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## Improving students' writing skills using storyboard

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### A B S T R A C T

*Keywords: Narrative Text, Project-Based Learning, Storyboard, Writing Skills*

In English language learning, writing is a skill that allows students to express their ideas, opinions, and thoughts effectively. However, students at SMPN 03 Entikong demonstrated low writing proficiency. This research aimed to investigate how the implementation of the Storyboard in teaching solves students' writing problems. Storyboard is a teaching tool that displays a sequence of pictures accompanied by the appropriate words and sentences to describe events in the story. This research was conducted through classroom action research, which was carried out in two cycles with 36 students in Grade VIII-B as participants. Data were collected using writing test, observation checklist, and field notes. The quantitative findings showed an improvement in the average of the writing test score from 63.44 to 72.22. The qualitative results indicated that the implementation of Storyboard in the writing instruction and practice helped students to express ideas clearly, choose appropriate vocabulary, and use correct grammar in their writing, especially for the narrative text. Thus, it can be concluded that Storyboard improved students' writing skills.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

In the context of education, teaching the English language becomes a fundamental aspect of academic achievement. English language teaching focuses on the components of written and oral skills (Sherkuziyeva et al., 2023). There are reading, writing, listening, and speaking. However, from those four skills, writing skills play a particularly vital role as an integrative skill to be mastered by students in the classroom, forcing students to combine their knowledge about grammatical rules, vocabulary choice, and the ability to construct content cohesively (Mantra & Widiastuti, 2023). It enables students to interpret and communicate their ideas, thoughts, and understanding, which impacts their academic performance and outcomes. As a crucial skill, writing has become one of the required subjects in the school curriculum decided by the government of Indonesia (Zein et al., 2020). It encourages teachers to nurture and develop their students' writing skills. Students are expected to have the proper concept of knowledge and understanding for writing and to be able to express information, ideas, or opinions through writing (Gunawan, 2017). Consequently, students must acquire the writing skills necessary for communication.

Writing aims to transform ideas and thoughts enormously. Through writing, students can reconstruct their ideas, thoughts, perspectives, and insights in a structured manner effectively (Rezeki & Rahmani, 2021; Megista et al., 2023; Santri et al., 2022). To achieve proficient and cohesive writing, students not only require the idea itself but also consider the correct grammatical

tenses used in writing and construct the ideas in an organized, coherent, and clear manner. Writing skills are developed through the integration process of what has been heard, talked about, and read, then re-expressed in written form. Moreover, the writing process is not just merely on a linear process, it can be an iterative process in which planning, drafting, and editing occur repeatedly rather than in a fixed order (Harmer, 2006; Abdullah et al., 2020; Mirkovic et al., 2018). Hence, writing skills improve students' communication performance (Akki & Larouz, 2021). Through writing, students can deliberate their thoughts into writing, which allows them to clarify and explore their ideas and communicate complex concepts in a structured and coherent way.

Unfortunately, in both private and public schools, there are problems with students' writing skills, particularly on creating narrative texts. Gustiani et al. (2024) found that many students struggle in writing, especially in determining the topic, following the proper generic structure of the text, and the grammatical knowledge. Those problems are also found in students of SMPN 03 Entikong, particularly in class IX. Students still struggle to achieve better writing by following the writing aspect. Those are content, grammar, vocabulary, mechanics, and organization (Brown & Abeywickrama, 2018; Saori et al., 2023). Moreover, Andargie et al. (2025) reported that students often struggle to construct ideas and thoughts into the writing products and organize them into paragraphs. Grammar issues are seen as incorrect sentence structure and verb use (Tambunan et al., 2022). Bisriyah (2022) also reported that EFL learners commonly face difficulties in generating ideas, organizing their writing, and applying accurate grammar and vocabulary throughout the writing process.

