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## Enhancing EFL Students' Recount Writing through Animation Movies: A Classroom Action Research Study

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### Abstrak

**Tujuan penelitian.** Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis penerapan film animasi dalam meningkatkan kemampuan menulis teks recount siswa EFL.

**Bahan dan Metode.** Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan Classroom Action Research (CAR) yang dilaksanakan dalam dua siklus, meliputi tahap perencanaan, tindakan, observasi, dan refleksi. Data dikumpulkan melalui tes menulis, observasi, dan dokumentasi, kemudian dianalisis secara deskriptif kualitatif untuk melihat peningkatan kemampuan menulis siswa.

**Hasil.** Hasil penelitian menunjukkan adanya peningkatan yang signifikan dalam kemampuan menulis siswa, yang terlihat dari kemampuan mereka dalam mengembangkan ide secara lebih luas, menyusun teks secara lebih terstruktur, serta menggunakan kosakata dan tata bahasa—khususnya past tense—dengan lebih tepat. Selain itu, penggunaan film animasi juga berhasil meningkatkan keterlibatan dan motivasi siswa, sehingga proses pembelajaran menjadi lebih aktif dan bermakna.

**Kesimpulan.** Kesimpulan penelitian ini menegaskan bahwa penggunaan film animasi efektif dalam meningkatkan kemampuan menulis recount siswa sekaligus mendorong keterlibatan aktif mereka dalam proses pembelajaran.

**Kata kunci:** menulis EFL; teks recount; film animasi; penelitian tindakan kelas.

### Abstract

**Study purpose.** This study aims to analyze the implementation of animation movies in improving EFL students' recount writing skills.

**Materials and Methods.** This study employed a Classroom Action Research (CAR) approach conducted in two cycles, consisting of planning, acting, observing, and reflecting stages. Data were collected through writing tests, observations, and documentation, and were analyzed using descriptive qualitative methods to examine students' writing improvement.

**Results.** The findings revealed a significant improvement in students' writing ability, as reflected in their enhanced capacity to develop ideas, organize texts more coherently, and use more appropriate vocabulary and grammatical structures, particularly in the use of past tense. In addition, the use of animation movies successfully increased students' engagement and motivation, making the learning process more active and meaningful.

**Conclusion.** The study concludes that animation movies are effective in improving students' recount writing skills while also promoting their active engagement in the learning process.

**Keywords:** EFL writing, recount text, animation movies, classroom action research.

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## Introduction

Writing plays a crucial role in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learning, particularly in academic contexts where students are required to communicate ideas in a clear and structured manner. In secondary education, writing is not only a means of communication but also a way to develop students' critical thinking and language competence. Despite its importance, writing remains one of the most challenging skills for EFL learners (Graham, 2018; Hyland, 2019). Students often face difficulties in organizing ideas, using appropriate grammar, and selecting suitable vocabulary, which results in poorly structured texts. In the Indonesian context, these challenges are still widely observed, especially in classroom practices where students tend to struggle in expressing their ideas coherently (Widodo, 2018). One noticeable difficulty appears in recount writing, where students are expected to retell past experiences systematically but frequently fail to produce grammatically accurate and well-organized texts.

A growing body of research has highlighted the importance of using instructional media to support students' writing development in EFL classrooms. In particular, animation movies have attracted attention as an engaging teaching medium that provides both visual and contextual support for language learning. Previous studies have reported that animation movies can enhance students' motivation, stimulate idea generation, and improve writing performance (Ismaili, 2019; Putri & Refnaldi, 2020). In addition, audiovisual materials enable students to better understand language use in meaningful contexts, which supports their ability to develop and organize ideas in writing. (Mayer, 2021). These findings suggest that animation movies offer promising opportunities to facilitate writing instruction, especially in helping students produce more coherent and meaningful texts.

