



Enhancing Students' Narrative Writing Through English Visual Prompt Cards at SMA Swasta Nurul Iman Tanjung Morawa

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Abstract. The purpose of this research was to investigate how effective English Visual Prompt Cards (EVPC) are at enhancing the narrative writing skills of eleventh graders at SMA Swasta Nurul Iman Tanjung Morawa. Writing has traditionally been regarded as one of the most difficult skills to master in English as a foreign language because it demands not only grammatical precision and vocabulary knowledge but also the ability to generate ideas, organize them coherently, and express them creatively. A lot of students struggle with narrative writing, especially when it comes to crafting plots, keeping logical coherence, and preserving motivation as they write. This study proposed EVPC as a visual-based tool aimed at fostering students' creativity, steering idea generation, and alleviating writing-related anxiety as a means of tackling these challenges. The research utilized Classroom Action Research (CAR), carried out in two cycles, each comprising planning, action, observation, and reflection. The study involved 30 students from the eleventh grade as participants, and data collection utilized a mix of quantitative and qualitative methods, such as pre-tests, post-tests, observation sheets, interviews, and questionnaires. The quantitative results showed considerable advancement: students' writing mean score rose from 52.00 in the pre test to 77.66 in the first cycle and reached 82.40 in the second cycle, with every student successfully achieving the Minimum Passing Grade (KKM). The qualitative results further indicated that EVPC improved students' motivation, confidence, and involvement in writing activities. Students indicated that visual prompts facilitated their generation of story ideas, organization of plots, and expansion of vocabulary. Teachers noted a significant change in the classroom atmosphere, with students becoming more active, collaborative, and eager to engage in writing exercises. This research shows that EVPC has significant pedagogical value in developing linguistic competence and positive learning attitudes. In addition to enhancing the quality of students' writing, EVPC fostered in them the idea that narrative writing could be a worthwhile and pleasurable pursuit, rather than a taxing chore. This research indicates that EVPC can be successfully incorporated into English writing instruction, especially for narrative texts, and may also be suitable for other genres such as descriptive, recount, or expository texts. This study adds to the expanding literature on the use of innovative media in language education and offers practical insights for educators, learners, and researchers to come. To sum up, EVPC is an effective teaching resource that improves students' narrative writing skills while also fostering their creativity, motivation, and self-assurance in learning English as a foreign language.

Keywords: English Visual Prompt Cards, Narrative Writing, Classroom Action Research

1. INTRODUCTION

Writing is not merely an academic activity but a fundamental life skill that plays a crucial role in both educational and professional contexts. It serves as a medium for effective communication, enabling individuals to convey ideas clearly to teachers, peers, and future employers (Harahap, 2023). Furthermore, writing fosters critical thinking by requiring individuals to organize their thoughts logically and systematically (Tarigan, 2008). In addition, writing competence is essential for professional success, as it is widely used in daily tasks such as composing emails, reports, and proposals (Walsh, 2010).

In the context of English as a Foreign Language (EFL), writing becomes even more

challenging because students must not only generate ideas but also express them using appropriate vocabulary, grammar, and text structure (Brown, 2004). One important genre that students are expected to master is narrative text. Narrative writing allows learners to develop creativity, imagination, and the ability to structure stories coherently (Anderson & Anderson, 1997, 2022). However, many students face difficulties in writing narrative texts, particularly in organizing ideas, developing plots, and using appropriate language features (Arifin & Rahmadani, 2022).

This issue is evident among students at SMA Swasta Nurul Iman Tanjung Morawa. Based on preliminary observations, students often struggle to transform their ideas into well-structured narrative texts. These difficulties are influenced by several factors, including limited vocabulary, low motivation, and a lack of engaging instructional media. Traditional teaching methods that rely heavily on textbooks tend to make writing activities monotonous and less stimulating for students (Mulyasa, 2020). As a result, students frequently experience what is commonly known as “blank page syndrome,” where they feel confused and hesitant when starting to write.

