

IMPROVING STUDENTS' SKILL IN WRITING NARRATIVE TEXT THROUGH PICTURE SERIES

Elma Akbarina Devi, M. Asrori, Martono

English Education Department
Teacher Training and Education Faculty
Sebelas Maret University of Surakarta

Email: elmaakbarina@yahoo.com

Abstract: The objectives of the research are: (1) to find out whether picture series can improve the students' skill in writing narrative text; (2) to describe the classroom situation when picture series is applied in teaching writing narrative text. The subject of the research is the students of class VIII of Junior High School in the academic year of 2012/2013. The research data were collected through observation, interview, field notes, document analysis, photographs, and test includes pre-test and post test. The qualitative data were analyzed by assembling the data, coding the data, comparing the data, building interpretation, and repoting the outcomes. Meanwhile, the quantitative data were analyzed by comparing the mean scores of the pre-test and the post test. The research findings show that the use of picture series could improve students' writing skill and classroom situation during teaching learning process. It can be seen that the mean score was 61.42 increased to 66.53 in post test 1, and 78.72 in post test 2.

Keywords: *writing skill, picture series*

INTRODUCTION

English is one of foreign languages studied by many students in the school. There are four skills that have to be mastered by students, namely listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Writing is one of the English language skills which should be mastered. Writing belongs to productive skill. It is very useful for students because it can convey their message through their minds in the written form. Based on *Kurikulum Tingkat Satuan Pendidikan 2006*, learning writing in Junior High School aimed at making the students able to express idea in the written form by using appropriate language variation fluently and accurately in interaction or monologue in the form of descriptive, recount narrative, procedure,

and report. For especially the eight graders, it is limited on narrative, descriptive, and recount.

Based on that curriculum, it can see the importance of writing instruction. Bell and Burnaby in Nunan (1998: 6) state that writing is an extremely complex cognitive activity in which the writer is required to demonstrate control of a number of variables simultaneously. At the sentence level these include control of content, format, sentence structure, vocabulary, punctuation, spelling, and letter formation. It means, ideally, in writing the students should be able to organize the content with the title, organize a text to make it cohesive and coherent, use correct grammar, use correct vocabulary, and

write a text with correct punctuation, spelling, and capitalization.

Based on pre-research conducted in the eighth grade, it was found that the students' writing skill was still low. They have difficulties in all aspects of writing, such as; (1) the students were not able to organize their writing in good organization; (2) the students could not express their ideas; (3) the students got difficulty in using appropriate vocabularies; (4) the students were not able to make sentences grammatically; (5) the students got difficulty on mechanics including punctuation and spelling. Then, the researcher also found the problems on the classroom situation, such as: (1) the students didn't participate during the lesson, and (2) the students didn't pay attention to the teacher.

There were some factors why the students got the difficulties in writing narrative text. These factors came from the students and the teacher. The students factors includes they were lazy to express their ideas or feeling because they were lack in vocabulary. Their submitted papers were usually blank or just with little writing without any elaborations. They often make mistake in write sentences using past tense, and they didn't know the distinction among the texts because they were lack of practice writing in daily activities.

Then, the factors came from the teacher's side are as follow: the teacher rarely taught writing to the students through writing process. He just explained the patterns and gave the example of the text then asked to write the paragraph without guidance. The teacher only focused on textbook and gave students an instruction and topic. The teacher didn't give adequate explanation, time, models,

and practices for the students to write. There is no creative technique and media used in improving the students' writing skill. When the teacher gives the writing assignment, he just asks the students to do writing and submit it, without discussing with the students. And the students just get the mark without knowing their mistakes. So far, the teacher teaches conventionally, by giving the students lecture and presenting the material without any creative media.

