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The Effectiveness of Picture Media (Photographs) on the Poetry Writing Ability of Eighth-Grade Students at SMP Negeri 15 Ambon

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Abstract

This study investigated the effectiveness of photo media in supporting poetry-writing skills among eighth-grade students at SMP Negeri 15 Ambon. The research was motivated by students' difficulties in generating ideas, developing imagery, selecting diction, and organizing poetic elements. A pre-experimental design was described as a One-Shot Case Study, involving 25 students from Class VIII.4 selected purposively. Data were gathered through classroom observation, interviews, documentation, and a poetry-writing test. Students' post-treatment scores were compared with archived scores obtained from writing instruction without photo media. Descriptive statistics and prerequisite tests, followed by an independent-samples t-test, were reported. The mean score increased from 62.28 without photo media to 83.28 after its use, exceeding the school's minimum mastery criterion of 71. The normalized gain was 0.62, categorized as moderate. The reported t-test indicated a statistically significant difference ($t = -5.929$, $df = 48$, $p < .001$). Findings suggest that photographs can provide concrete visual stimuli for imagination and idea development in poetry writing. However, the use of archived comparison scores and the absence of a control group limit causal interpretation.

Keywords: *photo media; poetry writing; pre-experimental design; visual stimulus*

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INTRODUCTION

Indonesian language learning at the junior secondary school level is directed toward developing language skills, linguistic knowledge, and positive attitudes toward the language. One of the productive skills that students need to master is writing. Writing requires students to transform their knowledge and experiences into ideas organized in written language. Semi (2007) views writing as a creative process of transferring ideas into written symbols, while Tarigan (2008) regards writing as a language skill used for indirect communication.

In literature learning, poetry writing provides students with opportunities to develop their psychological experiences, imagination, sensitivity, and language skills. Poetry may originate from experiences, feelings, memories, or things that are seen, heard, and thought about. Jabrohim et al. (2009) explain that the creative process of poetry writing involves imagination and the development of empirical facts into aesthetically valuable expressions. Therefore, poetry instruction should provide stimuli that help students observe, feel, develop ideas, and creatively select words.

Preliminary observations in Class VIII of SMP Negeri 15 Ambon indicated that students experienced difficulties in developing their imagination, determining poetic structure, aligning the content with the theme, and expanding their knowledge of poetry. Instruction dominated by lectures and assignments was also considered less engaging. The archival assessment records showed that the mean poetry-writing score was 62.28, which was below the Minimum Competency Criterion (KKM) of 71. These findings indicate the need for instructional media that can help students generate ideas and develop their imagination in a more concrete manner.

Picture media (photographs) have the potential to serve as visual stimuli in poetry-writing instruction. Sanjaya (2016) states that photographs can convey information, stimulate thinking, and develop imagination. Arsyad (2016) also explains that photographs provide visual representations that closely resemble real objects or situations. In poetry-writing practice, students can observe photographs, interpret their meanings, determine titles, collect relevant words, compose poetic lines, pay attention to poetic elements, and revise their written work (Mafrukhi et al., 2016).

Based on this background, this study aims to examine the effectiveness of using picture media (photographs) in improving the poetry-writing ability of eighth-grade students at SMP Negeri 15 Ambon. The study focuses on differences between scores obtained before the use of the media, based on archival records, and scores obtained after the treatment, as well as the level of improvement achieved.

METHODS

This study employed a quantitative approach with a pre-experimental design, specifically a One-Shot Case Study. In this design, a single group receives a treatment (X), after which the outcome is observed (O), without a pretest or a control group. The treatment consisted of poetry-writing instruction using picture media (photographs), while the observed outcome was the students' poetry-writing ability. In the reported analysis, post-treatment scores were compared with archival scores from poetry-writing instruction conducted without photo media.

The population consisted of 198 eighth-grade students of SMP Negeri 15 Ambon in the 2019/2020 academic year, distributed across seven classes. The sample comprised 25 students from Class VIII.4 (10 female and 15 male students), selected through purposive sampling based on the teacher's considerations and the results of preliminary observations. The study was conducted from November 7 to 28, 2019. Initial classroom observations were carried out on November 14, while the instructional treatment using photo media was implemented on November 21, 2019.

The instruments and data sources included observation notes, an audio recorder, a Lesson Plan (Rencana Pelaksanaan Pembelajaran/RPP), a poetry-writing test, interviews with the Indonesian language teacher, and students' score records. Primary data consisted of posttest results, interviews, and observation notes, while secondary data comprised archival poetry-writing scores obtained from instruction without photo media. Students' poems were assessed based on three aspects: theme appropriateness, poetic structure, and word coherence. Each aspect was assigned a score ranging from 1 to 4, and the total score was subsequently converted into a final grade.