To address these challenges, innovative and interactive teaching strategies are required. One promising approach is the use of visual media, particularly English visual prompt cards. Visual prompts provide concrete representations that help students generate ideas and organize their thoughts more effectively (Andriani & Azizah, 2023). Visual-based learning also supports students in connecting abstract concepts with real-life contexts, thereby enhancing comprehension and engagement (Anderson, 2021).

Moreover, the use of visual prompts aligns with the principles of social learning theory, which emphasizes that learning occurs through observation and interaction with meaningful stimuli (Bandura, 2024). By using visual prompt cards, students can actively participate in the learning process, construct narratives based on visual cues, and develop confidence in expressing their ideas. Previous studies have shown that visual and picture-based strategies significantly improve students' writing skills, particularly in narrative texts (Anisa et al., 2023; Ardan et al., 2023; Bates, 2015).

In addition, integrating visual prompts with digital or interactive elements can further enhance students' writing development. Research indicates that technology-supported narrative tasks can improve students' creativity, motivation, and overall writing performance in EFL classrooms (Chou, 2021a, 2021b). Therefore, the use of English visual prompt cards is not only relevant but also highly effective in modern language learning environments.

Based on the above considerations, this study aims to enhance students' ability in writing

narrative texts through the use of English visual prompt cards at SMA Swasta Nurul Iman Tanjung Morawa. This research is expected to provide both theoretical and practical contributions, particularly in developing innovative teaching strategies that can improve students' writing skills and engagement in the learning process.

2. RESEARCH METHODS

This research uses a Classroom Action Research (CAR) approach. Think of it as a "learning by doing" method where the teacher acts as a researcher to solve real classroom problems and upgrade their teaching style. This study utilizes a Classroom Action Research (CAR) framework based on the Kemmis and McTaggart model (Wiriaatmadja, 2008), which operates as a continuous "improvement loop" through four key stages: planning, action, observation, and reflection. Central to this intervention is the use of English Visual Prompt Cards (EVPC), designed to spark creative brainstorming and help students organize complex thoughts into a logical writing structure. To ensure consistent results, the process is conducted over two iterative cycles each consisting of a pre-test, intervention, observation, and post-test allowing the researcher to act as both instructor and critic. By refining teaching strategies based on real-time feedback and reflection, this approach aims to transform students into confident writers who can communicate with precision and clarity. (Arikunto, 2010)

The research was carried out in two cycles, each consisted of a pre-test, intervention, observation, and post-test. The pre-test assessed students' initial writing skills, while the intervention involved teaching with EVPC. During the observation phase, data were gathered on student engagement and challenges. The post-test measured improvement, and the reflection phase informed adjustments for the next cycle. (Mulyasa, 2020)

This cyclical process supports the continuous refinement of teaching strategies to achieve better learning outcomes. The design of the action research cycle by Kemmis, as cited in Wiriaatmadja (2008), is as follows:

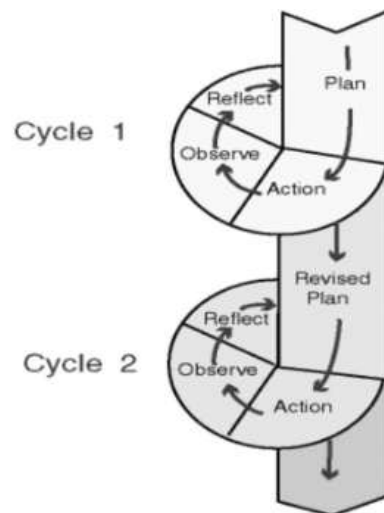


Figure 1 Cyclical Action Research Model

This study used both quantitative and qualitative approaches to collect and analyze data:

1. Quantitative Data

Quantitative data were used to measure the outcomes of the study and were considered objective in nature. The instruments included:

- a. Writing Tests: Pre-test and post-test scores were collected and analyzed using descriptive statistics to assess students' improvement in writing skills across the cycles.
- b. Writing Performance Criteria: Students' progress was evaluated based on specific writing components such as idea development, grammar, vocabulary, and text organization.

