

The Implementation of Picture Series Technique to Improve Writing Skill

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Abstract

The objective of this research is to find out whether the implementation of Picture Series technique is effective in teaching mechanics writing to eight grade students of SMP N 6 Palu or not. This research applied quasi-experimental research design with pre-test and post-test. The research population was the eighth grade students of SMP N 6 Palu. The sample of this research were class VIIIE as experimental class that consisted of 29 students and class VIIIB as control class that consisted of 27 students. In collecting the data, the researcher used test. The test was used twice as pre-test and post-test. Then, the data were analyzed statistically. After analyzing data, it was revealed that there were different score obtained from control group and experimental group. In other words, t -counted (3.47) was higher than t -table (1.67). It means that the result indicates that the Picture Series technique can be used to improve writing skill of eight grade students of SMP N 6 Palu.

Keywords: *picture series, writing mechanics, narrative text*

Abstrak

Tujuan penelitian ini adalah untuk mengetahui apakah Picture Series efektif dalam mengajar tata cara penulisan pada siswa kelas delapan SMP N 6 Palu. Penelitian ini menggunakan desain penelitian kuasi, dengan tes awal dan tes akhir sebagai alat ukur. Populasi penelitian ini adalah siswa kelas VIIIE sebagai kelas experimental yang terdiri dari 29 siswa dan kelas VIIIB sebagai kelas kontrol yang terdiri dari 27 siswa. Dalam pengumpulan data, peneliti menggunakan tes. Tes digunakan dua kali pada saat tes awal dan tes akhir. Kemudian, data diolah secara statistik. Setelah data diolah, ditemukan bahwa terdapat perbedaan skor yang diperoleh dari kelompok kontrol dan kelompok eksperimental. Dengan kata lain, t -hitung (3.47) lebih tinggi dari t -tabel (1.67). Ini berarti bahwa, hasil penelitian ini dapat meningkatkan keterampilan menulis siswa.

Kata kunci: *picture series, writing mechanics, narrative text*

INTRODUCTION

English, as an International Language, becomes one of the subject that is now taught in most formal institutions from Elementary Schools until Universities in Indonesia. Even now, it begins to be introduced in some kindergartens. English in some Elementary Schools in Indonesia becomes the first foreign language included into local content. English is important because nowadays to acquire a good job we need to have a proficiency in English language. It is also useful when you are interested in studying abroad. In sum, being fluent in English is crucial in living to become a part of global world.

English is taught at schools in order that students are able to master the four skills. They are listening, speaking, reading and writing. These are often divided into two types, receptive and productive skill. Receptive skill is a term used for reading and listening, a skill where the students receive some information, while productive skill is the term for speaking and writing, a skill where student actually have to produce language themselves.

Among those skills, writing is the most complicated and difficult to be learnt than others. Writing is a complicated skill for the students because when they want to write they need to know several components of writing. Some of the language components are grammar and mechanics of writing. Brown (2001:336) asserts, "Writing is a thinking process. Writers produce final written products based on their thinking after the writers go through the thinking process."

According to 2013 English Curriculum for Junior High School, the teaching objective for students is "Obtaining the meaning in a narrative text, oral and written fable, short and simple." It means that students are expected to express their idea, thought, and meaning in written form in various genre, procedure, descriptive, recount, narrative and report.

Text is a group of sentences that develop one idea. There are some types of text. Such as descriptive text, recount text, report text, procedure text, and narrative text. However, in this study, the researcher will only focus on narrative text. Narrative is basically as a story or characterized by the telling of a story. Hyland (2003:10) defines "A narrative is a text that tells a story". The story in narrative text is usually to entertain or amuse the readers. Narrative text focuses specific participants and it is organized focusing at character oriented.

- 1) A narrative tells a story.

Narration tells a story about a series of events or actions. The events may be real or nonfiction - as in histories, biographies, and newspaper stories or imagery or fiction, as in short stories, novels, and plays. In narrative text, there is a climax of the problem.