Considering the problems in learning writing faced by the students and the teacher above, the researcher used picture series as the media to improve the students' writing skill. The use of media, especially picture series media in learning narrative writing skills might motivate students in the learning process. Wright (1989: 2) states that pictures contribute to interest and motivation, a sense of context of the language and a specific stimulus. Pictures in the pictures series can create a context within students with the information used in controlled practiced work. Pictures showing objects, actions, events and relationship can cue answer to questions, substitutions, and sentence completion. The role of picture series in writing activities may be motivating and interesting. It can very useful and help to brainstorm the students' idea and stimulate their imaginative power. There were some roles of picture series in writing (Wright, 1989: 17), such as: (1) pictures can motivate student and make them want to pay attention to take part, (2) pictures contribute to the context in which the language is being used, (3) pictures can be described in an objective way or interpreted or responded to subjectivel, (4) picture can cue responses to questions or cue substations through controlled

practice, (5) pictures can stimulate and provide information to be referred to in conversation, discussion and storytelling.

Harmer (2001:57) explains briefly the role of teacher to use picture series. The first role is motivating. Teacher should motivate and provoke the students who have difficulties in writing through fun way, it is by using picture series. The second role is demonstrating, teacher need to demonstrate how to use the picture series and how to construct the text according to the picture series, thus the students will not confront any confusion to work with it. The third role is supporting. Teacher should be supportive when students write in the class and be ready to help them overcome difficulties. The fourth role is responding. In this way of teacher in expressing the strength and the weakness of the students' writing, thus they may get input to better writing. And the last role is evaluating. When evaluating, the students' writing, the teacher can indicate where they write well and make mistake.

Teacher can use picture series to provide a story for the students, then they will get an idea and develop their idea into chronological story based on the picture series. The students use their own imagination to develop their idea into a creative story. The teacher may ask the students about the characters, setting, or plot of the story. This technique can be collaborated with the other techniques, for example jigsaw, inquiry based teaching, story telling, etc. The activities can be done individually or in group. The teacher also may divides class into some groups and give them one or two sequential pictures for each group. By providing the picture series, the students get easily in finding appropriate vocabularies, write a

text using correct grammar, capitalization, punctuation, and spelling.

Based on the theories above, it is assumed that picture series can improve students' skill in writing narrative text of eighth grade students of Junior High School.

The aims of this research are to find out whether picture series can improve the students' skill in writing narrative text and to describe the classroom situation when picture series is applied in teaching writing narrative text.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study was conducted to the students of class VIII D of Junior High School. It consists of 32 students including 19 boys and 13 girls. There are 18 classrooms in this school, 6 classroom of seventh grade, 6 classroom of eighth grade, and 6 classroom of nineth grade. The buildings of this school have complete facilities that support the teaching and learning activities. There are teacher office, administration room, language laboratory, computer laboratory, science laboratory, multimedia room, library, mosque, basketball yard, and hall room. Besides, there are the buildings as the supplement of the school, like canteens, toilets, and parking area. In each classroom, there are whiteboard, 20 tables, 40 chairs for students, a teacher's desk and chair, a clock, and 2 fans.

The method used in this research is action research. "Action research is the application of fact finding to practical problem solving in social situation with view to improve the quality of action with involving collaboration and cooperation of researchers, practitioners, and laymen". The definition is supported by Burns (1999:30). It means that action research is

application to overcome the problems and makes social change with collaboration or cooperation technique. In this research, the researcher made the students' quality improve by using the cooperation technique. In implementing the action research, the researcher used these four steps; (1) planning the action, (2) implementing the action, (3) observing the action, and (4) reflecting the action.

There are two kinds of technique of collecting data in this research, such as: qualitative data and quantitative data. Qualitative data were taken from results of observation, interview, field notes, document analysis, and photographs. Meanwhile, quantitative data were taken from the result of the writing test, including the students' scores of the pre-test and post test.

Further, the data were analyzed by qualitative and quantitative ways. The qualitative data analyses were used to analyse the data that are taken during the teaching learning process. There are some processes of analyzing qualitative data in action research. Burns (1999: 156 - 160) mentioned the following processes: (1) assembling the data; (2) coding the data; (3) comparing the data; (4) building interpretation; (5) reporting the outcome.

