

The Effect Of Using Magic Card As Media On The Ability Of Eighth Grade Students Of SMP Negeri 1 Siantar In Writing Descriptive Text**Pengaruh Penggunaan Kartu Sihir Sebagai Media Terhadap Kemampuan Siswa Kelas VIII SMP Negeri 1 Siantar Dalam Menulis Teks Deskriptif****Novry Yohanna Damanik^{1*}, Sanggam Siahaan², Irene Adryani Nababan³**Department of English Education, Universitas HKBP Nommensen Pematangsiantar, Indonesia^{1,2,3}Email: novrydamanik202@gmail.com¹

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Received : 6 June 2026, Revised : 7 June 2026, Accepted : 8 June 2026.

ABSTRACT

This research aimed to investigate the effect of using Magic Card as media on the ability of eighth-grade students in writing descriptive text at SMP Negeri 1 Siantar. This study applied a quasi-experimental research design involving two groups, namely an experimental group and a control group. The experimental group was taught by using Magic Card media, while the control group was taught by using the conventional teaching method. The population of this research consisted of all eighth-grade students in the 2025/2026 academic year, and the sample was selected through purposive sampling. The sample consisted of 64 students divided into two classes: 32 students in the experimental group and 32 students in the control group. The instrument used in collecting the data was a writing test in the form of pre-test and post-test. The data were analyzed by using an independent sample t-test. The findings showed that the mean score of the experimental group improved from 55.25 in the pre-test to 71.69 in the post-test, while the control group showed only slight improvement. The result of hypothesis testing revealed that the value of t-observed was 7.29, which was higher than the value of t-table 2.000 at the significance level of 0.05. Therefore, the alternative hypothesis (H_a) was accepted. In conclusion, the use of Magic Card media significantly improved students' ability in writing descriptive text. Magic Card media also created a more interactive, enjoyable, and motivating learning atmosphere during the teaching and learning process.

Keywords: *Magic Card Media, Writing Ability, Descriptive Text, Quasi-Experimental Research, English Teaching*

ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengkaji pengaruh penggunaan Magic Card sebagai media terhadap kemampuan siswa kelas VIII dalam menulis teks deskriptif di SMP Negeri 1 Siantar. Penelitian ini menggunakan desain penelitian kuasi-eksperimental yang melibatkan dua kelompok, yaitu kelompok eksperimen dan kelompok kontrol. Kelompok eksperimen diajar dengan menggunakan media Magic Card, sedangkan kelompok kontrol diajar dengan menggunakan metode pengajaran konvensional. Populasi penelitian ini terdiri dari seluruh siswa kelas VIII pada tahun ajaran 2025/2026, dan sampel dipilih melalui purposive sampling. Sampel terdiri dari 64 siswa yang dibagi menjadi dua kelas: 32 siswa di kelompok eksperimen dan 32 siswa di kelompok kontrol. Instrumen yang digunakan dalam pengumpulan data adalah tes menulis dalam bentuk pre-test dan post-test. Data dianalisis menggunakan uji t sampel independen. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa nilai rata-rata kelompok eksperimen meningkat dari 55,25 pada pre-test menjadi 71,69 pada post-test, sedangkan kelompok kontrol hanya menunjukkan sedikit peningkatan. Hasil pengujian hipotesis menunjukkan bahwa nilai t-nyata sebesar 7,29, yang lebih besar daripada nilai t-tabel sebesar 2,000 pada tingkat signifikansi 0,05. Oleh karena itu, hipotesis alternatif (H_a) diterima. Kesimpulannya, penggunaan media Magic Card secara signifikan meningkatkan

kemampuan siswa dalam menulis teks deskriptif. Media Magic Card juga menciptakan suasana belajar yang lebih interaktif, menyenangkan, dan memotivasi selama proses pembelajaran.