2. Qualitative Data

Qualitative data were used to describe information that could not be measured numerically and were therefore considered subjective. The following instruments were used:

- a. Observation Sheet: to record the teacher's actions, student participation, and classroom atmosphere during the teaching process.
- b. Interview: conducted with both teacher and students to gather additional information as part of the preliminary study and gain deeper insights into the learning process.
- c. Questionnaire: used to collect students' opinions, interests, and difficulties related to writing and their experiences using English Visual Prompt Cards.

Aspects of narrative writing assessment evaluated through writing tests using English Visual Prompt Cards (EVPC) were used to derive the achievement indicators in this study. The

achievement indicators served as a benchmark to assess the degree of improvement in students' narrative writing skills from the pre-cycle to cycle II. The following table presents the achievement indicators:

Table 1 presents the achievement indicators

Aspects Assessed	Achievement Indicators	Assessment Instruments
Narrative Text Structure	Students are able to write texts with a complete structure: orientation, complication, resolution	Writing test (narrative rubric)
Visual Interpretation Prompt Cards	Students are able to connect images with story content and produce relevant text	Writing test & teacher observation
Creativity & Originality	Students generate interesting imaginative and non monotonous story ideas	Writing test (creativity rubric) + student questionnaire
Grammar & Mechanics	Grammar, spelling, and punctuation errors are reduced so as not to interfere with comprehension	Writing test (mechanics rubric)
Motivation & Participation	Students showed increased motivation, activity, and confidence in writing	Class observations, interviews, and questionnaires

The accomplishment indicators in the table above are a reference point for evaluating enhancements in students' narrative writing abilities. The indicators' achievement can be demonstrated through writing test outcomes, assessment rubrics, and qualitative data such as observations, interviews, and questionnaires. This study's success is indicated by the rise in students' average narrative writing scores from the pre-cycle to cycle II and the fact that all students met the Minimum Passing Criteria (KKM).

The reliability of the test refers to its consistency in producing stable and dependable results over repeated administrations. In this study, the reliability of the writing test was measured using SPSS version 25. This statistical software helped to determine the internal consistency of the test items, ensuring that the results accurately reflect students' writing performance. A high reliability score indicated that the test was trustworthy and suitable for assessing students' writing skills.

This study follows a Classroom Action Research (CAR) design consisting of two iterative cycles to ensure the effectiveness of the teaching intervention. Each cycle adheres to a four-stage process: planning, action, observation, and reflection. In the planning phase, the researcher prepares lesson plans, assessments, and the English Visual Prompt Cards (EVPC)

based on identified student difficulties. This is followed by the action phase, where the EVPC is implemented in the classroom to spark creativity and provide a narrative structure. During observation, the researcher documents student engagement and the effectiveness of the cards, which leads to the reflection phase where strengths and weaknesses are analyzed. While Cycle 1 serves to identify initial hurdles and baseline proficiency, Cycle 2 uses those insights to provide targeted support and refined strategies, ultimately allowing for a comprehensive comparison of progress to determine the impact of EVPC on students' writing mastery.

Tabel 2 study utilized both quantitative and qualitative data

Aspect	Score 5 (Excellent)	Score 4 (Good)	Score 3 (Fair)	Score 2 (Poor)	Score 1 (Very Poor)	
Content	Ideas are very clear, complete, creative, and fully relevant to the topic	Ideas are clear enough, some parts are less developed, but still relevant	Limited ideas, less developed, rather ordinary story	Ideas are unclear, partly irrelevant to the topic	Ideas are very unclear, irrelevant, and hard to understand.	
Organization	Narrative structure is complete (orientation, complication, resolution); storyline is coherent and cohesive	Structure is almost complete, storyline quite clear, with minor repetition	Structure is partially unclear; storyline not fully coherent	Structure is incomplete; storyline confusing and not logical	No clear structure; writing is random and does not resemble a narrative text.	
Vocabulary	Vocabulary is rich, varied, accurate, and well	suites to the context of the story	Vocabulary is fairly accurate, limited variation, still appropriate	Vocabulary is simple, repetitive, sometimes inaccurate	Vocabulary is very limited, frequent errors in word choice	Vocabulary is inaccurate, inappropriate, and makes the text incomprehensible.
Language Use	Grammar is correct, consistent	Some grammatical	Frequent grammatical errors,	Many grammatical	Very poor grammar, no	

