of this study were obtained through data collection using test and non-test techniques. Test data were sourced from student learning evaluations conducted at the end of each learning cycle (cycle I and cycle II) to measure the level of student learning achievement after the implementation of learning interventions. Meanwhile, non-test data were obtained through observations conducted during the learning process to determine student activity, engagement, and responses to the interventions implemented in each cycle. In addition to observations, other supporting data were also collected through student response questionnaires administered at the end of each cycle to obtain an overview of student perceptions, interests, and responses to the learning process.

All data were analyzed descriptively to determine the development of student learning outcomes, changes in learning activities, and the effectiveness of the interventions implemented during the study. The analysis was conducted by

comparing the results obtained in cycles I and II to identify improvements and challenges that emerged at each stage of the intervention implementation.

This section systematically presents the research results and their discussion. The presentation of research results is based on the sequence of actions implemented in each cycle, including a description of the learning process, observations of student activities, learning evaluations, and an analysis of the research findings obtained during the classroom action implementation.

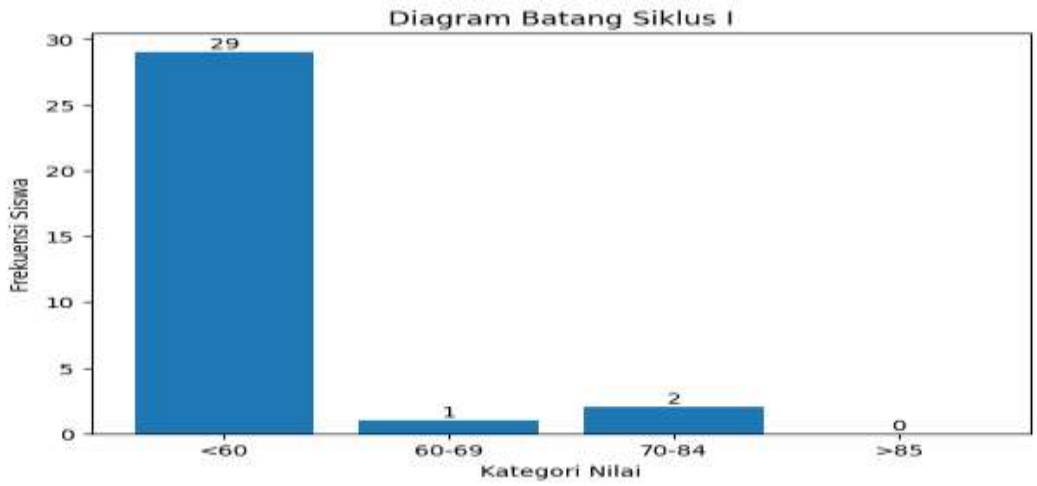
1. Cycle I

The test data consists of Cycle I data and non-test data, with the following findings. The test data refers to the assessment of students' news writing skills after the learning process. The non-test data was obtained through observation sheets during the learning process and through questionnaires completed by students.

a. Test Data

The results of the evaluation of students' news writing skills from Cycle I served as the source of the test data. The results of the Cycle I test are presented in Diagram 1 below.

Bar Chart 1. News Writing Skills Cycle I



b. Non-test Data

Non-test data was obtained from observations of students during the learning process and the results of a questionnaire/questionnaire on student responses to learning in Cycle I. Several aspects observed during the observation of student activities in Cycle I included:

1. Student readiness for learning. 21 students, or 65.62%, were ready to participate in the lesson. 34.37% of students were not ready to participate.
2. Students carefully observed the teacher's explanation. 25 students, or 78.12%, concentrated on the teacher's explanation, while 7 students, or 21.87%, did not pay attention.

3. Students actively asked questions to their peers or the teacher when they encountered difficulties. 6 students, or 18.75%, actively asked questions to their peers or the teacher when they encountered difficulties, and 26 students, or 81.25%, did not actively ask questions when they encountered difficulties.
4. Students were noisy during the lesson. The number of students who were noisy during the lesson was 10 students (31.25%), while the number of students who were not noisy during the lesson was 22 students (68.75%).
5. Students were calm while working on assignments. Twenty-three students (71.87%) were calm while working on assignments, while nine students (28.12%) were uneasy.

Based on the results of the student response questionnaire administered at the end of Cycle I, we obtained an overview of student responses to the learning process of writing news texts using photo stories. The data showed a variety of student responses to the learning process, both in terms of interest in the subject, understanding of the material, and perceptions of the use of learning media.