The data were analyzed descriptively using Microsoft Excel 2016 and SPSS for Windows. The reported inferential analyses included the Kolmogorov–Smirnov test for normality, Levene's test for homogeneity, and the independent-samples t-test to compare the mean archival scores with the post-treatment scores. The significance level was set at 0.05. The improvement in students' achievement was also calculated using the normalized gain (N-Gain) formula.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. Students' Poetry Writing Ability Before and After the Use of Photo Media

The results of this study indicate differences in students' poetry writing ability before and after the implementation of photo media in the learning process. The data were obtained from 25 students of Class VIII.4 at SMP Negeri 15 Ambon. Students' poetry writing ability was assessed based on three aspects: theme suitability, poetic structure, and word coherence.

Before the use of photo media, students' poetry writing ability was relatively low. The archival data showed that the students' average score was 62.28, which was below the Minimum Competency Criterion (KKM) established by the school, namely 71. The low scores indicated that students still experienced difficulties in developing ideas, expressing their thoughts and feelings, selecting appropriate diction, and constructing poetic language.

After the implementation of photo media, students' poetry writing scores showed a considerable improvement. The average score increased to 83.28, exceeding the school's Minimum Competency Criterion. The comparison between students' scores before and after the use of photo media is presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Students' Poetry Writing Scores Before and After the Use of Photo Media

Learning Condition	Total Score	Mean Score
Without photo media	1,557	62.28
With photo media	2,082	83.28

The data in Table 1 demonstrate that the average score of students' poetry writing ability increased by 21 points after the implementation of photo media. This improvement suggests that photographs can provide concrete visual stimuli that help students develop ideas and transform visual observations into poetic expressions.

The photographs used in the learning process provided students with visual objects that could be observed, interpreted, and associated with their personal experiences, emotions, and imagination. Rather than beginning the writing process with abstract ideas, students were able to identify objects, situations, colors, activities, and emotional impressions represented in the photographs. These visual elements subsequently became sources of inspiration for constructing poetic lines.

The improvement in students' scores also indicates that visual media may facilitate the initial stage of poetry writing, particularly idea generation. Students who previously experienced difficulties determining what to write could begin their writing process by observing the photographs and identifying relevant words or expressions. The visual stimulus consequently helped reduce the difficulties associated with generating ideas and developing poetic content.

However, the difference in average scores should be interpreted cautiously. The study employed a pre-experimental design without a control group, and the comparison scores were obtained from archival learning data. Therefore, the findings provide evidence of an improvement associated with the implementation of photo media, although they do not establish a definitive causal relationship between the media and students' achievement.

2. Students' Poetry Writing Ability Based on Assessment Aspects

Students' poetry writing ability was assessed through three aspects: theme suitability, poetic structure, and word coherence. Each aspect was scored on a scale of 1–4. The results of the assessment indicate that students demonstrated relatively good performance in all three aspects, although differences were observed in their achievement.

Table 2. Students' Poetry Writing Performance Based on Assessment Aspects

Assessment Aspect	Score 4	Score 3	Score 2	Score 1
Theme suitability	13 students (52%)	10 students (40%)	2 students (8%)	0
Poetic structure	14 students (56%)	10 students (40%)	0	1 student (4%)
Word coherence	7 students (28%)	13 students (52%)	5 students (20%)	0

The results show that theme suitability was one of the aspects in which students performed relatively well. Most students were able to develop poems that corresponded to the visual themes presented in the photographs. This finding suggests that photographs provided a clear contextual reference for students in determining the content and direction of their poems.

The photographs enabled students to establish a relationship between the visual object and the ideas expressed in their poems. For example, objects, landscapes, human activities, or particular situations depicted in photographs could be interpreted as representations of experiences, emotions, or personal reflections. The presence of a visual stimulus made the theme more concrete and helped students maintain the relevance of their poetic expressions.

In terms of poetic structure, most students obtained scores of 3 or 4. Nevertheless, one student obtained the lowest score in this aspect. This finding indicates that although photo media helped students develop poetic ideas, the ability to transform those ideas into aesthetically structured poetry remained a challenge for some students.

The difficulties may be related to students' limited mastery of poetic language, particularly diction, figurative language, imagery, rhyme, and typography. Some students were able to describe what they observed in the photographs but had not fully transformed their descriptions into imaginative and aesthetic expressions. In other words, visual observation was not always accompanied by the ability to manipulate language creatively.

The aspect of word coherence also showed relatively satisfactory results. Most students obtained scores of 3, indicating that the words and lines in their poems generally demonstrated an understandable relationship. However, five students obtained a score of 2, suggesting that coherence between words and poetic lines still needed improvement.

These findings indicate that the use of photo media may be particularly beneficial in facilitating the development of poetic ideas and theme-related content. Nevertheless, the media should be accompanied by explicit instruction on poetic language, including diction, imagery, figurative expressions, and the organization of poetic lines. The combination of visual observation and language exploration may provide a more comprehensive learning experience for students.