	use of past tense, varied sentence structures	errors, but meaning is still clear	sometimes hinder understanding	al errors, making text difficult to understanding	understanding of basic sentence structure.	
Mechanics	Spelling, punctuation, and capitalization are correct; writing is neat and easy to read	A few minor errors in mechanics that do not interfere with meaning	Several errors that may cause confusion	Many errors that significantly affect understanding	Excessive errors in mechanics ; writing is very difficult to read	

This study utilized both quantitative and qualitative data. Qualitative data described the conditions and events that occur during the teaching and learning process, while quantitative data was used to analyze students' writing test scores. The qualitative data was gathered through observation sheets, interview transcripts, diary notes, photographic documentation, and questionnaires to capture improvements in students' writing mastery. Meanwhile, the quantitative data was collected from vocabulary test results and analyzed by calculating students' scores.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. Finding

Quantitative and qualitative data were used to analyze the data. The quantitative data were derived from the mean of the students' writing test score. The qualitative data were gathered through interview, observation sheet and questionnaire. This study was carried out in one class of the eleventh grade students at SMA Nurul Iman Tanjung Morawa, which consist of 30 students. This study was completed in two cycles and each cycle consist of four steps (planning, acting, observing, and reflecting).

1. Quantitative Data

Quantitative and qualitative data were used to analyze the data. The quantitative data were derived from the mean of the students' writing test score. The qualitative data were gathered through interview, observation sheet and questionnaire. This study was carried out in one class of the eleventh grade students at SMA Nurul Iman Tanjung Morawa, which consist of 30 students. This study was completed in two cycles and each cycle consist of four steps (planning, acting, observing, and reflecting).

Table 3 Quantitative Data

Descriptive Statistics					
	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
nilai pretest	30	39,00	79,00	52,0000	10,26208
nilai posttest 1	30	74,00	82,00	77,6667	2,44009
nilai posttest 2	30	76,00	90,00	82,4000	4,27180
Valid N (listwise)	30				

Based on the table above, students' writing ability before using English Visual Prompt Cards had an average score of 52.00, with the lowest score being 39.00 and the highest score being 79.00, and a standard deviation of 10.26. Meanwhile, after using the EVPC medium, the average score was 77.66, with the lowest score being 74.00 and the highest score being 82.00, and a standard deviation of 2.44. Since the post-test scores were still below the minimum passing grade, the researcher conducted a second post-test, in which the average score was 82.40, with the lowest score being 76.00 and the highest being 90.00, and a standard deviation of 4.27.

Table 4 Students' Pre-Test Results

No	Initial Names	Pre-Test
1	AF	52
2	ANP	54
3	ANZP	48
4	AA	55
5	ASA	65
6	APA	56
7	DFH	55
8	EC	47
9	FAA	49
10	GBP	58
11	IAK	57
12	ID	54
13	IZ	78
14	IMKS	49
15	MFA	45
16	MHIN	40
17	MRA	54
18	MRIS	51
19	NA	79
20	N	39
21	NAN	46
22	NDP	42
23	NKA	70

24	RB	43
25	RA	41
26	RA	44
27	SSG	56
28	UR	40
29	VRA	48
30	YK	45
	Total	1560

Based on the score shown in the table above, there were 2 students who passed the test with the minimum criteria which is 75, and 28 students did not pass it. The students' total score was 1560. In addition there were there were 30 students in total took the . The following formula was applied to calculate the mean of the test. $X = \frac{\sum x}{n}$

X : the mean of the students' score

$\sum x$: the total Score

n : the number of the students

So, the mean of the students' score was : $X = \frac{1560}{30} = 52$

According to the results of the analysis, the students' writing was very low. The mean of the students score was 52.