Kata Kunci: Media Magic Card, Kemampuan Menulis, Teks Deskriptif, Penelitian Kuasi-Eksperimental, Pengajaran Bahasa Inggris

1. Introduction

English has become one of the most important international languages used in communication, education, technology, and global interaction. In Indonesia, English is taught as a foreign language and has been included in the national curriculum from elementary school to university level. The government considers English as an essential subject because it enables students to access global knowledge and improve their competitiveness in the modern era. Consequently, students are expected to develop competence in the four major language skills, namely listening, speaking, reading, and writing, in order to communicate effectively in English.

Among the four language skills, writing is often considered the most difficult skill to master. Writing requires students not only to generate ideas but also to organize them into meaningful sentences and coherent paragraphs (Herman et al., 2024). In the educational context, writing plays an important role because it allows students to express their thoughts, opinions, and experiences systematically (Purba et al., 2026). Moreover, writing activities can develop students' creativity, critical thinking, and communication abilities. Therefore, students need continuous practice and appropriate learning strategies to improve their writing competence.

One of the text types taught to junior high school students is descriptive text. Descriptive text is a genre of writing that aims to describe a person, object, animal, or place clearly and specifically so that readers can imagine the described subject vividly. Generally, descriptive text consists of two generic structures: identification and description. Identification introduces the subject being described, while description explains the characteristics, qualities, or appearances of the subject in detail. To produce a good descriptive text, students should master several writing components such as content, organization, grammar, vocabulary, and mechanics.

However, many students still experience difficulties in writing descriptive texts. Students often struggle to develop ideas, arrange sentences coherently, and use appropriate vocabulary and grammar. In many cases, students have limited vocabulary mastery, making their writing repetitive and less expressive. In addition, grammatical problems such as incorrect tense usage, subject–verb agreement, and sentence construction frequently appear in students' writing. These difficulties make students less confident and less motivated during writing activities.

The difficulties faced by students in writing descriptive text were also identified by Arifanita et al. (2019). The study revealed that Indonesian students commonly encounter problems related to vocabulary mastery, grammar usage, and idea development when writing descriptive texts. Furthermore, students often find it difficult to organize the structure of descriptive text effectively. Based on these findings, the researchers suggested that teachers should provide more structured and engaging learning activities to help students improve their writing ability. Therefore, teachers are expected to use appropriate teaching media and strategies that can stimulate students' interest and creativity in writing.

One of the learning media that can be used in teaching writing is Magic Card media. According to Hanif and Farhayadi (2019), learning media are tools or instruments used to deliver messages from teachers to students in order to stimulate students' thoughts, feelings, interests, and attention during the learning process (Rumapea et al., 2025). Magic Card is a creative learning medium in the form of folded cards containing interesting pictures of people, objects, animals, or places. The cards are designed attractively so that students become more interested and enthusiastic during the learning process. Through the pictures displayed on the cards,

students can more easily generate ideas and transform them into descriptive sentences and paragraphs.

The use of Magic Card media is expected to create a more interactive and enjoyable learning atmosphere. When students receive and open the cards, they become more curious, motivated, and actively involved in classroom activities. The visual images presented in the cards can help students explore their imagination and organize their ideas systematically. In addition, the use of pictures as visual stimuli can reduce students' anxiety in writing because they have concrete objects to describe. As a result, students may find it easier to compose descriptive texts with clearer content and better organization.

Previous studies have also shown the positive effects of Magic Card media in teaching writing. Kristina (2020) stated that Magic Card can improve students' ability in writing descriptive texts because the media makes the learning process more interesting, interactive, and enjoyable. Students become more enthusiastic and motivated to participate in writing activities when using Magic Card. In line with these findings, several researchers concluded that Magic Card media could significantly improve students' writing achievement, particularly in descriptive text writing. Therefore, this study aims to investigate the effect of using Magic Card as media on the ability of eighth grade students of SMP Negeri 1 Siantar in writing descriptive text.