Nevertheless, existing studies tend to focus on general writing improvement rather than specific genres such as recount texts, which require particular linguistic features and rhetorical organization. Moreover, many studies emphasize learning outcomes without paying sufficient attention to how the teaching and learning process unfolds in the classroom. Research adopting a classroom action research (CAR) approach to examine the use of animation movies in writing instruction remains relatively limited, particularly in Indonesian senior high school contexts. For instance, Ismaili (2019) found that the use of movies in EFL classrooms improved students' motivation and overall language performance; however, the study did not specifically focus on writing development or employ a CAR design. Similarly, Putri and Refnaldi (2020) reported that video-based instruction enhanced students' writing ability, yet their study was experimental rather than process-oriented classroom action research. These findings indicate that while audiovisual media has been widely explored, research focusing specifically on the integration of animation movies in recount writing through a CAR approach remains scarce, especially in Indonesian senior high school settings. As a result, there is still a need for more context-sensitive and process-oriented research that explores how animation movies can be effectively integrated into classroom practices to support students' development in recount writing.

In response to this gap, the present study aims to examine the use of animation movies

in improving EFL students' recount writing skills through a classroom action research design. Specifically, this study seeks to answer the following research question: *How does animation movies improve students' recount writing skills?* By focusing on a specific text type and examining the instructional process in a real classroom setting, this study is expected to contribute to the growing discussion on EFL writing pedagogy (Richards, 2017). Furthermore, the findings may provide practical insights for teachers in designing more engaging and effective writing instruction using audiovisual media.

## **Literature Review**

### **Writing in EFL Context**

Writing is one of the most demanding skills in EFL learning because it requires students to manage multiple aspects of language simultaneously, including grammar, vocabulary, organization, and mechanics. Unlike speaking, writing does not allow immediate clarification, so learners need to express their ideas clearly and accurately in a written form (Hyland, 2019; Graham, 2018). For many students, this process is not easy, especially when they have limited vocabulary and lack confidence in using grammatical structures.

Several studies have pointed out that students' difficulties in writing are often related to their inability to generate and organize ideas effectively (Fareed et al., 2018; Rao, 2019). In Indonesian classrooms, this issue is still commonly found, where students tend to produce short, disconnected sentences and struggle to develop coherent paragraphs (Widodo, 2018). These conditions indicate that writing instruction needs to go beyond traditional methods and should involve more engaging strategies that can support students in expressing their ideas more effectively.

### **Recount Text in EFL Learning**

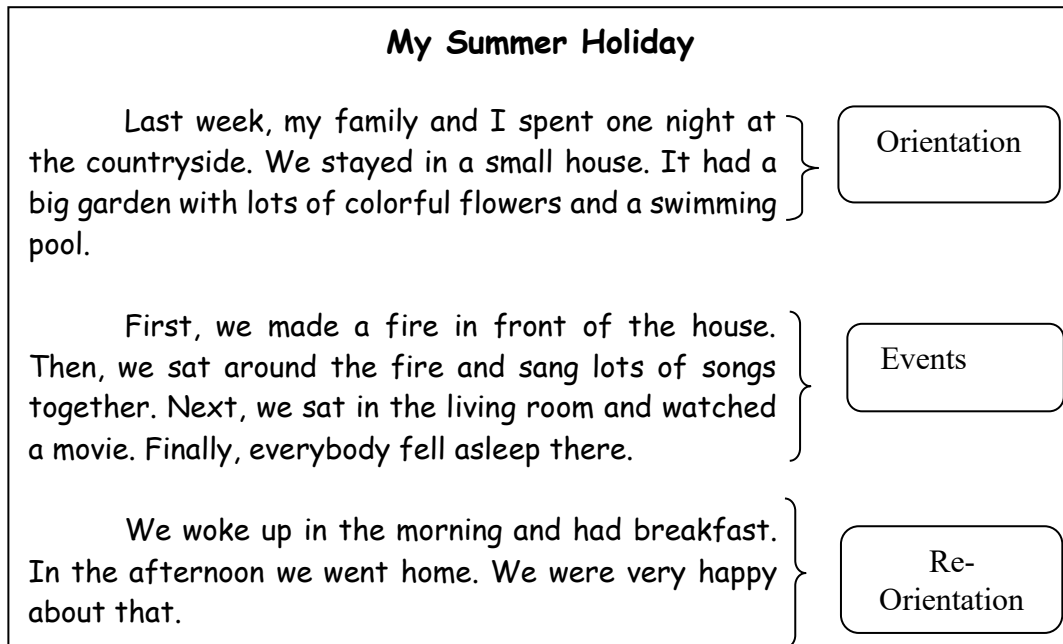
Recount text is a type of text that is used to retell past events in a structured and chronological manner. It is generally organized into three main stages, namely orientation, sequence of events, and re-orientation, which help readers understand what happened and how the events unfolded (Emilia & Hamied, 2018). In addition, recount texts aim to inform or entertain readers by presenting experiences in a meaningful sequence (Derewianka & Jones, 2019).