Meanwhile, the quantitative data gained from the tests support the qualitative data. In this research, the researcher were score by using analytical scoring rubric and gave score for each elements of writing: content, organization, vocabulary, language use, and mechanic. After that, the researcher counted the total score and mean score of each elements, then compared the mean score between pre-test and post test to know the improvement score of students' skill.

RESEARCH FINDINGS & DISCUSSIONS

This research was conducted at the eighth grade of Junior High School. Before beginning the action, the researcher interviewed the teacher and several students, observed the teaching learning process, and did the pre-test to measure the student's skill in writing. Based on the result of pre-research, the researcher found some problems that happened in the classroom that related to the students' writing skill. After that, to overcome those problems, the researcher proposed to improve the students' writing skill in narrative text by using picture series in implementing the teaching learning process. The research was conducted in two cycles. There were three meetings in the first cycle and two meetings in the second cycle. In each meeting, researcher gave all the material and some exercises. If each cycle was done, the researcher conducted post-test to know the development of student's writing skill.

Cycle 1 was implemented in 4 stages, namely: planning, action, observation, and reflection. Cycle 1 divided into three meetings, on the first meeting, the researcher explained of narrative text and gave the task related to the picture series entitled "Malin Kundang". On the second meeting 2, the researcher explained about past tense and mentioned the vocabularies related to the picture series entitled "Jaka Tarub". On the third meeting, the researcher explained about mechanic and gave the task to write down the text into correct mechanism. After that, the researcher asked the students to make a draft outline of narrative text with their own words entitled "Jaka Tarub". After implementing the first cycle, the researcher conducted post-test.

The researcher asked students to write a narrative text with entitled "Cinderella".

After analyzing the observation result and test result in cycle 1, the researcher found the students' progress in writing skill. The result of observation showed the improvement of students' writing narrative skill by using picture series. The first improvement could be shown on the increasing of mean score from pre-test and post test in cycle 1. The mean score of the students improved from 61.42 to 66.53. The second improvement could be seen from the classroom situation during teaching learning process. Implementing of picture series in teaching learning process had some strength to improve students' skill in writing narrative text. The students were motivated to join the class. They also tried to be active student in answering the question and curiosity to ask anything about the material. When the researcher was explaining the material, the students paid attention carefully and made a note in their book. It could be concluded that the students had high motivation to be better and they were also interested to join and get involved in the teaching learning process.

Cycle 2 was implemented in two meetings. The researcher tried to overcome the remaining problems which still occurred in cycle 1. In the cycle 2, the researcher would focus on past tense and improve their skill to express and develop the idea. The researcher would give more task about past tense to make better the students' writing skill. The researcher gave guidance on how to express and develop their ideas. On the first meeting, the researcher explained about past tense and asked the students to make sentences in past tense form. Then, the researcher asked

them to fill the blanks of the text. And the second meeting, the researcher distributed the worksheets and asked the students to arrange the words into a good sentence. After that, the researcher asked them to write an outline of narrative text with the title "Snow White" by using their own language. The researcher also choose the good story to make students more interest and gave the picture series in good quality. After implementing the second cycle, researcher conducted post test. The researcher asked students to write a narrative text with entitled "Hansel and Gretel".

After cycle 2, there were some improvements of students' skill in writing narrative text by using picture series. The first improvement could be seen on the increasing of score in each aspects of writing, such as: content, organization, vocabulary, language use, and mechanic. and classroom situation during teaching and learning process. The mean score of students' writing test improved from 66.53 to 78.72.

The implementation of picture series can improve students' skill in writing narrative text. Picture series is picture which show some actions or events in chronological order. Wright (1989: 2) states that pictures contribute to interest and motivation, a sense of context of the language and a specific stimulus. Wright (1989: 186) also states that picture series is sequences of pictures which are closely related to a narrative text. It is expected that through picture series, students can be interested and motivated in learning English. They more active, easier in expressing and exploring their idea into a good narrative paragraph.

