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ENHANCING STUDENTS' WRITING PERFORMANCE THROUGH INTERACTIVE MULTIMEDIA IN THE EFL CLASSROOM

Novita Riski Amalia[1*], Mujahidah[2], Zulfah[3] , H. Ambo Dalle[4] , MagdahalenaTjalla[5]
[1]novitariskiamalia17@gmail.com, [2]mujahidah@iainpare.ac.id. [3] zulfah@iainpare.ac.id,
[4]hambodalle@iainpare.ac.id, [5] maghdahalenatjalla@iainpare.ac.id

IAIN PAREPARE

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ABSTRACT

Writing is one of the most challenging skills for EFL learners, particularly at the junior secondary level, due to limited exposure to the English language and lack of motivation. Interactive multimedia has emerged as a promising tool to enhance students' writing proficiency. This Classroom Action Research (CAR) aimed to improve the writing skills of eighth-grade students at MTs Biccoing, Bone Regency, through two cycles consisting of planning, acting, observing, and reflecting. The first cycle employed YouTube interactive videos for teaching descriptive texts, while the second cycle utilized StoryJumper for narrative texts. The study involved 14 students and adopted both qualitative and quantitative approaches. Data was collected through writing tests assessed with analytic rubric and observation checklists. The results indicated that the students' mean writing score increased from 67.6% in Cycle 1 to 80.5% in Cycle 2, accompanied by notable improvements in key writing criteria, including content organization, vocabulary use, and grammatical accuracy. Moreover, students demonstrated greater engagement and more positive attitudes toward the lessons. These findings suggest that the integration of interactive multimedia is an effective strategy for improving EFL students' writing skills and may serve as a practical model for secondary classroom instruction.

Keywords: Classroom Action Research, Interactive Multimedia, Student Writing Skill

A. INTRODUCTION

In the digital era, the teaching and learning process has undergone significant transformations, especially in English Language Teaching (ELT). English is not only a global language but also a compulsory subject at all levels of education in Indonesia. As Subiyati (1995) stated, English is widely used by educated individuals around the world and is essential for both personal and professional development. In an increasingly globalized world, the ability to communicate in English is vital for participating in international academic and professional environments. Therefore, providing effective English instruction is crucial to prepare students for global competition and collaboration. Among the four essential language skills, such as listening, speaking, reading, and writing are often

considered one of the most challenging, particularly for students learning English as a foreign language. This challenge is more evident in the Indonesian context, where English is rarely used in daily communication, making it particularly difficult for students to master writing skills.

This general challenge is confirmed by preliminary observations conducted at MTs Biccoing, Bone Regency, which revealed that eighth-grade students faced considerable difficulties in writing. Many students demonstrated limited knowledge of basic vocabulary and grammar, which resulted in writing scores below the Minimum Mastery Criterion (KKM). Furthermore, classroom observations showed low motivation among students, reflected in passive behaviors such as chatting during lessons, leaving the room frequently, and minimal participation in discussions. These findings suggest that the learning environment may lack engagement due to the continued use of traditional teaching methods. To address these issues, educators must adapt to technological advancements by incorporating not only conventional but also modern teaching media. As noted by Asari et al. (2023), digital learning tools can enhance students' understanding of materials, then Mukherjee (2018), The ultimate goals of multimedia language teaching is to promote students' motivation and learning interest, which can be a practical way to get them involved in the language learning, Thus, one promising approach is the use of interactive multimedia.

Interactive multimedia offers a dynamic and engaging learning experience by combining text, images, audio, and video. Mayer (2009) argued that multimedia learning enhances understanding by allowing students to visualize abstract concepts. The use of interactive multimedia in English language learning has gained considerable attention in recent years. Numerous studies have investigated its role in enhancing language proficiency, increasing student engagement, and supporting diverse learning needs. Broadly, prior research in this area can be categorized into three main themes: (1) the impact of multimedia on language skills, motivation, and student engagement; (2) perceptions of teachers and students toward multimedia use; and (3) the relationship between multimedia and learning styles. The first theme focuses on the role of multimedia in improving English language skills. Several studies have shown that multimedia particularly in the form of audio-visual aids can significantly enhance students' abilities in reading, writing, speaking, and listening (Aulia et al., 2024; Arono, 2014; Abidin, 2017; Nugraheni & Priyana, 2017). These studies employed various methodologies including mixed-methods, quasi-experimental designs, classroom action research, and descriptive approaches. A consistent finding across these works is that multimedia not only improves linguistic competence but also boosts students' motivation and active participation.