3. Distribution of Students' Achievement Scores

The distribution of students' scores also illustrates the improvement in poetry writing ability following the implementation of photo media. Before the use of photo media, students' scores ranged from 40 to 85. After the implementation, scores ranged from 58 to 100.

The distribution of students' achievement categories is presented in Table 3.

Table 3. Distribution of Students' Poetry Writing Achievement

Achievement Category	Without Photo Media	With Photo Media
Low	10 students (40%)	2 students (8%)
Moderate	8 students (32%)	7 students (28%)
High	7 students (28%)	16 students (64%)
Total	25 students (100%)	25 students (100%)

The results demonstrate a shift in students' achievement distribution. Before the use of photo media, 40% of students were classified as having low achievement, whereas only 28% were categorized as having high achievement. Following the implementation of photo media, the proportion of students in the high-achievement category increased to 64%, while the proportion in the low-achievement category decreased to

8%.

This shift suggests that the improvement was not limited to a small number of students who already possessed strong poetry-writing skills. Instead, the distribution indicates that a greater proportion of students achieved higher scores after participating in the learning process using photo media.

The reduction in the low-achievement category may be associated with the photographs' role in providing concrete stimuli for students who previously struggled to generate ideas. The photographs helped establish a starting point for writing, thereby reducing the cognitive demands involved in independently developing a poetic theme.

At the same time, the remaining students in the moderate and low categories indicate that photo media alone may not be sufficient to address all difficulties in poetry writing. Students may still require additional support in developing vocabulary, understanding poetic elements, and expressing emotions through figurative and imaginative language.

4. Statistical Analysis of Students' Poetry Writing Scores

Before conducting the comparison of students' poetry writing scores, normality and homogeneity tests were performed as statistical prerequisites.

The Kolmogorov–Smirnov normality test showed that the significance value for the scores obtained without photo media was 0.200, while the significance value for the scores obtained with photo media was 0.157. Both values were greater than the significance level of 0.05. Therefore, the data were considered to satisfy the normality assumption.

The homogeneity test using Levene's test produced a significance value of 0.609, which was also greater than 0.05. This result indicated that the variances of the two score distributions were statistically homogeneous.

The statistical test results are summarized in Table 4.

Table 4. Results of Normality and Homogeneity Tests

Test	Statistic/Value	Significance	Conclusion
Normality: Without photo media	0.117	0.200	Normal
Normality: With photo media	0.149	0.157	Normal
Homogeneity (Levene's test)	0.265	0.609	Homogeneous

Based on the prerequisite tests, the original study subsequently conducted an Independent Samples t-Test to examine the difference between students' poetry writing scores without and with photo media. The test produced a t-value of −5.929, with 48 degrees of freedom and a significance value reported as 0.000 ($p < 0.001$).

The result indicates a statistically significant difference between the two sets of scores. The null hypothesis was rejected, while the alternative hypothesis was accepted. This finding supports the observation that students' poetry writing scores were higher following the implementation of photo media.

Table 5. Results of the Independent Samples t-Test

Statistical Test	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Conclusion
Independent Samples t-Test	−5.929	48	< 0.001	Significant difference

The statistical result is consistent with the descriptive findings presented previously. The average score increased from 62.28 to 83.28, while the proportion of students in the high-achievement category increased from 28% to 64%. These findings collectively indicate that students demonstrated better poetry-writing performance after the learning process using photo media.

Nevertheless, the statistical interpretation requires methodological consideration. The research involved the same class of students, while the comparison scores were obtained from archival data representing their learning without photo media. If the two sets of scores correspond to the same students, the statistical comparison should ideally employ a paired-samples t-test rather than an independent-samples t-test. The reported degrees of freedom (df = 48) indicate that the original analysis treated the scores as two independent groups of 25 observations.

Therefore, the statistical findings should be interpreted in accordance with the original analytical

procedure, while acknowledging the potential limitation associated with the choice of statistical test. A reanalysis using a paired-samples t-test would provide a more appropriate statistical comparison if the observations were obtained from the same students.

5. Magnitude of Improvement Based on N-Gain

To examine the magnitude of improvement in students' poetry writing ability, the original study calculated the normalized gain (N-Gain). The analysis produced an average N-Gain value of 0.62, which was categorized as moderate improvement.

The N-Gain result indicates that the improvement in students' poetry writing ability was not merely reflected in the difference between the average scores but also demonstrated a moderate level of achievement relative to the possible improvement.

The increase in the average score from 62.28 to 83.28, together with the N-Gain value of 0.62, suggests that photo media provided a meaningful contribution to the learning process. The photographs functioned as visual stimuli that enabled students to observe concrete objects and transform their observations into written poetic expressions.