This clear and predictable structure also helps learners manage their ideas more effectively. When students follow a chronological sequence, they tend to write in a more organized way, making their texts easier to understand. It also reduces confusion when developing ideas, especially for learners who are still struggling with writing in a foreign language. As a result, recount text can serve as a practical entry point for students to build confidence in writing.

In terms of language features, recount texts commonly use past tense verbs, action verbs, and temporal conjunctions to indicate the sequence of events. They also involve specific participants and time expressions to provide clarity and coherence in the text (Knapp & Watkins, 2019; Emilia & Hamied, 2018). Furthermore, the use of chronological sequencing plays an important role in helping learners organize their ideas effectively when writing recount texts (Fitriani et al., 2019).

In practice, these language features guide students to express events step by step, rather than writing disconnected sentences. The use of time signals such as "first," "then," and "finally" helps students maintain logical flow, while past tense forms train them to use grammar more consistently. This combination not only improves the readability of their writing but also supports the development of overall writing skills, particularly in organizing ideas and constructing meaningful sentences.

To illustrate, the following is an example of a simple recount text adapted from the classroom context:



This example shows how recount text is constructed using chronological events and simple past tense. However, many students still find it difficult to expand ideas and maintain coherence throughout the text, which indicates the need for more supportive teaching strategies.

### **The Use of Animation Movies in Language Learning**

The use of audiovisual media in language teaching has been widely discussed as an effective way to create more engaging and meaningful learning experiences. Among various types of media, animation movies are considered particularly useful because they provide visual context, storyline, and language input simultaneously (Mayer, 2021). This combination helps students understand meaning more easily and supports their language development.

Previous studies have shown that animation movies can increase students' motivation and participation in the classroom (Ismaili, 2019; Nugroho & Mutiaraningrum, 2020). When students are interested in the learning material, they tend to be more active and willing to express their ideas. In addition, animation movies provide clear sequences of events, which can help students understand how a story is structured. This is particularly relevant for recount writing, where students need to organize events in chronological order.

### **Animation Movies and Writing Development**

In writing instruction, animation movies can play an important role in helping students generate ideas and organize them into meaningful texts. Visual scenes and storylines presented in movies can stimulate students' imagination and provide concrete examples that they can describe in their writing. Studies have reported that students who learn through audiovisual media tend to produce more detailed and better-organized writing (Putri & Refnaldi, 2020; Sari & Zainil, 2021).

Furthermore, animation movies help students understand narrative flow, including how events are connected and how a story develops over time. This understanding is essential in writing recount texts, where students need to present events clearly and logically. In addition, exposure to language used in movies can support students in improving their vocabulary and grammatical accuracy (Ismaili, 2019). Therefore, animation movies are not only engaging but also pedagogically beneficial in supporting writing development.

## **Classroom Action Research in Writing Instruction**

Classroom Action Research (CAR) is a practical approach that allows teachers to improve their teaching practices through a cyclical process of planning, acting, observing, and reflecting (Burns, 2019). This approach is particularly useful in addressing classroom problems, including students' difficulties in writing. By implementing specific strategies and evaluating their impact, teachers can make continuous improvements in their instruction.

Several studies have shown that CAR can effectively enhance students' writing skills by providing opportunities for reflection and adjustment in teaching practices (Widodo, 2018; Rahman, 2020). In this study, CAR is used to examine how animation movies can be integrated into writing instruction to improve students' recount writing skills. Through iterative cycles, this approach allows for a deeper understanding of how students respond to the use of animation movies in the classroom.

## **Research Methods**

This study employed a Classroom Action Research (CAR) design to improve students' recount writing skills through the use of animation movies. CAR is a reflective and cyclical process that enables teachers to identify classroom problems and implement practical solutions through continuous improvement (Burns, 2019). The research was conducted in two cycles, each consisting of four stages: planning, acting, observing, and reflecting.