The second theme addresses how multimedia is perceived by educators and learners. Jelimun and Julia (2022), Izlin and Widiyati (2023), and Saputri et al. (2022), through qualitative research, reported generally positive perceptions among both teachers and students. These studies suggest that multimedia is viewed as an effective tool that makes learning more engaging and accessible, particularly in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) settings. While, the third theme explores the intersection of multimedia with students' learning styles. Researchers such as Mustadi et al. (2024), Yulianci (2021), Kabri and Budiyanto (2024), and Elviana et al. (2020) found that interactive multimedia supports varied learning preferences visual, auditory, and kinesthetic thereby accommodating individual differences and enhancing overall learning outcomes. These studies often used quasi-experimental or

research and development (R&D) methods and concluded that multimedia positively influences student achievement across different learning styles.

Despite the growing body of literature, most previous studies have focused on general language proficiency or student perceptions. In contrast, the present study offers a more specific and practical focus: it investigates the use of interactive multimedia, particularly YouTube and StoryJumper, in improving student engagement, responses, and writing skills. Moreover, this study employs Classroom Action Research (CAR), a reflective and cyclical approach that allows for immediate intervention and evaluation in a real classroom setting. Unlike most previous studies that relied on survey or perception-based data, this research incorporates direct observation and performance-based assessments, providing a more comprehensive understanding of how multimedia influences writing outcomes in the junior high school context. Based on these considerations, this study aims to examine the implementation of interactive multimedia in teaching writing. Specifically, it investigates how the integration of multimedia tools such as YouTube and StoryJumper can improve the writing skills of eighth-grade students at MTs Biccoing, Bone Regency.

B. METHOD

This study employed Classroom Action Research (CAR), based on the model developed by Kemmis and McTaggart (1988), consisting of four cyclical stages: planning, action, reflecting and evaluation. CAR was chosen because it allows the researcher to investigate and address real classroom problems while continuously improving teaching practices. It aligns well with the research objective, which is to improve students' writing skills and engagement through the integration of interactive multimedia in an authentic classroom setting. As Burns (2010) explains, CAR is particularly suited to EFL contexts where the teacher is both practitioner and researcher, aiming to enhance pedagogical effectiveness. The research is theoretically grounded in constructivist learning theory and Mayer (2009) Multimedia Learning Theory, which emphasizes the benefits of combining visual and verbal input for meaningful learning. Additionally, the study adopts Fredrickset et al (2004) three-dimensional model of student engagement (cognitive, affective, and emotional), providing a robust framework for observing student participation throughout the learning process.

The participants were 14 eighth-grade students (ages 13–14) from MTs Biccoing, Bone Regency, South Sulawesi, Indonesia. These students were purposively selected from a class identified through teacher reports as having low engagement and below-average writing scores. The sampling technique used was purposive sampling, based on practical access and the specific problem context. The students' English proficiency ranged from beginner to lower-intermediate level. Data were collected using two main instruments: writing tests (pre-test and post-test) and an observation checklist. The writing test was administered to assess students' ability to write descriptive and recount texts before and after the intervention. Tasks required students to write short paragraphs based on specific prompts. The assessment employed an analytic scoring rubric adapted from Weigle (2002), covering five criteria: content, organization, grammar, vocabulary, and mechanics. Each criterion was rated on a scale of 1 to 10, making a total of 100 points. The rubric was validated through expert judgment by two English teachers and piloted with another group of students to ensure appropriateness. Inter-rater reliability was ensured by involving both the researcher and collaborator in scoring independently and comparing results.

