

**THE EFFECT OF PICTURE-CUED TASK ON STUDENTS'  
WRITING SKILL IN RECOUNT TEXT AT THE  
TENTH GRADE OF SMA SWASTA GAJAH MADA MEDAN**

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**ABSTRACT**

This study aimed to determine the effect of using the Picture-Cued Task on students' writing skills in recount texts. Students often experienced difficulties in generating ideas, organizing events chronologically, and using appropriate vocabulary and grammar. This study employed a quantitative approach with a quasi-experimental design, specifically the nonequivalent control group design. The population consisted of all tenth-grade students, while the sample consisted of two classes: 20 students in the experimental class and 20 students in the control class. The data were collected through pre-test and post-test writing assessments and were analyzed using an analytic scoring rubric. The findings showed that the mean score of the experimental class increased from 62.05 in the pre-test to 83.25 in the post-test, while the mean score of the control class increased from 61.05 to 79.05. The result of the t-test showed that the t-observed value (4.15) was higher than the t-table value (2.024) at the significance level of 0.05. Therefore, the alternative hypothesis ( $H_a$ ) was accepted and the null hypothesis ( $H_0$ ) was rejected. It can be concluded that the Picture-Cued Task had a significant effect on improving students' writing skills in recount texts because it helped students generate ideas, organize events, and express their experiences more clearly.

***Keywords: Picture-Cued Task; Writing Skill Recount Text; Quasi- Experimental Design.***

**ABSTRAK**

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui pengaruh penggunaan *Picture-Cued Task* terhadap keterampilan menulis siswa dalam teks recount. Siswa sering mengalami kesulitan dalam menghasilkan ide, mengorganisasi peristiwa secara kronologis, serta menggunakan kosakata dan tata bahasa yang tepat. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kuantitatif dengan desain kuasi-eksperimen, khususnya desain kelompok kontrol nonekuivalen. Populasi penelitian terdiri dari seluruh siswa kelas X, sedangkan sampel terdiri dari dua kelas: 20 siswa di kelas eksperimen dan 20 siswa di kelas kontrol. Data dikumpulkan melalui tes menulis pre-test dan post-test serta dianalisis menggunakan rubrik penilaian analitik.

Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa nilai rata-rata kelas eksperimen meningkat dari 62,05 pada pre-test menjadi 83,25 pada post-test, sedangkan nilai rata-rata kelas kontrol meningkat dari 61,05 menjadi 79,05. Hasil uji-t menunjukkan bahwa nilai t-hitung (4,15) lebih besar daripada nilai t-tabel (2,024) pada tingkat signifikansi 0,05. Oleh karena itu, hipotesis alternatif ( $H_a$ ) diterima dan hipotesis nol ( $H_0$ ) ditolak.

Dapat disimpulkan bahwa *Picture-Cued Task* memiliki pengaruh yang signifikan dalam meningkatkan keterampilan menulis siswa pada teks recount karena membantu siswa dalam menghasilkan ide, mengorganisasi peristiwa, dan mengekspresikan pengalaman mereka dengan lebih jelas.

**Kata kunci: *Picture-Cued Task*; Keterampilan Menulis Teks Recount; Desain KuasiEksperimen.**

## 1. PENDAHULUAN

### Background of the Study

English is widely recognized as a global language that plays a significant role in communication, education, and technological development. In Indonesia, English is taught as a compulsory subject at various levels of education to enable students to communicate well, both verbally and in writing. Writing is often regarded as the most difficult language skill, as it requires students to generate ideas, select appropriate vocabulary, apply correct grammatical structures, and organize their thoughts logically. According to Harmer (2004), writing is not simply putting words on paper, but rather a complex thought process involving planning, drafting, revising, and editing. Therefore, teaching writing requires appropriate learning methods so that students can better convey their ideas.

In the high school curriculum, one type of text that students must master is the recount text, which recounts past experiences or events in sequence.