The improvement may be explained through the relationship between visual perception, imagination, and language production. Photographs provide observable details that students can interpret and associate with their own experiences. These associations may generate ideas, emotions, and vocabulary that subsequently support the construction of poetic lines.

In poetry writing, the ability to develop ideas is closely related to the ability to select and organize language aesthetically. Photo media may facilitate the first stage of this process by providing concrete material for students' imagination. However, the transformation of visual observations into poetry still requires linguistic creativity, including the selection of diction, the use of imagery, figurative expressions, and the arrangement of lines.

Consequently, the moderate N-Gain value suggests that photo media can function as an effective instructional stimulus, particularly in supporting idea generation and thematic development. However, its effectiveness may be further enhanced through instructional activities that guide students in exploring vocabulary, developing figurative language, revising poetic lines, and improving the coherence and aesthetic quality of their poems.

6. Discussion: The Role of Photo Media in Poetry Writing Learning

The findings of this study demonstrate that the use of photo media was associated with improved poetry writing performance among eighth-grade students at SMP Negeri 15 Ambon. The improvement was reflected in the average score, achievement distribution, and normalized gain value.

The pedagogical relevance of photo media lies in its ability to provide a concrete visual stimulus for an abstract and imaginative writing activity. Poetry writing requires students to transform experiences, observations, emotions, and thoughts into language that possesses aesthetic value. For students who experience difficulties in generating ideas, the writing process may become challenging when they are required to begin from an abstract theme without sufficient stimulus.

Photographs can help address this difficulty by presenting visual objects and situations that students can observe directly. Through observation, students may identify particular objects, colors, movements, settings, and emotional impressions. These observations can then be developed into words, phrases, metaphors, images, and poetic lines.

The results of the study also suggest that photo media may contribute to greater student engagement during the learning process. The photographs provided an alternative learning stimulus that made the poetry-writing activity more concrete and potentially more interesting than activities based solely on verbal explanations or predetermined themes.

The improvement in theme suitability indicates that photographs helped students maintain the relevance of their poems to the intended topic. Meanwhile, the relatively high scores in poetic structure suggest that some students were able to transform visual observations into organized poetic expressions. However, the lower performance of certain students in the structure and coherence aspects indicates that the development of poetic language remains an important instructional concern.

This finding highlights the distinction between generating ideas and developing literary expression.

Visual media may facilitate the generation of ideas, but students still need guidance in transforming those ideas into aesthetically meaningful language. Teachers should therefore integrate photo-based activities with explicit instruction on poetic elements, including diction, imagery, figurative language, rhyme, typography, and coherence.

The findings also have implications for Indonesian language learning in the context of literary education. The use of photographs may encourage students to connect their writing with their surrounding environment and personal experiences. Photographs of landscapes, social activities, cultural practices, or everyday experiences may serve as meaningful stimuli for students to develop poems that reflect their observations and interpretations of the world.

In this regard, photo media can be understood not merely as a visual aid but as a pedagogical stimulus that facilitates the relationship between observation, imagination, and language production. Its implementation may support a more student-centered poetry-writing learning process by encouraging students to observe, interpret, generate ideas, and express their experiences through written language.

However, the findings should be interpreted within the limitations of the research design. The study employed a pre-experimental One-Shot Case Study design without a control group, and the comparison data were obtained from archival scores. Consequently, other factors, such as differences in learning activities, students' prior experiences, instructional conditions, and the timing of assessment, may also have contributed to the observed improvement.

Further research involving a more rigorous experimental design, a control group, and a more appropriate statistical analysis would be necessary to establish stronger evidence regarding the effectiveness of photo media in improving students' poetry writing ability.

Overall, the results indicate that photo media has potential as an instructional medium for poetry-writing learning. Its ability to provide concrete visual stimuli, facilitate idea generation, and support thematic development makes it a relevant alternative for addressing students' difficulties in writing poetry. Nevertheless, its implementation should be accompanied by systematic guidance on poetic language and writing techniques to ensure that students not only generate ideas but also produce poems with stronger linguistic and aesthetic qualities.

CONCLUSION

The use of photo media in poetry-writing instruction for Class VIII.4 students at SMP Negeri 15 Ambon was associated with an improvement in poetry-writing achievement. The mean score increased from 62.28 based on archival data obtained without photo media to 83.28 after the treatment, exceeding the Minimum Competency Criterion (KKM) of 71. The N-Gain value of 0.62 was categorized as moderate. The reported statistical test also indicated a significant difference. Photographs have the potential to serve as stimuli for fostering imagination, developing ideas, and helping students connect themes with words. Nevertheless, the findings should be interpreted cautiously because the use of archival scores, the absence of a control group, and the potential mismatch between the statistical analysis and paired data limit causal conclusions. Future research is recommended to employ a pretest–posttest design with a comparison group and an appropriate statistical analysis.

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