The results of the questionnaire showed that 18 students (56.25%) expressed their liking for Indonesian language learning, while 14 students (43.75%) expressed their dislike for the subject. This data indicates that more than half of the students have shown an interest in Indonesian language learning, although a number of students still showed relatively low interest. These conditions can be influenced by various factors, such as the level of understanding of the material, the learning methods used, and previous learning experiences.

Regarding the aspect of interest in news text material, 20 students (62.5%) stated that they liked learning news text, while 12 students (37.5%) stated that they did not like it. This percentage indicates that the majority of students had a positive response to the news text material, although there were still some students who did not show optimal enthusiasm for the learning. Regarding the ability to write news text, 26 students (81.25%) admitted that they still had difficulty in writing news text, while only 6 students stated that they did not experience any difficulties. The high percentage of students who experienced difficulties indicates that the skill of writing news text remains a challenge for the majority of students. These difficulties are likely caused by students' lack of understanding of the structure of news writing, limited mastery of linguistic elements, and a lack of systematic writing

practice. In determining news elements, 20 students (62.5%) admitted that they still experienced obstacles, while 12 students (37.5%) stated that they did not experience any difficulties. These data indicate that students' understanding of news elements still needs to be improved through the provision of more concrete examples, structured exercises, and the use of more interesting and contextual learning media. Meanwhile, regarding the use of photo story media, as many as 19 students (59.37%) stated that they liked learning news texts with this media, while 13 students (40.62%) stated that they did not like it. This shows that photo story media is starting to be accepted positively by the majority of students as a learning tool that helps understand the material. In addition, as many as 22 students (68.75%) stated that the use of photo story media makes the learning atmosphere more enjoyable, while 10 students (31.25%) have the opposite opinion. These findings indicate that photo story media is able to create a more interactive and interesting learning atmosphere, thus potentially increasing student motivation and engagement during the learning process.

Overall, the results of the questionnaire in cycle I showed that the use of photo story media had a significant effect on the learning atmosphere and student interest, although improvements were still needed in the implementation of the action to help students overcome difficulties in writing news texts more optimally in the next cycle.

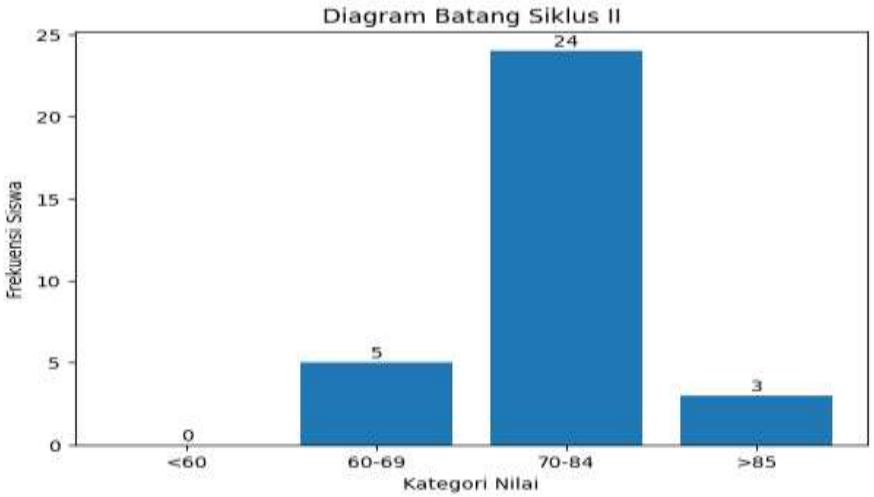
2. Cycle II

The results obtained in Cycle II represent a follow-up and refinement of the actions implemented in Cycle I. Various weaknesses identified in the previous cycle were used as reflection material to improve learning strategies, including material delivery, classroom management, and optimizing the use of learning media. Therefore, data from Cycle II is expected to demonstrate a more significant improvement in student learning outcomes compared to the results obtained in Cycle I.

a. Test Data

Test data for Cycle II was obtained through a news writing skills test administered to students after the entire cycle II learning process was completed. This test aimed to determine the extent to which students had improved in composing news texts based on correct writing principles, including the completeness of news elements, the accuracy of writing structure, the use of language, and the students' ability to convey information clearly and systematically.

The results of the Cycle II test were then analyzed to assess the progress of students' skills compared to the results obtained in Cycle I. This analysis serves as the main indicator for determining the success of the implemented learning activities. The complete results of the news writing skills test for Cycle II can be seen in **Diagram 2** below.



The test results in cycle II showed an increase in students' ability to write news texts after the application of photo story media in learning. The average score obtained by students reached 71.34%, as seen in Table 2. This result is better than cycle I, thus indicating that the corrective actions taken in cycle II have a positive impact on student learning outcomes.