2) A narrative has some types and kinds.

Some types of narrative may include fairy stories, mysteries, science fiction, romances, horror stories, adventure stories, fables, myths and legends, historical narratives, ballads, slice of life, personal experience, comedy, or others.

3) A narrative is organized by time order or chronological.

The series of events in narration are generally arranged by time order (logical time sequence) or chronological order. This means that the story begins what happened first, then moves on to what happened next and ends with what happened last.

4) A narrative makes a point or has purpose.

There must be a purpose in writing a narration. The writer has a duty or job to emphasize the details that are significant to the purpose or the point of the story and then omit the rest. The point of a narrative is to bring one's subject to life.

There are some generic structures of narrative text states by Anderson and Anderson (1997:8) that consists of:

1) Orientation: Introducing the participants and informing the time and the place. The narrator tells the audience who is in the story, when it is happening, where it is happening and what it is happening.

2) Complication: Describing the rising crises which the participants have to do with. This is the part of the story where the narrator tells about something that will begin a chain of events. These events will affect one or more of the characters and often mirror the complications in real life.

3) Resolution: Showing the way of participant to solve the crises. In this part of the narrative where the complication is sorted out or the problem is solved.

Based on the observation in SMP Negeri 6 Palu at class VIII, it seemed that the students were rarely taught to write in English. As a result, there were some problems occurred. First, they did not have the skill to construct the sentences in simple past tense form. Second, students did not have any ideas to write. They went blank when they were asked to write a text. Third, the students had many problems in using proper grammar. Fourth, students also did not have any motivation and were not interested in doing the task since the writing activities were not exciting.

There were some factors that make students writing skill was low. It could be caused by both of the teacher and students. Firstly, the teacher gave the writing assignment to reduce his or her job. It was because when the assignment was given, the students needed to do it in their own way at school. When the students could not do it on time, the assignment became a homework that needed to be done at home. By looking at this, we saw that the teacher did not guide the students in writing at all. Secondly, the students had difficulty in expressing something due to the fact that the teacher was not guiding them well.

Thus, the students need some interesting techniques to engage their motivation in developing idea of their writing. These can be solved by providing the students Picture Series as a medium in conveying the materials and developing ideas. Picture is one of the visual aids used by the teacher in teaching learning process. Kinds of pictures which are used to teach are picture, picture series, and etc. Wright (1989) states that pictures are very important in helping students to retell experiences or understand the content of the whole series of pictures because the pictures are related. Pictures series are arranged as media to help students express their ideas and feelings fluently.

Yunus (1981:49) states that a picture series is a number of related composite pictures linked to form a series of sequence. Raimes (1983:36) states that pairs of picture or picture series provide for a variety of guided and free writing exercises. Picture series such as comic strip, provides the subject matter for writing narrative and for speculating about the story beyond the pictures in the strip. A set of pictures shows a similar scene or tell a similar story. It provides material that offers guidance on sentence structure and organization yet lets the students write about new subject matter. Based on the explanation above, the researcher concludes that picture series is a set of pictures which is presented in sequence to be used as guidance in writing exercise. Picture brings the outside world into the classroom in clearly way, a need common language form to use in the classroom, a variety of tasks and a focus of interest for students.

Wright (1989:4) states that picture series can be used by teachers and students whatever the emphasis of the syllabus they are following. Wright also stated that one of the most useful developments in language teaching methodology in recent years has been in the organization of students in the classroom. The gain lies in the degree of interaction between students and the consequent sense of purpose in using language. Picture can play a key role in motivating students contextualizing the language they are using, giving them a reference in helping to discipline the activity.

Before choosing and applying a kind of technique, a teacher should know well about the technique. It is better for the teacher to evaluate the advantages and the disadvantages of the technique. The advantage of using picture series is that it will help the students to improve their writing skill in the aspect of content. The students firstly need to have ideas in what they want to write so that they will be able to write the ideas into readable sentences. In this case, picture series will enable the students to do it since picture series can stimulate the students to develop and use their imagination. By looking at the picture series given by the researcher, they will be stimulated to write the story based on the sequence of pictures.