It is worse since students have problems with mechanics rules, such as spelling, punctuation, and capitalization (Terzioğlu & Bostancı, 2020). Lastly, students face a limited vocabulary (Taye & Mengesha, 2024). Furthermore, it is made worse by teachers who tend to use a conventional learning style, which causes students to easily forget and find it difficult to understand the writing material that is being taught. It causes boredom among students in the classroom. All these problems are shown based on the results of direct observation in the classroom. Those issues impact students' writing skills.

Based on that, teachers as educators have to fully contribute to providing writing instruction and materials to their students. Writing in the ELT needs certain appropriate instructional methodologies, suitable teaching tools, and powerful teachers to support students in the writing class (Fauziah & Ithriyah, 2024; Mustika & Wardah, 2021; Selvaraj & Aziz, 2020). Putri et al. (2024) explained that teachers' roles hold an important part in maintaining students' motivation and creating a supportive environment in the lessons. In addition, teachers as facilitators must facilitate students with teaching tools to help the writing process (Istiqa et al., 2022; Nurfadhillah et al., 2021). Teaching tools and supportive conditions are needed to improve writing skills and make writing easy for students. The study by Qurrotu'ain and Yuniar (2025) showed that the use of digital learning media could significantly improve students' vocabulary, sentence structure, and writing organization, indicating that appropriate instructional tools play a crucial role in writing development. Given that the role of the teachers is crucial, the teachers must accommodate the learning tools in the learning process that can improve writing skills. To achieve writing improvement, writing learning should be well-designed, and the right learning tools should be used (Indriyani, 2019). Teachers must also create conducive and supportive learning conditions and provide the space for students to think actively, creatively, and innovatively in exploring and elaborating their abilities. For this reason, the writing lesson should ideally not be taught by only emphasizing theory and memorization. Instead, writing lessons should be practical and relevant

to the context, with structured learning materials and tools. An alternative learning tool that can be used to achieve these expectations is the Storyboard.

However, various teaching tools for writing, such as mind mapping and traditional outlining, are commonly employed to help students in generating and structuring ideas in writing. However, these methods only focus on developing ideas, besides creating the chronological structure of a story cohesively, and developing ideas coherently. Based on that, Storyboard was chosen since it offers students guidance for brainstorming the ideas on each event, and developing those ideas into the chronological narrative writing. Previous research reported by Ahmed (2021) found that storyboard helped students to overview the information, generate plans, encourage creative thinking, and provide the final form of the story through the storyboard visualization. Another researcher Mustaidah et al. (2024) investigated about the effectiveness of using the guided questions technique to improve students' ability in writing descriptive text and. Meanwhile, other research by Rohmatin and Aminin (2024), also found that through the experiences of the teachers in teaching writing, storyboard helped students to understand the text types, organize events, visualize the story, and turned the learning activities become interesting, which led to an improvement in students' literacy. Based on that, the storyboard could be considered to be implemented as a teaching tool to improve students' writing skills, as it supported students to maintain the ideas, built students' interest, and engagement to produce writing.

Storyboard is a writing tool that represents the original form in the visual dimensions like images, drawings, paintings, or photographs, to facilitate students' understanding of the event information before doing the writing (Basuki & Saputri, 2020; Wahid & Aziz, 2022). In line with this, Hafour & Al-Rashidy (2020) described the Storyboard as a sequence of events, where the pictures represent each stage of the narrative, accompanied by appropriate sentences, verbs, adverbs, and adjectives. Also, Reyvaldy and Khatimah (2022) stated that as an integrated teaching tool, Storyboards related to the design visualization are arranged sequentially, picture by picture, to form the complete storyline in writing. Their study also found that the treatments of implementing the Storyboard improved students' writing skills, especially in writing narratives. Additionally, the research conducted by Yeung et al. (2021) found that the data analysis showed there was a significant effect on students' writing skills through the implementation of the Storyboard in the classroom activities, which reached the minimum mastery criterion for achievement.