This improvement is evident in the increase in the number of students in the excellent category, to 3 students (9.37%), and the increase in the number of students in the good category to 24 students (75%). Conversely, the number of students in the adequate category decreased to 5 students (16.62%). The decrease in the adequate category indicates that some students have improved their abilities and moved to a higher category.

The data shows that using photo stories can help students better understand news writing material. This medium provides visual stimulation, making it easier for students to generate ideas, organize news elements, and write them in a more structured manner. Therefore, the use of photo stories has proven effective in improving students' news writing skills.

b. Non-test Data

Non-test data in Cycle II was obtained through observations of student activities during the learning process and student response

questionnaires after the learning activities were completed. This data was used to determine changes in student attitudes, activeness, and responses to the use of photo story media in learning to write news texts. The observations showed an increase in student learning activity compared to Cycle I.

1) Based on the observations, most students demonstrated good readiness for the lesson. Twenty-five students (78.12%) were ready to participate in the lesson, while seven students (21.87%) were not yet optimally prepared. Regarding attention to teacher explanations, 27 students (84.37%) paid attention, while five students (15.62%) remained unfocused. This indicates that in Cycle II, students began to demonstrate greater commitment to the lesson.
2) Students began to actively ask questions when experiencing difficulties, although not optimally. Eleven students (34.37%) actively asked questions to the teacher or their peers, while 21 students (65.62%) remained passive. This situation indicates that some students still need encouragement to become more confident in expressing the difficulties they encounter during the learning process.
3) The classroom atmosphere in Cycle II also showed a more conducive change. Twenty-four students (75%) participated in the lesson in an orderly and quiet manner, while eight students (25%) still exhibited less calm behavior. Furthermore, 26 students (81.25%) were able to work calmly and focused while completing assignments. This data indicates that the use of photo story media can help create a more orderly learning atmosphere and support student concentration.
4) The questionnaire results showed that student interest in learning Indonesian increased. Twenty-two students (68.75%) stated they enjoyed learning Indonesian, while ten students (31.25%) stated they did not. In learning about news texts, 24 students (75%) expressed their enjoyment of the material. This indicates that learning presented through visual media is more easily understood by students.
5) Students' difficulty in writing news texts also decreased significantly. Only 7 students (21.87%) still experienced difficulties, while 25 students (78.12%) stated they no longer experienced difficulties. Similarly, only 4 students (12.5%) still experienced difficulties in identifying news elements, while 28 students (87.5%) were able to identify them effectively. This indicates that the use of photo stories helps students understand the structure and elements of news stories more clearly.
6) Student responses to the use of photo stories were very positive. Thirty students (93.75%) stated they enjoyed learning with this medium, and

27 students (84.37%) felt the classroom atmosphere was more enjoyable. Furthermore, 20 students (62.5%) felt more active after using this medium. These data indicate that photo stories can increase student motivation while creating more engaging and interactive learning.

Overall, the non-test data results in Cycle II showed positive changes in student activity, interest, and responses. This improvement reinforces the finding that the use of photo stories is effective in supporting news writing learning, both in terms of student engagement during the learning process and in terms of improving their understanding of the material being studied.

Based on the research results from Cycle I and Cycle II, it was found that the use of photo stories in learning to write news stories improved the writing skills of grade VII-1 students at SMP Negeri 36 Makassar. This improvement was evident in the results of the news writing skills test, which showed a gradual change from Cycle I to Cycle II. This indicates that the application of photo stories positively contributed to improving student learning outcomes, particularly in the ability to systematically compose news stories according to the correct structure and elements of news stories.

The results of this study align with the basic concept of visual media-based learning, which states that the use of engaging and contextual learning media can help students understand the material more concretely. Photo stories provide visual stimulation that facilitates students' discovery of ideas, development of concepts, and organization of information into a coherent news story. Therefore, the results of this study support the action hypothesis stating that the use of photo stories can improve students' news writing skills.

The improvement in student abilities was also evident from observations of learning activities during the learning process. Student readiness to participate in learning increased from 65.62% in Cycle I to 78.12% in Cycle II. Student attention to teacher explanations also increased, from 78.12% to 84.37%. Furthermore, student questioning increased from 18.75% to 34.37%. A more conducive learning environment was evident in the increase in the number of students who remained quiet during class, from 68.75% to 75%. Students who were able to work quietly on assignments also increased from 71.87% to 81.25%.

This increase in learning activity indicates that the use of photo story media can create more interactive and engaging learning. Theoretically, learning that involves visual elements can increase student attention and

motivation because the information presented is easier to understand. This directly impacts student engagement in the learning process and ultimately improves learning outcomes.