The percentage of students who achieved success in writing was calculated using the formula:

$$P = \frac{R}{T} \times 100\%$$

Notes:

P1= Percentage of students who get the point 75 up.

P2= Percentage of students who get the point 75 less.

R= Number of students who get point 75 up.

T= Total number of students who do the best

$$P1 = \frac{2}{30} \times 100\% = 6,6\%$$

$$P2 = \frac{28}{30} \times 100\% = 93,3\%$$

From the above analysis, students' writing proficiency is very low. Only 2 students passed the exam, or 6.6%, while 28 students failed the exam, or 93.3%. It can be concluded that students' writing proficiency in the orientation exam is very low. After conducting the orientation exam and obtaining the results of the students' writing proficiency, treatment using the EVPC medium was immediately implemented. The use of EVPC refers to the learning materials in the student handbook, which focuses on folk tales. After the first cycle of three sessions was completed, a final exam was administered at the end of the cycle, and the

questions were varied to match the images they received in the EVPC. The results obtained can be seen in the table below.

Table 5 Students' Post Test Result in Cycle -1

No	Initial Name	Post-Test 1
1	AF	76
2	ANP	77
3	ANZP	75
4	AA	80
5	ASA	79
6	APA	76
7	DFH	82
8	EC	75
9	FAA	75
10	GBP	79
11	IAK	80
12	ID	79
13	IZ	81
14	IMKS	76
15	MFA	75
16	MHIN	74
17	MRA	82
18	MRIS	77
19	NA	82
20	N	79
21	NAN	79
22	NDP	75
23	NKA	77
24	RB	76
25	RA	74
26	RA	77
27	SSG	79
28	UR	80
29	VRA	78
30	YK	76
	Total	2330

From the table above regarding the Final Exam in Cycle I, the total student score is 2330 and the number of students who took the exam is 30. The average student score on the Cycle 1 final exam is 77.66, which was obtained by applying the formula below. $X = \sum x / n$

So the mean of the students score was $X = \frac{2330}{30} = 77,66$

The analysis shows that students' mastery of narrative text writing has improved. The average test score was 77.66, which is categorized as a sufficient level, and the percentage of students who passed the vocabulary test was calculated using the following formula:

$$P = \frac{R}{T} \times 100\%$$

$$P1 = \frac{28}{30} \times 100\% = 93,3\%$$

$$P2 = \frac{2}{30} \times 100\% = 6,6\%$$

Analysis of Table 4.2 shows that the average student score was 77.66. The number of students who scored 75 or higher was 28, or 93.3%, and 2 students scored below 75, or 6.6%, indicating that students' vocabulary mastery had improved. It can be seen that the comparison of student scores on the post-test is higher than the total orientation scores. However, student performance in the first post-test cycle is still ineffective, as only 93.3% of students achieved good scores and met the minimum competency criteria (KKM). Clearly, this study expected that the improvement in vocabulary mastery would exceed the minimum passing criteria, or at least meet the predetermined achievement standards. Therefore, it was decided to proceed to Cycle II. The results of Cycle II are presented in the following table.

Table 6 Students' Post-test Results in Cycle II

No	Initial Name	Post Test 2
1	AF	87
2	ANP	80
3	ANZP	79
4	AA	89
5	ASA	83
6	APA	80
7	DFH	88
8	EC	79
9	FAA	76
10	GBP	86
11	IAK	82
12	ID	81
13	IZ	89
14	IMKS	85
15	MFA	79
16	MHIN	76
17	MRA	88
18	MRIS	85
19	NA	90
20	N	83
21	NAN	81
22	NDP	76
23	NKA	84
24	RB	78
25	RA	77
26	RA	80
27	SSG	87