Storyboard has several advantages as a teaching tool in writing classes. Storyboard is used as an interactive and creative teaching tool in writing activities to support students in their writing. According to those advantages, the storyboard provides benefits for improving students' writing skills. By enhancing the ability to organize thoughts into events in the story, visualize a narrative, and engage in creative critical thinking through combining words and pictures (Cuesta et al., 2021; Wahid & Aziz, 2022; Yusoff & Salim, 2014). Moreover, this visual illustration enables students to produce better planning, reducing confusion in generating some ideas (Miftahul, 2019). Thus, it will help students map their ideas visually and express meaning by providing a structure for events. Furthermore, utilizing the storyboard creates an engaging classroom environment that enhances students' motivation and writing outcomes (Suryani et al., 2024; Wahjuningsih et al., 2020). It stimulates and brainstorms ideas from the beginning until the end of the story through visual sequences in the form of narrative text with a joyful learning atmosphere. Hence, it reduces the confusion and boredom.

Several studies have reported that the storyboard can serve as an effective alternative learning tool to minimize students' writing problems (Reyvaldy & Khatimah, 2022; Setiawan et al., 2021).

Previous research mostly implemented cooperative learning, which emphasized group collaboration and provided limited opportunities for fostering individual creativity. However, gaps remained in terms of instructional approaches and teaching methods. To address these gaps, the present research applied a scientific approach supported by the Project-Based Learning method to promote independent learning, incorporated local folktales to create meaningful content, and focused specifically on ninth-grade students at SMPN 03 Entikong. Project-Based Learning enhances students' writing skills by encouraging them to produce a final writing product as part of the project (Simbolon & Koeswanti, 2020), while also developing critical thinking and communication skills. Furthermore, Suryani et al. (2024) explained that integrating storyboard with Project-Based Learning creates an engaging, organized, and effective writing process. Therefore, implementing storyboard in collaboration with the teacher helped create an active and supportive writing environment. The visual nature of the storyboard also attracted students' attention and made the learning experience enjoyable, resulting in improved writing skills, better comprehension, and higher final scores.

## 2. METHOD

### 2.1 Research Design

This research employed the classroom action research (CAR) design to resolve any class's problems through certain tools that relate to those problems. It was conducted through the cycle process, which included planning, acting, observing, and reflecting. Following this, Aziz et al. (2023) explained that classroom action research (CAR) was a reflective practice for teachers to investigate and solve the class's issues to improve teaching performance and enhance students' learning outcomes effectively. Furthermore, Pelton (2010) described classroom action research as the practical teaching activities involving certain teaching aspects and methods used to improve teaching outcomes. The teaching aspects included creating the learning environment, interacting with learners, developing lesson plans, and assigning writing tests.

According to the class's problems, this method was suitable to conduct in this research, as the main purpose was to solve the class's problems and make a class improvement. In collaboratively, this method enabled the researcher and the research collaborator to work in complete cycles on the use of the storyboard as a teaching tool to determine the problems. Through the cycling process of the classroom action research, the storyboard was implemented and evaluated based on students' responses and progress. Within this framework, the effectiveness of the storyboard to improve students' writing skills could be systematically and clearly examined.

### 2.2 Research Subject and Setting

The subject of this research was ninth-grade students at SMPN 03 Entikong during the 2024/2025 academic year. It was chosen based on the discussion with the research collaborator. Moreover, based on the results of observation before conducting the research, it was shown that students in this class experienced difficulties in writing, especially in developing ideas, organizing sentences, and using proper grammar in their writing. Thus, it indicated that this class needs some improvement and support in their writing class. This class consists of 36 students. This research was conducted at SMPN 03 Entikong. This school is located at Lintas Malindo Street, KM.3, District of Entikong, Sanggau, West Kalimantan Province

In this research, the researcher collaborated with an English language teacher at SMPN 03 Entikong to achieve the learning goals. The collaboration focused on developing a proficient and

cohesive writing class movement to improve students' writing skills. The researcher and teacher collaborated on the teaching, which included constructing lesson plans, teaching tools, assignments, and assessments. The teaching tool became the central point of this collaboration. It was the storyboard.