However, in reality, many students still face challenges with writing recount texts. Based on the researcher's observations during an educational internship at SMA

Swasta Gajah Mada Medan, the researcher conducted an initial

assessment of 17 tenth-grade students. The assessment measured **five aspects**: content, organization, vocabulary, grammar, and mechanics. Writing indicators were used according to Jacobs et al. The scores of the tenth-grade students at SMA Swasta Gajah Mada Medan **did not meet the minimum passing criteria**. The results of this study identified that students' writing skills still need improvement or are classified as low, especially in developing ideas, structuring paragraphs, and choosing

Based on the pre-test results for writing recount texts, students' initial writing skills ranged from 45 to 60 points, all of which were below the minimum passing score of 75. The lowest score, 45, indicates that some students have significant difficulties in developing ideas into structured texts, using appropriate vocabulary, and applying correct grammar rules. Meanwhile, the highest score of 60 indicates that, although some students have relatively stronger abilities than others, they have not yet reached the minimum competency standard.

Overall, these findings indicate that the recount-writing skills of tenthgrade students before the treatment

remained low to moderate. This condition shows that there are real problems in writing learning that need to be addressed immediately. Therefore, practical and interesting learning strategies are needed to help students improve their writing skills. One learning method that provides visual and cognitive support to students is the Picture-Cued Task. This method uses pictures as visual stimuli to help students understand the context, recognize the sequence of events, and develop the storyline systematically. In addition, Picture-Cued Tasks can help students begin the writing process more easily and reduce their dependence on direct translation from Indonesian to English

## **2. KAJIAN TEORI Theoretical Framework**

The theoretical framework will serve as the foundation for this study, explaining how the Picture-Cued Task will influence students' writing skills in recount texts. This study will be based on theories of writing as a cognitive process and of the use of visual media in language learning. Picture-Cued Tasks are expected to help students generate ideas, organize events logically, and improve accuracy in vocabulary and structure. Therefore, this framework will guide the research in designing treatments, analyzing results, and concluding on the effectiveness of the Picture-Cued Task in improving students' writing performance.

### **2.1 Writing Skill**

Writing is considered one of the most complex productive skills in the English language learning because it

requires an integrated process that involves cognitive, linguistic, and metacognitive aspects. Unlike receptive skills, writing involves the active construction of meaning, resulting in coherent written language. According to Harmer (2004b), writing will not simply be an act of copying but will become a critical and reflective activity that transforms abstract ideas into effective writing through several stages, such as prewriting, drafting, revising, editing, and finalizing. Therefore, writing is a complex, multilevel skill that demands critical thinking, language mastery, and systematic procedures to transform ideas into clear, meaningful, and well-organized texts.

### **Definition of Writing Skill**

Writing skill is one of the most complex productive skills in language learning because it enables learners to communicate ideas, thoughts, and experiences in a clear, organized, and meaningful written form. In academic, professional, and social contexts, writing serves not only as a tool for communication but also as a medium for developing critical thinking, organizing ideas, and strengthening linguistic competence, including grammar, vocabulary, and discourse structure. Through writing, learners learn to think systematically, evaluate information, and express meaning accurately.

According to Nunan (2020), Writing is a cognitive activity that involves developing ideas, selecting appropriate expressions, and

organizing them into clear sentences and paragraphs that can be understood by readers. This view highlights that writing is not a spontaneous activity but a cognitive process that involves planning, idea development, word choice, sentence structure, and revision. Thus, writing requires higher-order thinking skills in order to transform abstract ideas into comprehensible written language.

According to Napitupulu (2024), writing is the ability to convey thoughts and ideas in an understandable form. The writing is not only intended for readers, but also for the writer themselves, such as in journals or notes. Writing is the process of pouring ideas into text so that they have meaning and can be read. *In addition*, Sri & Sitepu (2025) emphasize that writing plays an essential role in language learning because it reinforces students' understanding of grammar, idioms, and vocabulary. Writing activities also allow learners to experiment with language forms, apply linguistic knowledge independently, and reflect on their ideas. Through writing, learners become more aware of language structure and learn how to integrate new information with their existing knowledge.

Furthermore, Sudaryanto (2024) explains that writing is the ability to express thoughts and feelings using graphic symbols that readers can understand. This definition implies that writers must ensure clarity of meaning, logical sequencing of ideas, and coherence between sentences and paragraphs. Writing, therefore, requires

not only linguistic accuracy but also the ability to organize information effectively so that the intended message is delivered clearly.