The observation checklist was designed to capture student engagement and response during the learning process. The checklist consisted of 10 observable items organized under two categories: affective, and emotional aspect. Each item was scored using a binary Yes/No system, depending on whether the behavior was observed. The indicators were developed based on theoretical constructs from Fredricks et al (2004) and Mayer (2009) and reviewed by two experts in language education for content validation. Quantitative data from the pre-test and post-test scores were analyzed using descriptive statistics to measure mean score improvement and mastery level. Mastery level was calculated as the percentage of students scoring ≥70, based on the school's Minimum Mastery Criterion (KKM). To support interpretation, students' achievement was categorized into five levels, as shown below:

Table 1. Students' Achievement Category

Acquisition Percentage	Category
0–34%	Very Poor
35–69%	Poor
70–74%	Neutral
75–84%	Good
85–100%	Very Good

Qualitative data from the observation checklist were analyzed descriptively to identify patterns in student engagement and responses. The observations were interpreted thematically and cross-checked with classroom field notes to ensure triangulation and trustworthiness. The observation checklist was structured around two major dimensions: Student Engagement and Student Response, each consisting of affective and emotional aspects. The table below outlines the indicators used:

Tabel 2. Observation Indicators of Engagement and Response

Dimension	Aspect	Indicators
Student Engagement	Affective	1. Shows interest in interactive quizzes2. Follows instructions promptly3. Expresses excitement when learning with media4. Persists through the lesson5. Listens quietly to teacher or media
	Emotional	1. Demonstrates enthusiasm during learning2. Appears happy upon success3. Controls emotions after failure4. Encourages or supports peers5. Expresses satisfaction after task completion
Student Response	Affective	1. Smiles or comments positively after a task2. Asks questions after media viewing3. Listens attentively to feedback4. Participates confidently5. Supports peer contributions
	Emotional	1. Maintains calm when facing difficulty2. Pays attention to teacher/screen3. Shows enthusiasm for interesting material4. Facial expressions reflect the material5. Avoids restless gestures

This research complied with ethical guidelines for classroom-based studies. The purpose and procedures were clearly explained to all participants. Informed consent was obtained from the school, parents, and students. Confidentiality was maintained, and students' identities were anonymized in all reporting.

C. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This section presents the findings of the classroom action research and discusses them in relation to the research objectives. The data were collected through observations, tests, and field notes during the two research cycles. The analysis focuses on three main aspects: (1) students' engagement in the learning process, (2) students' responses to the use of YouTube videos as learning media, and (3) students' writing performance. The findings are discussed in comparison with the expected learning outcomes and relevant literature to highlight both the progress achieved and the challenges encountered. The discussion begins with the results of Cycle I.

Cycle I

The implementation of Cycle I revealed several key issues that limited student progress. First, student engagement was relatively low. Although students showed some initial interest when watching YouTube videos, their enthusiasm, persistence, and emotional involvement declined over time. Observation checklist data showed that only 3 out of 5 affective and emotional engagement indicators were met. Second, student responses were inconsistent. Students showed a lack of attentiveness during teacher feedback, limited confidence in class activities, and decreased motivation. This was confirmed by observation scores showing only 2 out of 5 indicators fulfilled in both affective and emotional responses. Third, writing performance remained below the expected standard. Students faced challenges with grammar (particularly the use of simple present tense and pronouns), limited vocabulary, and errors in punctuation and capitalization. Although the average score improved from 52.1% to 67.6%, the mastery level only reached 64.2%, which did not meet the minimum standard ≥70. The results of the observation checklist regarding student engagement and responses in Cycle I are summarized in Table 3.

Table 3. Summary of Student Engagement and Response – Cycle I

Cycle	Engagement (Affective)	Engagement (Emotional)	Response (Affective)	Response (Emotional)
I	3/5	3/5	2/5	2/5

The data in Table 3 demonstrate that students only achieved 3 out of 5 indicators for affective and emotional engagement, and as low as 2 out of 5 for affective and emotional responses. This finding supports the earlier observation that students' enthusiasm, persistence, and motivation declined during the learning process. According to Fredricks, Blumenfeld, and Paris (2004), affective and emotional engagement are critical factors that sustain students' interest and willingness to participate actively in learning.