### 2.3 Technique and Tool of Data Collection

In this research, the researcher used measurement and observation techniques. The measurement technique involved administering a writing test to the students at the end of each cycle. The quantitative data, based on the results of each writing test, were used to determine students' progress in writing skills by scoring their writing tests. While, for the qualitative data, the observation technique was done by the observation checklist and field notes. It was used to collect data on students' activities when implementing the Storyboard in the classroom.

### 2.4 Data Analysis

In this research, the data analysis involved both qualitative and quantitative data. First, the researcher conducted the analysis of qualitative data by using the observation checklist and field notes. At this stage, the researcher completed the observation checklist by selecting the level of each aspect based on the classroom conditions. Moreover, field notes were employed to report the information to describe the students' responses and behaviors during the teaching activities in all steps of each cycle.

Second, the quantitative data were analyzed to strengthen the qualitative data and to obtain clear findings on students' progress and achievement in their writing. At this stage, the researcher employed the mean score formula to calculate the students' writing scores at all cycles. It aimed to see any improvement in students' writing skills. It was utilized to evaluate whether students met the minimum mastery criterion, as the English subject at SMPN 03 Entikong requires a minimum score of 70 to fulfill the minimum mastery criterion. The average scores of the students' writing skills were calculated by using the mean score formula from Heaton (1988) as follows:

$$\bar{X} = \frac{\sum X}{N}$$

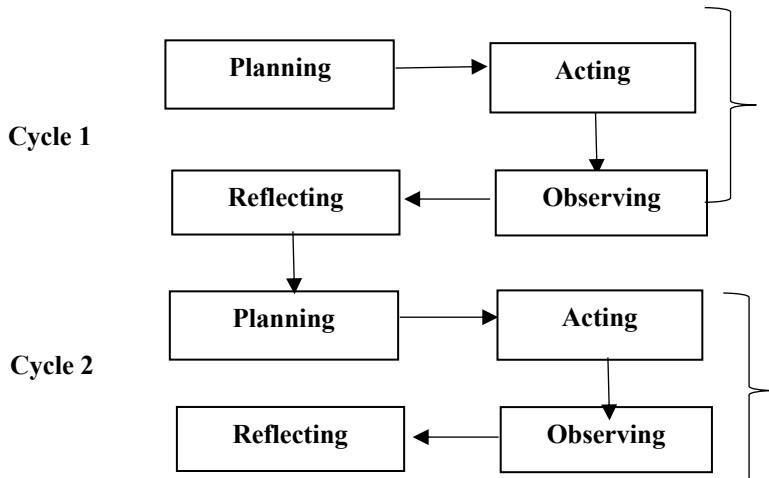
X : Mean

$\sum x$  : Sum of students' individual scores

N : Number of students

### 2.5 Classroom Action Research Procedures

In this research, the researcher implemented the classroom action research procedures based on Kurt Lewin's model. Kurt Lewin's model was based on four main components of the research. Each component was related to the others. Those components included planning, acting, observing, and reflecting. The flowchart is depicted in Figure 1.

**Figure 1.** Research design using Kurt Lewin's model

In the planning phase, the researcher designed the lesson plans based on the curriculum 2013 used, designed the observation checklist and field notes, designed the writing test and assessments, and prepared the material for the implementation of the Storyboard on the actions. In the acting phase, the teacher, as the collaborator, carried out the teaching procedures using the storyboard. Meanwhile, the researcher acted as an observer to collect the data using the observation checklist and field notes. However, in the observing phase, the researcher observed using an observation checklist and field notes to evaluate the action process. Lastly, in the reflecting phase, the researcher analyzed the data based on the observation checklist, field notes, and writing test results at the end of the research. Then, the researcher and the research collaborator conducted the reflection to discuss the next planning of the Storyboard implementation for the next cycle, if necessary.

### 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

#### 3.1 Result

This research was conducted to improve students' writing skills using Storyboard as a teaching tool. The results of this research are presented in two subheadings: the implementation of the storyboard, and the way of the storyboard improves students' writing skills.

