

ENHANCING THE ABILITY IN WRITING NARRATIVE TEXT OF JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS THROUGH PICTURE SERIES

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Abstract

The objective of this study is to find out whether the use of picture series significantly improves the achievement on writing narrative text of the eighth grade students of Junior High School. The subject of this study is the eighth grade students of SMP Negeri 76 Jakarta. The sample of this study is the students VIII-4 consisting 30 students. The method of this research is descriptive qualitative method.. The technique for collecting the qualitative data was gathered through students' writing text and observation sheet. Qualitative data showed that the students were interested in using pictures as the learning media in writing narrative text. From the findings can be seen that student's narrative writing is found improved through picture series. Students' responses toward the use of picture series activity in EFL writing classroom were mostly positive. It can be concluded that picture series was an interesting alternative. Under certain condition, it was said more intensive than other approach and this gives them chances to be aware on their mistakes in writing. Overall, the students' revised version drafts are more developed. As suggested by researchers and teachers, picture series should be implemented thoroughly, carefully, and well-planned.

Keywords: writing, narrative text, picture series.

1. Introduction

The students at SMP Negeri 76 Jakarta were indicated that their ability in the English language skills especially in writing was still lack. Most of the students failed to gain high score. It is because there are some problems in teaching and learning to write in class that need to be addressed. In the teaching and learning process, the teacher provides a smaller portion of writing activities for students in the class. In addition, the strategies used in the teaching and learning process are not varied because students must carry out writing activities under pressure. Then, as a result, students are not enthusiastic about writing activities and thus become easily bored. When the teacher gives them task to write something, most of them seem very nervous and neglect the task, even the students cannot produce anything for a certain period of time because they do not know what to do and how to do it. It showed that they face more difficulties to do the writing task. The teacher-centered learning approach made the teacher dominated a passive learning.

The other fact was that students had lack confidence in write something. The students were not able to generate ideas from their mind into written language. It is proven that most of the students cannot write simple paragraph in writing narrative

text and consequently they got low score in writing. Seeing at this condition, teachers are faced with changing students' attitudes and building self-confidence. In other to make students more confident to write, designing good writing activities such as the use of picture series needs to be built. Picture series was the simplest way that could be used by the teacher. It became the simple way since it let the students wrote and provided opportunities for them to do experiment with a story as narrative text.

Regarding those difficulties, there must be a special strategy that could be used to solve the problems. English teachers should pay attention to components of teaching in order to make the teaching-learning process conducted well. In this research, the researcher proposed the use of picture series which could be matched with process writing approach based on the context of teaching writing for Junior High School in Indonesia. Actually, teaching writing for EFL students in Indonesia has become more difficult since they move up to higher grade. For Junior High School students, they usually have to deal with more complicated writing, like writing a narrative, a report, descriptive and many other of paragraph.

In this study, the researcher will gives some examples and highlights the role of using picture series in improving students' ability. Finally, this article proposes a procedure of how to teach writing narrative text using picture series and offers some suggestions for future practice and research.

2. Literature Writing

Learning to write is not only about how to write words but also how to package ideas, messages and information correctly in a text, within certain criteria. To make the students to write the target language in the classroom is not easy. The difficulties of students to write may result from of some reasons such as students' reluctance, lack of motivation, uninteresting teaching technique, etc. In addition, the use of English for writing is not simple, because the writer should also master several elements which are important such as: grammar, vocabulary, spelling, content, and organization. Teachers are supposed to be creative in developing their teaching learning process to create good atmosphere, improve the students' writing skill, give the attention on the elements of writing, and make the English lesson more exciting (Wibowo, 2019). While Celce-Murcia (2000: 142) in (Muhibbudin, 2016) defines writing as the production of the written words that result in a text that must be read and comprehended in order for communication to take place. Therefore, teachers must be able to present interesting subjects and choose relevant topics based on the knowledge of their students. She/he needs to motivate the students and increase their curiosity especially to stimulate their writing skills.

Narrative Text

A narrative is some kind of retelling, often in words (though it is possible to mime a story), of something that happened (a story). The narrative is not the story itself but rather the telling of the story, which is why it is often used in phrases such as written narrative, oral narrative, etc. A narrative is a story that is created in a constructive format (written, spoken, poetry, etcetera) that describes a sequence of fictional of non-fictional events (Purba, 2018). While Purba also add the generic structure of narrative text involves the character with define personalities/identifies, and creates images in reader's mind and enhances the story. It also focusses a text on a series of action. (Purba, 2018). The steps for constructing a narrative text are:

Orientation : sets the scene and introduces the participants
Evaluation : a stepping back evaluate the plight
Compilation : a crisis arises
Resolution : the crises is revolved, for better or for worse
Re-orientation : optional

Writing narrative should include adequate details about the action and its context so that the readers can understand what is going on. In addition, selecting and emphasizing events and details that serve a purpose should be considered. Generally, there are three stages of organization in narrative: orientation, complication, and resolution. Narratives are written in past tense verbs because they tell stories that have already happened (Luthfiyati & Latief, 2015).