The relatively low scores in these areas indicate that the YouTube-based activities in Cycle I were not fully effective in maintaining student engagement and response. This limitation was caused by the one-way nature of YouTube, which limited direct interaction between students and the media. Although the content was visually and audibly appealing and included features such as quizzes or questions, students' participation remained passive because they had no opportunity to modify the content or take an active role in the learning process. Mayer (2009) highlights that passive video consumption tends to hinder students' cognitive and emotional engagement due to the lack of active interaction needed to maintain their motivation and participation. Therefore, further efforts are needed by applying a more engaging and interactive approach. Details of individual student scores in the writing test and the overall test results are shown in Table 4.

Table 4. Student Writing Scores – Cycle I

No	Student Code	Pre-Test (C1)	Post-Test (C1)	Mastery C1
1	S1	50	55	No.
2	S2	52	65	No.
3	S3	48	62	No.
4	S4	55	70	Yes
5	S5	53	72	Yes
6	S6	50	64	No.
7	S7	57	59	No.
8	S8	60	72	Yes
9	S9	58	70	Yes
10	S10	62	73	Yes
11	S11	59	72	Yes
12	S12	54	71	Yes
13	S13	56	70	Yes
14	S14	55	71	Yes
Total		**729**	**946**	
Mean		**52.1**	**67.6**	
Mastery Level			**64.2%**	

The data in Table 4 show that the students' average pre-test score was 52.1%, while the post-test score increased to 67.6%. Although this indicated an improvement, according to the acquisition percentage category, the average score was still considered low. Furthermore, the student mastery level reached only 64.2%. According to Mulyasa (2012), learning can be considered successful if at least 75% of students achieve mastery and are motivated to learn. Therefore, the results of Cycle I had not yet met the expected learning outcomes, making the implementation of a second cycle necessary.

Cycle II

Following the findings from Cycle I, Cycle II implemented a revised instructional strategy that integrated YouTube and StoryJumper to enhance students' writing of recount texts. YouTube provides passive feedback through visual and audio input, whereas StoryJumper offers active feedback by allowing students to create their own stories. According to Domagk (2010), differences in the design and type of interactivity significantly influence how students learn, engage, and ultimately improve their writing skills.

The results of Cycle II demonstrated notable progress across several aspects of student learning, particularly in terms of engagement, responses, and writing skill. First, student engagement increased significantly. Learners showed consistent enthusiasm, attention, and persistence throughout the sessions. According to the observation checklist, all five indicators under affective and emotional engagement were fully achieved. Second, student responses were highly positive. Students demonstrated attentiveness, confidence, collaboration, and emotional stability during activities. They expressed pride and excitement when publishing their digital stories, which contributed to higher motivation. Third, writing performance improved markedly. Most students were able to produce well-structured recount texts with appropriate orientation, events, and reorientation. The average score rose from 58.4% to 80.5%, and 12 out of 14 students (85.7%) achieved the mastery threshold of ≥70. The results of the observation checklist in Cycle II are summarized in Table 5.

Table 5. Summary of Student Engagement and Response – Cycle II

Cycle	Engagement (Affective)	Engagement (Emotional)	Response (Affective)	Response (Emotional)
II	5/5	5/5	5/5	5/5

The results in Table 5 show that students achieved all indicators, particularly 5 out of 5 indicators of engagement and response. This indicates that learners were highly motivated, enthusiastic, and emotionally involved during the lessons in Cycle II. The combination of YouTube and StoryJumper in Cycle II produced better outcomes than using YouTube alone in Cycle I. These findings suggest that integrating various types of interactive multimedia can increase student engagement, improve their responses, and enhance their writing skills. According to Mayer (2009), learning becomes more effective when information is presented through both visual and verbal channels simultaneously, as this dual coding helps students to better understand and retain the material. Therefore, combining different types of interactive media can make learning more engaging, effective, and enjoyable. Details of individual student scores in the writing test and the overall test results are shown in Table 6.