##### 3.1.1 The Implementation of The Storyboard

This research was conducted in order to overcome the students' writing problems by using the Storyboard as a teaching tool. The implementation of the Storyboard in this research was carried out in two cycles. However, before implementing the Storyboard in the teaching activities, it began with the teacher explanation about the narrative text materials. However, the following descriptions explained in detail the procedures of the Storyboard implementation, as elaborated below:

1. In the initial stage, the teacher introduced the Storyboard. The teacher showed the students how each picture on the Storyboard represents a specific event or moment in the story. It allowed students to organize the ideas logically. The teacher informed the students that each picture in the Storyboard was accompanied by a verb, adverb, or adjective, and also Storyboard displayed descriptive sentences on each picture to help them describe the event accurately in their sentences.

2. Before going to the writing practice, the teacher asked students to observe the Storyboard in terms of the story's title, pictures, verbs, and description sentences displayed by the Storyboard. It aimed for students to collect the information before starting a writing activity.
3. In writing instruction, the teacher taught students to construct simple sentences with the help of the Storyboard. It started with changing the present verb form to the past verb form. It was based on the students' writing problems, in which, students showed that they still made many grammar mistakes.
4. As a part of writing practice using the Storyboard, the students were asked to make their sentences based on the Storyboard under the teacher's guidance. They wrote the sentence based on the sequence of events visualized by the Storyboard. This activity provided students with the opportunity to use their understanding of the previous material on the first and second cycles independently.

Overall, the implementation of the Storyboard in the classroom focused on the students' writing improvement. The implementation of the Storyboard in writing instructions helped students to recognize their ideas by understanding the sequence of events in the story. It supported students to construct the sentences with grammatically correct. Thus, Storyboard as a teaching tool assisted students by providing them with a visual aid, keywords, and sentences, which allowed them to construct the text more clearly.

### **3.1.2 The Way of The Storyboard Improves Students' Writing Skills.**

Based on the observation and reflection findings, as well as the students' scores in both cycles, it was found that students' writing skills improved through the use of the Storyboard as a teaching tool in the teaching and learning activities. The use of the Storyboard helped the teacher resolve writing problems among students, especially in writing aspects such as grammar, vocabulary, and writing content. Those became primary aspects in the writing process that should be mastered by students. After mastering these aspects through the assistance of the Storyboard, students' writing skills were improved. The way Storyboard improved students' writing skills is described in the following parts.

The first, the Storyboard improved students' writing skills in terms of vocabulary and grammar, particularly for the use of the simple past tense, by implementing it in the writing practice activities. Through the visual sequence of pictures, in which each picture displayed a descriptive sentence, which were written in the simple past tense, allowed and encouraged students to develop their sentences with correct grammar by recognizing the word forms and meaning based on the Storyboard displayed. Through guided explanations by the teacher, students learned how regular and irregular verbs are used within the simple past tense by constructing the sentences using the help of the Storyboard. Moreover, Storyboard provided a list of verbs, adverbs, and adjectives, that helped students to specify the word forms in the sentences and enrich students' vocabulary. It forced students to develop and express more details on their ideas in the sentences. Those activities engaged the students' attracted and focus to learn about grammar and word order. As a result, students were able to write their narrative sentences individually by paying attention to the grammar rules and word order.