28	UR	82
29	VRA	84
30	YK	78
Total	2472	

From the final exam results table for cycle II above, the total student score is 2472 and the number of students who completed this exam is 30. To calculate the average student score in this exam, the following formula is applied. $X = \sum x / n$

So the mean of the students score was $X = \frac{2472}{30} = 82,4$

The results of the analysis from the table above showed that the mean score of students is increased and is higher than the mean score of students in the post-test in cycle I and the success rate of students who were able to achieve a score of 75 was calculated using the following formula $P = \frac{R}{T} \times 100\%$

$$P1 = \frac{30}{30} \times 100\% = 100\%$$

$$P2 = \frac{0}{30} \times 100\% = 0\%$$

The results of the analysis show that students' ability to write narrative texts has improved significantly and has been achieved by all students. Student scores improved in each cycle. The improvement in students' narrative text can be seen from the number of students who were able to achieve or exceed the minimum passing score, by applying the following formula:

Pre Test $= \frac{2}{30} \times 100\% = 6,6\%$

Post Test 1 $= \frac{28}{30} \times 100\% = 93,3\%$

Post Test 2 $= \frac{30}{30} \times 100\% = 100\%$

The percentage shows a significant increase in student scores on the pre test, post-test I, and post-test II. On the pre test, only 2 students (6.6%) scored 75 or higher out of 30 students, while in post-test cycle I, 28 students (93.3%) scored 75 or higher out of 30 students. In the post-test II cycle, all 30 students (100%) scored 75 or higher.

2. Qualitative Data

This study utilized a combination of qualitative and quantitative data including observation sheets, interviews, questionnaires, and writing tests to evaluate the impact of English Visual Prompt Cards (EVPC) on narrative writing skills. The research was conducted in two cycles: while Cycle I showed a significant jump in average scores (from 52.00 to 77.66), it revealed lingering challenges in classroom management and student understanding of sentence structure. By reflecting on these issues and implementing a more refined approach in Cycle II, the researcher successfully fostered a more organized and highly motivated environment

where students viewed writing as an engaging, game-like activity. Consequently, all 30 students passed the minimum competency standard in the final post-test, achieving a peak average of 82.40. Ultimately, the qualitative feedback from both teachers and students confirmed that the EVPC not only improved test scores but also effectively addressed core difficulties in idea generation, vocabulary mastery, and overall writing confidence.

4. CONCLUSION

The study at SMA Swasta Nurul Iman Tanjung Morawa demonstrates that English Visual Prompt Cards (EVPC) significantly enhance narrative writing skills, as evidenced by average scores rising from 52.00 in the pre-test to 82.40 by the end of Cycle II, achieving a 100% success rate relative to the Minimum Passing Grade. Qualitatively, the cards transformed writing into a dynamic, game-like experience that boosted student confidence and creativity while providing a clear structure for organizing plots and expanding vocabulary. The research implies that learners benefit from reduced writing anxiety and increased motivation through visual stimuli, while teachers gain an innovative tool for differentiated instruction and student-centered learning. Ultimately, it is suggested that teachers integrate EVPC regularly alongside collaborative activities, while future researchers explore the impact of this media on other genres and digital platforms to further support long-term language mastery. Beyond the numbers, the qualitative data (interviews, observations, and questionnaires) shows a fundamental change in the student's relationship with English: Overcoming the "Blank Page": Before EVPC, students reported feeling "stuck" when trying to generate ideas. The visual cues provided an immediate narrative "hook," making the writing process feel more like storytelling than a chore. Confidence vs. Anxiety: In early stages, "to be" usage and grammar errors caused significant insecurity. As the cycles progressed, the "game-like" nature of the cards shifted the focus from "worrying about mistakes" to "successfully conveying a message." Active Collaboration: By Cycle II, students weren't just writing in silos; they were discussing cards, sharing vocabulary "tricks," and assisting peers, which the teacher noted as a major boost in classroom atmosphere.

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