Table 6. Student Writing Scores – Cycle II

No	Student Code	Pre-Test (C2)	Post-Test (C2)	Mastery C2
1	S1	53	86	Yes
2	S2	54	75	Yes
3	S3	50	80	Yes
4	S4	55	75	Yes
5	S5	60	90	Yes
6	S6	60	65	No
7	S7	56	68	No
8	S8	61	73	Yes
9	S9	65	85	Yes
10	S10	62	80	Yes
11	S11	68	95	Yes
12	S12	56	75	Yes
13	S13	60	90	Yes
14	S14	58	90	Yes
Total		**818**	**1,127**	
Mean		**58.4**	**80.5**	
Mastery Level		**85.7%**		

The data in Table 6 show that the students' average pre-test score in Cycle II was 58.4, while the post-test score increased to 80.5. This indicates a significant improvement compared to Cycle I. Based on the acquisition percentage category, the average score in Cycle II was considered “good.” Furthermore, the student mastery level reached 85.7%, which exceeded the minimum standard of 75% suggested by Mulyasa (2012) as the indicator of successful learning. Therefore, the results of Cycle II demonstrated that the use of Multimedia Interactive successfully improved students’ writing achievement and met the expected learning outcomes.

Interactive multimedia does not have to rely on only one type of media. In fact, combining several types of interactive media can make learning more interesting and effective. Nurarifah et al. (2025) stated that appropriate media are needed in the learning process, the aspects that need to be considered in selecting media are the suitability of the media with the

learning objectives and the content of the material, as well as ease of access. This was shown in the results, where the combination of YouTube and StoryJumper in Cycle II gave better outcomes than using YouTube alone in Cycle I. These findings suggested that integrating various types of interactive multimedia can increase student engagement, improve their responses, and help enhance their writing skills.

In addition, the use of multimedia in learning has proven to be very beneficial because it is creative and innovative. Children today tend to prefer learning processes that make use of technology rather than conventional verbal teaching by the teacher. Based on Dağhan (2017), Prensky (2001), and Madarcos et al. (2024), this trend has resulted in the rapid penetration of technology into the daily lives of children. Wherever they are, children are surrounded by various technologies and technological elements, including smartphones, tablets, wireless internet, game consoles, TVs, videos, mobile devices, and applications. Therefore, using multimedia can increase their motivation, attention, and participation in learning. However, it is important to understand that multimedia does not replace the teacher's role. Instead, it functions as a facilitator or support for teachers in delivering learning materials, making the learning process more effective, engaging, and in line with the needs and characteristics of today's students. According to Wulandari (2024), the teacher's role as a facilitator can be seen through activities such as preparing teaching materials, media, learning spaces, the environment, and ensuring student readiness. Therefore, in this study, integrating interactive multimedia, such as YouTube and StoryJumper, is strongly recommended as an effective and engaging tool to support the teaching of writing skills in the classroom.

D. CONCLUSION

This study aimed to improve the writing skills of eighth-grade EFL students at MTs Biccoing through the use of interactive multimedia. The findings showed that students initially displayed low engagement, minimal responses, and below-standard writing performance during Cycle I. However, significant improvements were observed in Cycle II when StoryJumper was integrated alongside YouTube. Students became more consistently engaged, their emotional and affective responses increased, and their writing outcomes exceeded the minimum mastery criteria. These findings suggest that the integration of StoryJumper and YouTube was effective due to its learner-centered design, which combined visual-auditory input with opportunities for creative, active output. YouTube provided clear language models and contextual exposure, while StoryJumper enabled students to construct and revise their own narratives, enhancing their motivation and understanding of language use and text structure. Pedagogically, this study highlights the importance of incorporating interactive multimedia tools in EFL writing instruction to foster deeper student engagement, student response, and improved writing proficiency. This aligns with multimedia learning theory and supports diverse learning styles in language classrooms. Nevertheless, this study has certain limitations, including the small sample size (14 students) and its focus on a single school context, which may limit the generalizability of the results. Future research is recommended to examine the effectiveness of other digital platforms, explore different text genres such as narrative or argumentative writing, and involve larger and more diverse student populations to strengthen the evidence on the benefits of interactive multimedia in EFL writing instruction.

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