In the planning stage, the researcher identified students' difficulties in writing recount texts, such as generating ideas, organizing paragraphs, and using appropriate past tense forms. Based on these problems, lesson plans were designed by integrating animation movies as instructional media. Teaching materials, worksheets, and assessment rubrics were also prepared.

In the acting stage, the planned instructional activities were implemented in the classroom. Students were introduced to recount text structures and then exposed to animation movies. They were asked to observe the storyline, identify key events, and write recount texts based on the movies they watched. The use of animation movies aimed to provide visual support and stimulate students' idea development.

In the observing stage, the researcher collected data on students' learning processes and writing performance. This was done through classroom observations, field notes, and students' writing tests. The observation focused on students' participation, engagement, and response to the use of animation movies during the learning activities.

In the reflecting stage, the researcher analyzed the results of Cycle I to evaluate the effectiveness of the implemented strategy. The reflection revealed that although students showed improvement, some difficulties remained, particularly in grammar and text organization. Therefore, revisions were made to improve the teaching strategy in Cycle II, such as providing clearer guidance, additional examples, and more structured writing activities.

The second cycle was conducted by applying improvements based on the reflection from Cycle I. This iterative process allowed the researcher to continuously refine the instructional strategy and achieve better learning outcomes.

## **Findings and Discussion**

### **Preliminary Findings**

Prior to the implementation of the action, a preliminary study was conducted to identify students' initial writing ability and classroom conditions. The data were collected through a diagnostic writing test, classroom observations, and informal interviews. The writing test was used as the primary instrument to measure students' baseline ability in writing recount texts, while observations and interviews were used to support the interpretation of students' learning difficulties.

The results of the initial writing test indicated that students' writing performance was still relatively low. Many students experienced difficulties in generating ideas, organizing texts coherently, and applying appropriate grammatical structures, particularly in the use of past tense. These findings are consistent with previous studies which suggest that EFL learners often struggle with idea development and grammatical accuracy in writing (Fareed et al., 2018; Rao, 2019).

Classroom observations further revealed that students showed low participation and engagement during writing activities. In addition, interview data indicated that students felt unmotivated and found writing tasks difficult due to limited vocabulary and lack of supporting media. However, it is important to note that observation and interview data were not used to measure students' writing improvement directly, but rather to provide contextual understanding of the learning process. The measurement of improvement in this study was primarily based on students' writing test scores across cycles.

**Table 1.** Students' Problems in Writing (Preliminary Findings)

No	Aspect	Description of Problems
1	Content	Students had difficulty generating and developing ideas
2	Organization	Students were unable to organize sentences into coherent paragraphs
3	Vocabulary	Limited vocabulary and inappropriate word choice
4	Grammar	Frequent errors in tense, especially past tense
5	Mechanics	Errors in punctuation, capitalization, and spelling
6	Motivation	Low interest and participation in writing activities
7	Media	Lack of instructional media made learning monotonous

### Cycle I

#### Implementation of the Action

To show how the intervention was conducted, the teaching activities in Cycle I are presented below.

**Table 2.** Teaching Activities in Cycle I

Meeting	Activities
1	Introduction to recount text and showing animation movie
2	Watching animation movie and writing recount text based on the story

### Students' Writing Performance in Cycle I

To analyze students' improvement, their writing performance is summarized below.

**Table 3.** Students' Writing Performance in Cycle I

Aspect	Description
Content	Students began to generate ideas but still limited
Organization	Some improvement, but paragraphs were still not fully coherent
Vocabulary	Slight improvement, but still repetitive
Grammar	Frequent errors in past tense
Mechanics	Many errors still occurred

### Cycle II

#### Improvement of Students' Writing

To highlight the improvement from Cycle I to Cycle II, the comparison is presented below.