The results of this study also align with previous research that suggests that the use of visual media in writing lessons can improve students' writing skills. Previous research has shown that image-based media can help students express their ideas in a more focused and systematic manner. These similar results reinforce the finding that photo stories are effective in teaching news writing because they provide concrete stimuli for students to develop their writing.

Furthermore, these results also support research findings that suggest that teaching writing with visual media can increase student motivation, interest in learning, and active participation during the learning process. In this study, the majority of students responded positively to the use of photo stories. This was evident in the increased student interest in learning news texts and the reduced difficulty in identifying news elements in cycle II.

Based on data analysis and observations of student activities, this study indicates that the use of photo stories can bring positive changes to the learning process. These changes are evident in increased student engagement, enthusiasm for learning, and the creation of a more conducive learning environment. Students are no longer passive but actively engaged through observing, exploring, discussing, and understanding the material more deeply. This situation indicates that photo stories can create more meaningful learning because students gain direct learning experiences.

Theoretically, this finding supports the view that the use of contextual visual media can increase students' cognitive engagement in the learning process. Photo stories help students connect the information they receive with concrete experiences, facilitating the process of understanding, organizing, and expressing ideas in written form. Therefore, the use of this medium supports constructivist learning theory, which emphasizes the importance of direct experience in building students' knowledge.

Practically, the results of this study imply that photo stories can be an effective alternative learning strategy for improving students' writing skills. Using this medium helps teachers overcome students' difficulties in developing ideas, organizing their thought processes, and expressing their ideas in writing. Furthermore, increased student motivation through photo stories impacts student persistence, which ultimately contributes to improved writing skills.

Another noteworthy finding is that the use of photo stories appeared to support students' development of critical observation skills, which are essential in news writing. Before composing their texts, students were required

to examine a sequence of photographs, identify important events, determine relevant details, and distinguish between primary and supporting information. This process encouraged students to engage in analytical thinking and information selection before writing. Recent studies have highlighted that visual-based learning activities promote learners' critical thinking and interpretation skills because students must actively construct meaning from visual information rather than simply receiving information passively (Serafini, 2020; Jiang & Luk, 2023). In the context of news writing, these skills are particularly important because students need to organize facts objectively and present information in a logical and coherent manner.

In addition, the effectiveness of photo stories can be associated with the concept of multimodal learning, which emphasizes the integration of multiple modes of communication, including visual and textual elements. Multimodal resources provide learners with richer learning experiences by presenting information through different channels, thereby facilitating comprehension and knowledge construction (Jewitt et al., 2021). The photographs used in this study functioned as visual scaffolds that guided students in generating ideas and organizing news elements such as who, what, when, where, why, and how. Consequently, students experienced fewer difficulties in initiating the writing process and were able to produce more complete and structured news texts. This finding supports previous research suggesting that multimodal learning environments contribute positively to writing quality and language development among secondary school students (Hafner & Ho, 2020).

Furthermore, the positive outcomes observed in this study may also be explained by the role of learner autonomy in the writing process. Photo stories provided students with opportunities to independently interpret visual information and develop their own written narratives based on their observations. Such learning experiences encourage students to take greater responsibility for their learning and become more confident in expressing ideas through writing. According to recent studies, instructional approaches that foster autonomy and active knowledge construction tend to improve students' writing performance, self-efficacy, and long-term learning outcomes (Teng, 2023; Lee & Hannafin, 2016). Therefore, beyond improving news writing skills, the use of photo stories may also contribute to the development of independent learning habits and greater confidence in written communication.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Based on the results of the classroom action research conducted, it can be concluded that the use of photo story learning media is effective in improving the news writing skills of grade VII-1 students at SMP Negeri 36

Makassar. This media helps students understand the material more concretely, facilitates their development of ideas, and encourages them to express their ideas systematically in written form. Furthermore, the use of photo story media also had a positive impact on student learning activities. Students demonstrated more active involvement in the learning process, focused more on teacher explanations, were more willing to ask questions, and were more disciplined in participating in learning activities. Thus, the research objective of improving news writing skills through the use of photo story media has been achieved.

Based on the results of this study, the authors offer the following recommendations. (1). For Indonesian language teachers, photo stories can be used as an alternative learning tool to improve news writing skills and other writing skills. (2). Schools need to provide support in the form of innovative learning resources and media to make the learning process more engaging and effective. (3). For future researchers, it is recommended to expand this research to other learning materials or at different educational levels to determine the effectiveness of photo stories more broadly. (4). Future research could also combine photo stories with other learning models to achieve more varied and optimal learning innovations in improving students' writing skills.

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