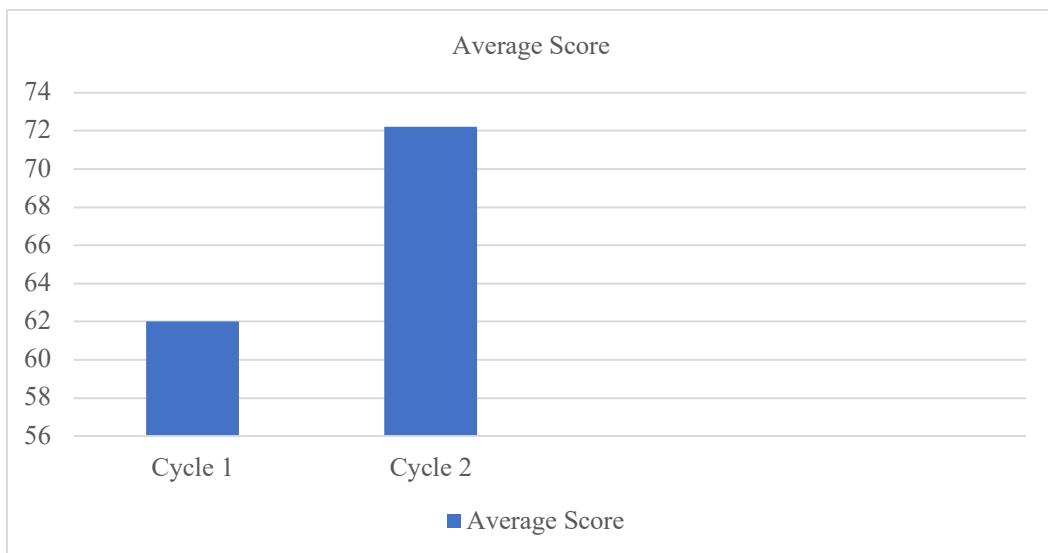
The second, the implementation of the Storyboard in writing improved students' writing performance, in terms of the writing content. The sequence of events illustrated by pictures in the Storyboard helped students to brainstorm their ideas before constructing the sentences. By seeing the pictures, clues, and sentences in the Storyboard, students were directed to follow the content

ideas, which helped students decrease their confusion or run out of ideas in writing a text. It helped students to manage the idea development, especially for students who struggle to begin writing. In other words, it can be said that the use of the Storyboard as a teaching tool served as a guide for students in writing sentence by sentence to stay on the right content of the story. Hence, students produced a narrative writing with meaningful content, and the writing flow became systematic and organized.

The third, the implementation of the Storyboard improved overall students' writing skills, and decreased the writing problems among students in the classroom. It was especially increased in the aspects of grammar, vocabulary, and content, which led to the improvement of students' writing skills. It helped students to achieve an overall good performance in producing the narrative text individually. It stimulated students' creativity in expressing their ideas while still maintaining the initial content, and decreased the confusion to starting the writing. Also, it enabled students to describe in detail the action, emotion, and setting more vividly for each event in the story.

Based on the results of the observation and reflection from both cycles, it was confirmed that the implementation of the Storyboard improved students' writing skills by facilitating students' understanding of word forms and the relevant meaning of the available pictures displayed by the Storyboard. Storyboard also provided a sentence to describe the relevant picture form, which students could construct their own sentences for the pictures given. The Storyboard effectively resolved the writing problems faced by students in the classroom. The improvement was particularly in terms of grammar, vocabulary, and content development. It helped students to construct sentences correctly using the simple past tense, enhance students' vocabulary, and develop writing aligned with the content ideas. Ultimately, the use of the Storyboard as a teaching tool was successful in improving students' writing skills.

Finally, the writing test from the first to the second cycle showed an improvement in students' writing scores. The average of students' writing scores improved from 63.44 to 72.22. The students who met the minimum mastery criterion improved from 13 students, or 36.11% to 26 students, or 72.22% in the second cycle. Students showed a better understanding of the grammatical aspect, particularly in the use of past tense verbs in their sentences. Moreover, sufficient writing practice using the Storyboard contributed to students' vocabulary enrichment. Thus, students produced their sentences to become more expressive to express their ideas. The improvement in students' average scores through the use of the Storyboard from the first cycle to the second cycle was illustrated in the figure as follows:

**Figure 2.** Students' Average Scores

### 3.2 Discussion

The result of this research found that the use of the Storyboard improved students' writing skills of ninth-grade students at SMPN 03 Entikong. The implementation of the Storyboard helped students improve their writing skills. By providing students with descriptive sentences relevant to the pictures, supported students in understanding the content of the storyline. It allowed students to visualize the storyline and supported students in expressing their ideas through the sequence of pictures. Besides, the word exposure given by the Storyboard displayed enhanced students' vocabulary, and helped them to recognize the word forms, especially on verbs, adverbs, and adjectives. Thus, students could create their simple sentences clearly based on the pictures given.