**Table 4.** Improvement of Students' Writing from Cycle I to Cycle II

Aspect	Cycle I	Cycle II
Content	Ideas limited	Ideas more developed and detailed
Organization	Poor structure	More coherent and well-organized
Vocabulary	Limited words	More varied vocabulary
Grammar	Many errors	Fewer errors, better past tense use
Mechanics	Frequent errors	Improved punctuation and spelling

### Students' Engagement

**Table 5.** Students' Engagement Improvement

Aspect	Cycle I	Cycle II
Participation	Moderate	High
Motivation	Increased but unstable	High and consistent
Attention	Some students still distracted	Most students focused

### Summary of Findings

**Table 6.** Summary of Research Findings

Indicator	Result
Writing Skill	Improved significantly
Idea Development	Improved through visual stimulus
Grammar Accuracy	Increased
Classroom Engagement	Significantly increased
Teaching Effectiveness	More interactive and engaging

### Discussion

The findings of this study demonstrate that the use of animation movies significantly contributed to the improvement of students' recount writing skills. This improvement can be seen not only in students' ability to generate and develop ideas but also in their capacity to organize texts more coherently and apply more appropriate grammatical structures. The results

suggest that animation movies serve as an effective instructional medium that bridges the gap between abstract language concepts and concrete understanding.

From a theoretical perspective, these findings are strongly supported by Richard E. Mayer's (2021) *Cognitive Theory of Multimedia Learning*, which posits that students learn more effectively when verbal and visual information are presented simultaneously. In this study, animation movies provided dual channels of input—visual scenes and spoken language—which helped students construct meaning more easily and retain information more effectively. As a result, students were better able to transform their understanding of events into written form, particularly in recount texts that require chronological organization.

Furthermore, the use of animation movies facilitated students' idea generation and text organization. The clear sequence of events presented in the movies allowed students to follow a logical storyline, which is essential in writing recount texts. This finding is consistent with previous research by Brett (1997), who argued that visual input supports comprehension and helps learners organize information more effectively. Similarly, Harmer (2007) emphasizes that visual media can stimulate learners' imagination and provide a meaningful context for language production, particularly in writing activities.

In addition to cognitive benefits, the findings also highlight the significant role of animation movies in enhancing students' motivation and engagement. During Cycle II, students showed higher levels of participation, attention, and enthusiasm in completing writing tasks. This supports the view of Zoltán Dörnyei (2001), who states that motivation is a crucial factor influencing students' success in language learning. When students are exposed to engaging and enjoyable learning materials, such as animation movies, they are more likely to become actively involved in the learning process. This is also in line with Ismaili (2019), who found that movies can significantly increase students' interest and participation in EFL classrooms.

Moreover, the gradual improvement in students' grammar and vocabulary indicates that repeated exposure to contextualized language input plays an important role in language acquisition. Through animation movies, students were exposed to authentic language use within meaningful contexts, which helped them internalize linguistic patterns more naturally. This finding aligns with Stephen Krashen's (1985) *Input Hypothesis*, which suggests that language acquisition occurs when learners are exposed to comprehensible input slightly above their current level of competence. In this study, animation movies provided such input, enabling students to improve their grammatical accuracy and expand their vocabulary over time.

In addition, the findings of this study support previous empirical research on the use of audiovisual media in writing instruction. For example, Putri and Refnaldi (2020) reported that video-based instruction improved students' writing performance, particularly in terms of content and organization. Similarly, Sari and Zainil (2021) found that students who learned through audiovisual media produced more detailed and coherent texts compared to those who used traditional methods. These studies reinforce the idea that animation movies are not only engaging but also pedagogically effective in supporting writing development.

Overall, the findings of this study suggest that animation movies function as both a cognitive and motivational tool in EFL writing instruction. They help students understand content more clearly, organize ideas more effectively, and engage more actively in the learning process. Therefore, integrating animation movies into writing instruction can be considered a practical and effective strategy to enhance students' recount writing skills as well as their overall learning experience in EFL classrooms.

## **Conclusion**

This study aimed to examine the use of animation movies in improving students' recount writing skills through a Classroom Action Research (CAR) approach. The findings revealed that the integration of animation movies effectively enhanced students' writing performance, particularly in terms of idea development, text organization, vocabulary use, and grammatical accuracy. In addition, the use of animation movies contributed to increased student engagement,

as reflected in their active participation and motivation during the learning process.

These results indicate that animation movies serve as a meaningful instructional medium that provides visual context and supports students in expressing ideas more clearly in writing. However, the effectiveness of this approach depends on how it is implemented, particularly in terms of instructional guidance and structured activities. Despite its positive outcomes, this study was limited to a single classroom and a short research duration. Therefore, future research is recommended to involve a larger sample and explore the use of animation movies in different writing genres and instructional contexts.

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