Similarly, Gautam (2021) states that writing involves producing a series of words that are not only linguistically correct but also meaningful and acceptable to readers. This view underscores that meaning, purpose, and communicative clarity are central to effective writing. A good piece of writing should combine linguistic correctness with the ability to convey ideas clearly and appropriately based on the reader's needs. According to Tampubolon (2023), writing skill is the ability of students to express ideas, thoughts, and feelings in writing using appropriate vocabulary, correct grammar, and well-organized sentences. Writing skills also involve the ability to arrange ideas logically so that the reader clearly understands the text.

Based on these experts' perspectives, writing skill is a complex cognitive and communicative ability that enables individuals to transform ideas, thoughts, and experiences into written language that is organized, meaningful, and understandable. Writing requires mastery of linguistic components such as grammar, vocabulary, and sentence structure; awareness of discourse elements such as coherence and cohesion; understanding of genre conventions; and the ability to consider the needs of the audience. Therefore, writing is not merely a linguistic activity but a comprehensive process that integrates thinking, organizing, and expressing ideas

systematically in order to achieve effective communication.

### 3. METODOLOGI PENELITIAN

#### Research Design

This research employed a quantitative, quasi-experimental design, specifically the Nonequivalent Control Group Design. This design was chosen because the school's class placement system did not allow random student assignment, as the classes had been predetermined before the research took place. According to **Creswell (2018)**, quantitative research is an approach for testing objective theories by examining relationships among variables, which can be measured with instruments and analyzed using statistical procedures. Therefore, the quantitative approach was considered appropriate for this study, as it aimed to examine the effect of the PictureCued Task technique on students' recount writing skills using measurable data and statistical analysis.

The quasi-experimental design was selected because it allowed the identification of causal relationships even in the absence of complete randomization. Arikunto (2013:213) emphasized that quasi-experimental research is conducted when the researcher cannot fully control the research subjects but can still administer treatment and measure its impact. This means that the absence of total external control does not eliminate the nature of experimentation as long as measurements are carried out before and after the

treatment so that changes can be analyzed logically, comparatively, and empirically.

In this research, a quasiexperimental design was used to compare the writing performance of students taught through the Picture-Cued Task technique and those taught through conventional instruction. By administering pre-tests and post-tests to both groups, the researcher was able to assess students' progress more objectively. Thus, this design aligned with the real classroom setting and enabled the researcher to measure the treatment effectively without disrupting the existing instructional structure.

The research design is presented below:

The determination of the population and sample in this research aimed to ensure that the data obtained truly represented the targeted group. The participants were selected based on the study's needs and objectives to enable the results to be used to draw conclusions and describe the actual conditions.

#### Population

The population of this research consisted of all tenth-grade students of SMA Swasta Gajah Mada Medan in the academic year 2025/2026, totaling 40 students. The population was divided into two classes, that is class X1 and class X2 each with 20 students. Creswell (2018) stated that a population refers to a group of individuals who share common characteristics and from whom the researcher collects data to generalize the results of a study. In this research, the population consisted of all tenth-grade

students because they had similar characteristics, particularly in learning recount text as part of the English curriculum.

The tenth grade was considered appropriate for this research because it represented the foundational stage of English writing development at the senior high school level. In contrast, eleventh- and twelfth-grade students focused on different, more advanced text types that were not aligned with the study's focus. Therefore, the tenth-grade population was methodologically relevant for investigating students' recount text writing skills.

### **Sample**

The sample for this research consisted of 40 tenth-grade students from class X1 and class X2, each with 20 students. The sampling technique used in this study was total sampling, as all members of the population were included as research participants. According to Arikunto (2013:174), if the population is fewer than 100 students, it is recommended to take the entire population as the sample. Therefore, total sampling was considered appropriate because it ensured the collected data were representative of the population and minimized sampling bias. In this study, class X1 was designated as the experimental class, while class X2 served as the control class. The experimental class (X1) received instruction using the Picture-Cued Task technique, whereas the control class (X2) received instruction using conventional teaching methods without the Picture-Cued Task

## **4. HASIL DAN PEMBAHASAN**

### **Research Discussion**

This study aimed to examine whether the use of the *Picture-Cued Task* technique had a significant effect on students' ability in writing recount texts. Based on the statistical analysis, the result of the t-test showed that the t-observed value (4.15) was higher than the t-table value (2.024) at the 0.05 significance level. Therefore, the alternative hypothesis ( $H_a$ ) was accepted and the null hypothesis ( $H_0$ ) was rejected. This indicates that the *Picture-Cued Task* technique had a significant effect on students' writing ability.