The use of Storyboard as a teaching tool improved students' writing skills. The Storyboard helped students to overcome the specific problems in writing, especially with aspects of grammar, vocabulary, content, and overall writing. All those writing aspects improved by the Storyboard affected on students' overall writing performance. By incorporating the Storyboard, the teacher was able to solve the writing challenges faced by students in the writing instruction. This also aligned with the research conducted by Sinaga et al. (2025) confirmed that the storyboard as an instructional tool was effective in improving the writing performance, engagement, understanding, and creativity among students compared to other conventional instruction. Thus, the writing score improved first to the second cycle in a meaningful way.

In line with the research findings, the researcher found that the use of the Storyboard enhanced students' writing skills, particularly in narrative text. This finding reconfirmed the results of previous research by Reyaldy and Khatimah (2022) who found that the use of Storyboard helped students develop narrative text sequentially. Moreover, the findings were also consistent with the research conducted by Setiawan et al. (2021) who stated that the implementation of the Storyboard had a significant effect on enhancing students' writing skills. It encouraged students to participate actively in the classroom, which impacted their leadership, problem-solving, and confidence to tackle problems (Ghafar et al., 2023). As a result, the Storyboard contributed to improving students' writing skills, enabling students to create their text effectively, coherently, and independently.

Using the Storyboard as a teaching tool to teach narrative writing helped students to overcome their difficulties with the content flow in the story. Incorporating the Storyboard guided students to brainstorm their ideas before expressing them into sentences through the sequence of the pictures. It ensured that students still maintained and focused on the story's theme, allowing them to produce a logically structured and sequentially coherent text. These findings also validated the research outcomes conducted by Miftahul (2019), and the previous research carried out by Wahid and Aziz (2022). Moreover, the research conducted by Kamila and Wahyudi (2025) showed positive impacts on writing skills using the storyboard, including creativity in developing ideas, maintaining concepts, and designing stories by the sequence of pictures on the storyboard. Thus, it indicated that the use of the Storyboard effectively assisted and stimulated students in generating their ideas through a sequence of pictures before the writing process began.

Unfortunately, during the implementation of the Storyboard in both the first cycle and the second cycle, noticeable variations in students' abilities were observed. Some students were able to construct the sentences smoothly to complete the text. While, the other students had difficulty in constructing more than three sentences on each picture in the Storyboard displayed. This difficulty was faced by students who had a limited vocabulary. However, addressing this gap can be done by allowing more extended time for writing practice with the support of the Storyboard.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, there was an improvement in the students' writing skills between the first cycle and the second cycle through the use of Storyboard. The implementation of the Storyboard successfully addressed students' writing problems, which were grammar, vocabulary, and content organization. The visual prompts and accompanied by the relevant vocabulary provided by the Storyboard, helped students construct their sentences logically. The Storyboard served as a guide for students to stay in the storyline, and supported students to reduce confusion. Consequently, the findings affirmed that the implementation of the Storyboard as a teaching tool solved students' writing problems and improved students' creativity and overall writing skills.

However, it was some limitation regarding the implementation of the storyboard in writing activities, especially in the time allocation aspect. It needed to allocate the time effectively to practice writing by using the storyboard. It is suggested that at the explanation material stage should not be detailed, but spend more time practicing writing using the storyboard. Moreover, the storyboard can be used for all English skills, such as speaking, reading, and listening. Additionally, in writing skills, it was applicable to all text types, beyond narrative text. Students are encouraged to practice their writing, expand their vocabulary, and increase their interest and motivation in English to enjoy the learning process. Future researchers are advised to gather more feedback on students' experiences, perceptions, and suggestions for implementing the storyboard for other skills besides writing skills.

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