2. Research Methods

1. Research Design

This study employed a quasi-experimental research design to investigate the effect of using Magic Card media on students' ability in writing descriptive text. Quasi-experimental research was selected because the researcher used existing classes without randomly assigning the participants (Girsang et al., 2025). The study involved two groups, namely an experimental group and a control group. The experimental group was taught descriptive writing by using Magic Card media, while the control group was taught by using the conventional teaching method applied by the English teacher. The design of the research can be presented as follows:

Table 1. Research design

Group	Pre-Test	Treatment	Post-Test
Experimental Group	Y1	Xm	Y2
Control Group	Y1	Xn	Y2

Notes:

Y1 : Pre-test

Y2 : Post-test

Xm : Teaching descriptive text by using Magic Card media

Xn : Teaching descriptive text without using Magic Card media

The experimental group received a pre-test before the treatment, followed by learning activities using Magic Card media, and finally a post-test after the treatment. Meanwhile, the control group received the same pre-test and post-test but was taught without using Magic Card media.

2. Place and Time of the Research

This research was conducted at SMP Negeri 1 Siantar, located at Jalan Mahoni Raya No. 237, Perumnas Batu 6, Siantar District. The study was carried out during the 2025/2026 academic year.

3. Population and Sample

The population of this study consisted of all eighth-grade students of SMP Negeri 1 Siantar in the 2025/2026 academic year. There were eight classes in total, with 32 students in each class. Therefore, the total population consisted of 256 students.

This study used purposive sampling to determine the sample. The researcher selected class VIII-1 and class VIII-2 as the research sample. Class VIII-1, consisting of 32 students, was assigned as the experimental group and was taught by using Magic Card media. Meanwhile, class VIII-2, consisting of 32 students, was assigned as the control group and was taught by using the Grammar Translation Method commonly applied by the English teacher at the school.

Table 2. Sample of the research

No	Class	Number of Students
1	VIII-1	32
2	VIII-2	32
Total	2 Classes	64 Students

4. Variables of the Research

Variables are important components in quantitative research because they determine the relationship investigated in the study (Marbun et al., 2025). This research involved two variables, namely the independent variable and the dependent variable. The independent variable is the variable that influences or affects another variable, whereas the dependent variable is the variable influenced by the independent variable. In this study, the independent variable was the use of Magic Card media, while the dependent variable was the students' ability in writing descriptive text.

The variables of this research are described as follows:

1. Independent Variable (X): Magic Card media
2. Dependent Variable (Y): Students' ability in writing descriptive text

5. Research Instrument

The instrument used in this research was a writing test in the form of an essay test. The test consisted of a pre-test and a post-test. The pre-test was administered before the treatment to determine the students' initial writing ability, while the post-test was administered after the treatment to measure the students' improvement in writing descriptive text. In the test, students were instructed to write a descriptive text based on a predetermined theme. The students' writing was assessed based on several aspects, namely content, organization, grammar, vocabulary, and mechanics. The scores obtained from the pre-test and post-test were collected as quantitative data and analyzed statistically to determine the effectiveness of Magic Card media in teaching descriptive writing.

6. Technique of Data Collection

The data in this study were collected through writing tests. The researcher used pre-test and post-test procedures to compare the students' writing achievement before and after the treatment. The procedures of data collection were conducted as follows:

1. Administering the pre-test to both the experimental and control groups.
2. Conducting the treatment in the experimental group by using Magic Card media.
3. Conducting the teaching process in the control group by using the Grammar Translation Method.
4. Administering the post-test to both groups using the same type of test as the pre-test.
5. Scoring and analyzing the students' writing results.

7. Technique of Data Analysis

This study applied quantitative data analysis techniques to analyze the students' writing scores obtained from the pre-test and post-test. The data collected from both groups were

analyzed statistically to determine the effect of Magic Card media on students' writing ability. The researcher used an independent sample t-test to compare the mean scores of the experimental and control groups. The statistical analysis was conducted to determine whether there was a significant difference between the students taught by using Magic Card media and those taught without using the media.