In addition, both groups showed improvement after the teaching process. The experimental group increased from 62.05 to 83.25, while the control group improved from 61.05 to 79.05. However, the experimental group showed a higher improvement (21.20 points) compared to the control group (18.00 points). This suggests that the *Picture-Cued Task* technique was more effective in improving students' writing ability. This improvement can be explained by the use of visual stimuli, which helped students generate ideas and organize events more easily in a chronological order. As a result, students were able to write more effectively and coherently.

The findings of this study are supported by several previous studies.

- 1) Sari (2021) reported that the implementation of the *Picture-Cued Task* significantly improved students' ability in writing recount texts.

**Similarity:** Both studies employed the same technique and found significant improvement in students' writing performance;

**Difference:** Sari's study mainly focused on score improvement, whereas the present study also examined detailed aspects of writing such as grammar, vocabulary, organization, and mechanics;

**Result:** Both studies confirm that the *Picture-Cued Task* technique is effective in improving students' writing ability.

- 2) Hutabarat (2022) found that the use of picture series enhanced students' ability to organize events chronologically. **Similarity:** Both studies utilized visual media to support idea development; **Difference:** The present study applied a more structured instructional technique compared to the general use of picture series in Hutabarat's study; **Result:** Visual media were proven to assist students in organizing ideas more effectively.
- 3) Sari (2019) revealed that picturebased media helped students generate ideas, although some students still encountered difficulties in grammar and vocabulary.

**Similarity:** Both studies highlight the important role of visual media in writing; **Difference:** This study employed a more systematic approach and a more comprehensive assessment;

**Result:** The findings of this study indicate a more optimal improvement due to the structured learning process.

Overall, visual media play an important role in improving students' writing ability. However, this study provides a more comprehensive evaluation by using an analytic scoring rubric and a structured teaching technique.

**The novelty of this study lies in the use of a structured *Picture-Cued Task* technique combined with a comprehensive assessment of students' writing ability.** In conclusion, this study supports previous research and confirms that the *Picture-Cued Task* technique is effective in improving students' ability in writing recount texts.

## 5. KESIMPULAN DAN SARAN

### Conclusion

Based on the results of the research and data analysis, it could be concluded that the use of the *Picture-Cued Task* technique had a significant effect on students' ability in writing recount texts among the tenth-grade students of SMA Swasta Gajah Mada Medan. This was shown by the improvement of the students' mean score in the experimental class from 62.05 in the pre-test to 83.25 in the post-test, while the control class increased from 61.05 to 79.05. In addition, the result of the t-test showed that  $t_{observed}$  (4.15) was higher than  $t_{table}$  (2.024) at the significance level of

5% ( $\alpha = 0.05$ ). Therefore, the alternative hypothesis ( $H_a$ ) was accepted and the null hypothesis ( $H_0$ ) was rejected. This finding indicated that the Picture-Cued Task technique was effective in improving students' ability in writing recount texts, particularly in helping students generate ideas, organize events chronologically, and express their experiences more clearly in written form.

### **Suggestion**

Concerning the conclusion above, the suggestions were stated as follows:

#### 4) For English Teachers

English teachers are suggested to use the Picture-Cued Task technique as an alternative teaching strategy in teaching writing, especially in recount texts. This technique can help students generate ideas more easily, organize events chronologically, and improve their writing ability. Teachers are also encouraged to combine this technique with other teaching methods or activities, such as group discussions, peer review, or writing exercises, in order to maximize students' learning outcomes.

#### 5) For Students

Students are encouraged to actively practice writing by using visual media such as pictures to help them generate and develop their ideas. The use of the Picture-Cued Task technique can make it easier for students to organize their thoughts and express their experiences in written form. Regular practice is expected to improve their writing ability

and increase their confidence in writing recount texts. 6) For Future Researchers

Future researchers are suggested to develop this study by applying the Picture-Cued Task technique in different text types, such as narrative or descriptive texts, or at different educational levels. In addition, future studies may use a larger sample size, longer treatment duration, or different research designs to obtain more comprehensive results. Researchers are further advised to analyze particular components of writing, including grammar, vocabulary, and coherence, more thoroughly.

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