Picture Series Media

Pictures are two-dimensional visual representation or person, place, or things. They can be painted or drawn, colored or black and white. She classifies pictures into three types such as composite picture, picture series and individual picture. He describes picture series as numbers of linked pictures which form series of sequences in order tell a sequence of events or a story. The use of picture series can help the students to write types of text that require sequences like procedure, recount, and narrative (Wening, 2016). Muhibbudin states that picture series are a series of pictures which show some actions or events in a chronological order. The picture series usually ranges from four to eight pictures. The pictures usually tell some kind of story but pictures may also be used to depict a process, for example, how to make something. Pictures can be utilized in the teaching of writing via: first, pictures can provide a shared experience for students in the classroom. Second, they can stimulate a variety of tasks. Finally, they can provide a focus of interest for the students. Besides, considering the principles of using media, media have to be fun, help students to think and explore their ability to think by themselves, they should be easy to use but challenging (Muhibbudin, 2016).

There are some alternative of picture series that can be used in the classroom. These picture series can be colored or black and white. They can be drawn by the teachers or adopted from textbooks, magazines, newspapers, photographs, and the other media. The number of pictures can be in one series can be varied (Wening, 2016). While (Asrifan, 2015) proves through his research that the students who are taught by using pictures have better performance in writing than the students who are taught by using conventional way although the researcher did same treatment. Also proved by (Gregoria, Gutiérrez, Puello, Alberto, & Galvis, 2015), the use of pictures series made more effective the process approach implemented in the groups. There was a marked improvement in the overall writing skills of the targeted population using picture series. Participants or students improved their sequencing skills by writing stories in chronological order with details and consistent use of time-order words.

3. Methodology

The research used descriptive qualitative method. It was designed to investigate whether picture series could be used in the learning process of writing narrative text by the students and what the effects of picture series would be.

The researcher conducted the study in the VIII-4 Class at SMP 76 Jakarta which consists of 30 students. The research took 1 (one) month, starting from September 10 to October 10, 2019. Furthermore, the procedure of data collection in this research was obtained by observation. In the observation, the researcher observed English language teaching learning activities by implementing picture series as the media. Here, the researcher also took part as the companion teacher to teach the students. She observed how the teacher taught writing using the picture series. The researcher also did some interviews with both the teacher and students using simple and unstructured questions because she wanted to get the information as complete as possible. At the end of the learning process, she interviewed the teacher first and followed by the students. By doing this, she got the information of the students' interest and response in joining learning activities.

4. Findings and Discussion

The researcher gave the students a pre-task. The purpose of the pre-task was to measure the students' writing skill. The researcher gives them topics that they can choose randomly, so they can start to write a narrative text based on the topic they chose. Based on the observation at SMK 76 Jakarta, the students were taught by teacher-centred method where the students are in passive. The students put all their focus on the teacher. The teacher found the difficulties of students to write may result from many reasons such as lack of motivation to write, uninteresting teaching media/technique/approach and etcetera. In the pre-task results, the students' did some errors which were classified based on content, organization, grammar, and vocabulary.

Based on the observation, the mistakes in using grammar were mostly dominant. Most of the students did not know about the tenses that should be used in writing a narrative text. The students got difficulties in using simple past tense in their writing. One possible reason of the mistakes is that the students translate their ideas using Bahasa sentence patterns which do not have past tense verb pattern. The implicit way of teaching grammar in schools may add the reason the students got difficulties in using correct grammar in writing. The number of mistakes in vocabulary was relatively small in the students' writing narrative text. It means that they can choose the effective words in their narrative text. This study found that the students in SMP 76 Jakarta still made a lot mistakes in narrative writing. Besides, this study also showed that the most dominant mistakes in students' writing narrative text was on the use of grammar, especially on the use of simple past tense.

Based on the findings of the study, it is suggested that English teachers use this finding as the references to do more research about how to motivate the students in writing class. Students should do more practices in writing narrative composition by paying attention to the use of correct grammar to improve their skill in writing narrative text.

So, look at the problems face at SMP 76 Jakarta, to teach writing in Class VIII-4, the teacher chose picture series that are applicable to teach narrative text. One of the examples of picture series in writing narrative text is shown in Figure 1.



Figure1. Example of Picture Series of Narrative Text (James's Story)

The above picture series tell about the story of daily activities. It is a narrative text. From these picture series above, the students can be guided to learn the story through its generic structure in terms of orientation (picture 1), complication (picture 2-5), and resolution (picture 6). The students can recognize the participants and place of the story, the problems happened, and the end of the story by analyzing the pictures one by one. The final result is that the students can write the story of James's story in the form of narrative text.

There are also some advantages of the use of picture series. The first advantage is that picture series can help the students to generate their ideas about what they are going to write. Most of the students feel difficult when they ask to write a text and are confused about what they will write at first. Picture series provide stimulus for written production. Picture series give the exact information of which event comes first and which one comes next. Meanwhile, the second advantage is that picture series can draw students' attention out to be involved in writing process. At last, it can enrich students' vocabulary. Pictures series are suitable media to introduce new English vocabulary to the students. Hopefully, it will improve students' writing ability.

5. Conclusion

Writing plays an important role in teaching and learning English. However, it is also claimed to be the most difficult skill to master because of the complexity of the writing process. In addition, writing products must have good organization, sufficient content, correct grammar, and various vocabularies. To overcome this complexity, the teacher must provide appropriate learning media. Picture series as one of the learning media is useful for improving students' writing abilities. The picture series was chosen because it is interesting and contains chronological order in a sequence that makes it easy for students to produce and arrange their ideas in written form. Therefore, teachers are advised to be more creative in choosing and creating interesting media for the success of teaching writing. They are expected to conduct research to explore more about the use of image series in improving students' writing abilities.

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