The procedures of data analysis were as follows:

1. Reading the students' answer sheets carefully.
2. Identifying and classifying the students' writing results.
3. Scoring the pre-test and post-test based on the writing assessment criteria.
4. Tabulating the scores of both experimental and control groups.
5. Calculating the total and mean scores of the pre-test and post-test.
6. Analyzing the data statistically by using an independent sample t-test to test the research hypothesis.

3. Results

The purpose of this study was to determine the effect of using Magic Card media on the ability of eighth-grade students in writing descriptive text at SMP Negeri 1 Siantar. The data were obtained from the students' pre-test and post-test scores in both the experimental and control groups. After the data had been analyzed, the researcher found that the use of Magic Card media gave a positive effect on students' writing achievement, particularly in writing descriptive text. Before the treatment was conducted, both groups were given a pre-test to measure the students' initial writing ability. The result of the pre-test in the experimental group showed that the mean score was 55.25. This result indicated that most students still experienced difficulties in writing descriptive text. Many students had problems in organizing ideas, using appropriate vocabulary, constructing grammatical sentences, and developing descriptive paragraphs effectively. Similarly, the control group also showed relatively low achievement in the pre-test with a mean score of 56.12. The similarity of the pre-test scores in both groups indicated that the students had almost the same level of writing ability before receiving the treatment.

After the pre-test, the researcher conducted the treatment in the experimental group by using Magic Card media. During the teaching and learning process, students appeared more active, enthusiastic, and motivated in participating in writing activities. The use of attractive pictures contained in the Magic Cards helped students generate ideas more easily and stimulated their imagination in describing objects, people, and places. Students also became more confident in expressing their ideas into written form because the visual media provided concrete guidance for them in constructing descriptive texts.

Meanwhile, the control group was taught by using the conventional teaching method without applying Magic Card media. In this class, the learning process tended to be more teacher-centered, and students showed less enthusiasm during writing activities. Some students still experienced difficulties in developing ideas and organizing sentences into coherent paragraphs. As a result, the improvement in students' writing ability in the control group was not as significant as the improvement shown by the experimental group.

The result of the post-test revealed a significant improvement in the experimental group. The mean score increased from 55.25 in the pre-test to 71.69 in the post-test. The mean gain score of the experimental group was 16.44 with a standard deviation of 11.30. This improvement demonstrated that Magic Card media effectively helped students enhance their descriptive writing ability. Students were able to produce better descriptive texts in terms of content, organization, vocabulary, grammar, and mechanics after being taught by using Magic Card media. In contrast, the control group showed only slight improvement after the teaching process. The mean score of the post-test in the control group was 55.71, which was slightly lower than the pre-test mean score of 56.12. The mean gain score in the control group was -0.41 with

a standard deviation of 6.60. This finding indicated that the conventional teaching method did not significantly improve students' writing achievement. The students still faced difficulties in expressing ideas and composing descriptive texts effectively.

Furthermore, the hypothesis testing showed that the value of t -observed was 7.29, while the value of t -table at the significance level of 0.05 was 2.000. Since the value of t -observed was higher than t -table ($7.29 > 2.000$), the alternative hypothesis (H_a) was accepted, while the null hypothesis (H_o) was rejected. This result proved that there was a significant effect of using Magic Card media on students' ability in writing descriptive text.

The findings of this study indicate that Magic Card media can create a more enjoyable and interactive learning atmosphere in writing classes. The visual representation provided by the cards encouraged students to become more creative and imaginative in developing ideas for descriptive writing. In addition, the use of attractive media reduced students' boredom and increased their participation during the learning process. Therefore, Magic Card media can be considered an effective teaching medium to improve students' writing skills, especially in descriptive text writing.

Overall, the results of this research confirmed that students who were taught by using Magic Card media achieved better improvement than students who were taught through conventional methods. The significant difference between the experimental and control groups demonstrated that the application of innovative and interactive learning media plays an important role in enhancing students' writing performance. Consequently, English teachers are encouraged to use creative media such as Magic Card to support students in developing their writing ability and increasing their motivation in learning English.