The implementation of picture series in writing narrative text could help

the students in developing their idea and giving supporting detail based on picture series. They could also organize the narrative text starting from orientation, complication, and resolution. By providing picture series, the students found some appropriate vocabularies and tried to write the sentences in good grammar. They also used the correct capitalization, punctuation, and spelling. Finally, they could improve their skill in writing narrative text.

The implementation of picture series can improve the classroom situation when teaching learning process. The role of picture series in writing activities may be motivating and interesting. It can very useful and help to brainstorm the students' idea and stimulate their imaginative power. Wright (1989: 17), states that there are some roles of picture series in writing: (a) picture can motivate student and make them want to pay attention to take part, (b) picture contribute to the context in which the language is being used. They bring the world into the classroom, (c) picture can be described in an objective way or interpreted or responded to subjectively, (d) picture can cue responses to questions or cue substations through controlled practice, and (e) picture can stimulate and provide information to be referred to in conversation, discussion and storytelling.

Based on the theories above, it can be concluded that picture series could improve the classroom situation. The students gave more pay attention to the teacher during teaching learning process. They also more concentration to the lesson, so they never looked sleepy or talked with their tablemates. The role of teacher was to controll and guidance the writing process. The teacher also gives opportunity to each students to try answer

the question, give opinion, or just ask the difficult word. This condition makes the students participate actively and gave good responses in class. The situation of class is more relax and enjoy. The students looked enthusiastic when joined the writing class.

CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

This research was conducted in the eighth grade of Junior High School. Based on the finding in using picture series to teach writing narrative text, the researcher makes some conclusions. Firstly, the result of this action research shows that the implementation of picture series as teaching media improves the students' skill in writing narrative text. There are some improvement of students' score in each aspect of writing. It is shown that they got good scores in each test. The students can easily in exploring their idea and giving supporting detail based on picture series. They also can organize the narrative text and choose appropriate vocabularies. They also write the sentences in correct grammar, punctuation, and spelling. Those aspects of writing can be achieved through implementing picture series in the practice of writing.

Besides, the classroom situation when teaching learning process get better. The students gave pay more attention to the teacher during teaching learning process. They also more concentration to the lesson, so they never looked sleepy or talked with their tablemates. The students were brave to be active student, they gave good responses in every activity during the lesson. The situation of class is more relax and enjoy and all the students looked enthusiastic when joined the writing class.

The appropriate choice of picture series will give good impact in process and result of teaching and learning itself. The

implementation of picture series has shown that the media is effective to use in teaching learning process to improve the students' skill in writing narrative text. Picture series can develop the students' imagination to get the idea into a good writing. Besides, the use of picture series can attract the students' interest to join the writing class. They are more enthusiastic, active and enjoy when teaching learning process.

After conducting the research, the researcher would like to give some suggestions that can be provided to improve the students' skill in writing. The role of teacher is very important in teaching learning process. The teacher can be a facilitator, motivator, and evaluator. Besides, the teacher has to control and guidance the students in the teaching learning activity. The teacher are expected to pay attention to the students' problem. Therefore the teacher should be able to identify the students' problems and tried to solve those problems. The teacher should use an interesting media in teaching writing. Picture series is one of effective media that can be used in teaching writing. Then, the teacher are also expected to bring the classroom into conducive situation and make the students to be active and enjoy when joined the writing class.

For the students who are taught writing by using picture series, they should realize that writing is important to be mastered. They are expected to follow the teacher's instruction and follow the stages on the writing process. The students are

recommended to have more practice in writing, not only at school but also have initiative to practice writing at home. They should not be afraid, shy or embarrassed in expressing their ideas into good writing.

It is needed for institution or school to encourage and support the students and English teacher to improve the quality of teaching learning process. They should facilitate various media and places that needed by both teacher and students to achieve the goals.

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