Discussion

The hypothesis testing result showed that $t_{obtained} = 7.29$ was higher than $t_{table} = 2.000$ at $\alpha=0.05$. Therefore, the alternative hypothesis (H_a) was accepted. This indicates that the use of Magic Card media produced a statistically significant improvement in students' writing skill compared to conventional media. The acceptance of H_a can be explained through three interrelated mechanisms observed during the treatment and supported by learning theories.

First, Magic Card media reduced cognitive load and facilitated idea generation through dual coding. Writing descriptive text requires students to recall vocabulary, organize ideas, and construct grammatically correct sentences simultaneously. For eighth grade students, this often exceeds their working memory capacity, leading to writing apprehension. Magic Card addressed this by presenting information in two forms: visual images and written keywords. According to Paivio's Dual Coding Theory (1986), verbal and visual information are processed in separate channels, and their combination enhances retention and recall. During the treatment, students could retrieve the word "narrow" and "crowded" directly from the card while looking at a picture of an alley, instead of searching their mental lexicon. This explains why the experimental group's mean gain score reached 16.44, while the control group, which lacked such scaffolding, showed a gain of -0.41.

Second, the structured yet flexible nature of Magic Card promoted guided discovery learning. Each card provided a model of sentence structure and content, but students had to arrange and expand the information into coherent paragraphs. This aligns with Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development (1978), where learning occurs most effectively with appropriate scaffolding. The cards acted as temporary scaffolds that were gradually internalized by students. In contrast, the control group received direct explanation without guided practice, which resulted in passive learning and minimal transfer to writing performance. The researcher observed that experimental students were more willing to revise and extend their sentences without constant teacher prompting.

Third, the game-based implementation lowered the affective filter and increased time on task. Writing is often perceived as a high-anxiety task. By framing the activity as a card game, students' anxiety decreased and their willingness to participate increased. Krashen's Affective

Filter Hypothesis (1982) posits that low anxiety and high motivation allow more comprehensible input to be processed. The increased engagement was evident from classroom observation notes: experimental students spent 85-90% of the time actively writing and discussing, while control students spent most of the time listening and copying examples. Consequently, the experimental group had more opportunities for output practice, which is critical for writing skill development as emphasized by Swain's Output Hypothesis (1985).

The findings corroborate Nurhayati et al. (2020) and Indriyastuti (2018), who reported significant improvements in descriptive text writing using Magic Card at the senior high school level. Although the educational level differs, the underlying mechanism—using visual-keyword prompts to support writing processes—remains applicable. The adaptation in this study involved simplifying vocabulary and using contexts familiar to eighth grade students. However, the external validity of this study is limited by the sample size and duration. The treatment was conducted in one school with 64 students over six meetings. Therefore, the result should be interpreted with caution, and replication with a larger and more diverse sample is recommended.

4. Conclusion

Based on the findings of the research, it can be concluded that the use of Magic Card media had a significant positive effect on the students' ability in writing descriptive text. The students who were taught by using Magic Card media showed better improvement in their writing achievement compared to those who were taught by using the conventional teaching method. The improvement could be seen from the increase in the students' post-test scores in the experimental group after receiving the treatment. The results of the data analysis also proved that Magic Card media helped students develop their ideas more easily and improve several aspects of writing, such as content, organization, vocabulary, grammar, and mechanics. In addition, the use of attractive visual media created a more interactive and enjoyable learning atmosphere, which increased students' motivation, participation, and confidence during the writing process. Therefore, Magic Card media can be considered an effective teaching medium for improving students' descriptive writing skills.

Furthermore, the hypothesis testing showed that the value of t -observed (7.29) was higher than the value of t -table (2.000) at the significance level of 0.05. This result indicated that the alternative hypothesis (H_a) was accepted. In other words, there was a significant effect of using Magic Card media on the ability of eighth-grade students of SMP Negeri 1 Siantarin writing descriptive text. Consequently, English teachers are recommended to apply creative and innovative learning media, such as Magic Card, to support students' writing development and improve the effectiveness of the teaching and learning process.

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