Besides having several advantages, there is always a downside to the use of picture series in teaching and learning process. The first thing is, it can be quite time consuming to the right pictures for a specific type of activity for a beginner teacher who lacks of his or her own collection. Moreover, pictures used for demonstration of the meaning should be repeatedly connected with the spoken and subsequently also written form of the word or chunk of language.

There are some steps in conducting picture series during learning process based on Wright (1989:15) :

1. Each group is given a number to distinguish it from the other groups.
2. Each group is given a picture. All the pictures given make up sequence.
3. Member from each group go to other groups to find out what each picture shows.
4. They then report back to their group.
5. Each group tries to work what the order of pictures should be.

Narrative text has special language features that are different from others. There are some common language features for narrative are:

1. Usually past tense: past tense for example live became lived.
2. Action verbs: put, danced, ran.
3. Written in the first person (I) or the third person (he/she).
4. Usually adjective and adverb: beautiful, unkind, peacefully.
5. Conversation/Dialog: "Oh God...I want to."

Hence, based on all those problems discussed above, the researcher used Picture Series to be the solution of the problems. In other words, this research was conducted to prove whether Picture Series could improve the students writing ability or not. Thus, the researcher formulated the problems statement as follows: "*Can the implementation of Picture Series improve the writing skill of the grade eight students of SMP Negeri 6 Palu?*" The objective of

the research was to prove if the writing problems of the eight grade students at SMP Negeri 6 Palu could be solved by using Picture Series.

METHODS

This research used quasi-experimental design. Emzir (2008) defines the design as a study that aims to compare something between groups. Therefore, the researcher was picked out two classes to become experimental group and control group. The experimental group got a treatment to improve the students' writing skill.

For this research, the population was the eight grade students of SMP Negeri 6 Palu which has eight parallel classes. They are VIIIA, VIIB, VIIC, VIID, VIIE, VIIF, VIIG, VIHH. The total number was 242 students. The distribution of the population could be seen in the table following.

Table 1. Population

No	Classes	Number of Students'
1	VIIIA	31
2	VIIB	27
3	VIIC	31
4	VIID	31
5	VIIE	29
6	VIIF	30
7	VIIG	31
8	VIHH	27
Total		242

In doing this research, the researcher used purposive sampling technique. Purposive sampling technique is a technique used when you are drawing the sample on purpose. Moreover, the samples were class VIIE as the experimental class and class VIIB as control class.

In this research, the researcher used two variables. They were dependent and independent variables. The dependent variable was the students' ability in writing narrative paragraph while independent variable was the use of Picture Series technique.

Furthermore, in collecting the data, the researcher used paper-and-pencil method as the ultimate technique. The instrument used was test, including pre-test and post-test. The pre-test used by the researcher was intended to find out the students' prior knowledge about their

ability in using mechanics of writing used in the sentences. After getting the result of pre-test and conducting a sequence of treatment, the researcher applied the same kind of test as the post-test for both of experimental and control groups. The aim of the post-test was to measure and find out students' ability in writing, whether the treatment through picture series technique that has been applied to the experimental was successful or not. To assess the students' score, the researcher provided the writing score rubric that could be seen in Table 2.

Table 2. Scoring System

No	Writing Components	Score	Explanation
1	Mechanical Accuracy I (Punctuation)	3	Almost no inaccuracies in punctuation. Some inaccuracies in punctuation. Low standard of accuracy in
		2	punctuation.
		1	Ignorance of conventions of punctuations.
		0	
2	Mechanical Accuracy II (Spelling)	3	Almost no inaccuracies in spelling. Some inaccuracies in spelling. Low standard of accuracy in spelling.
		2	Ignorance of conventions of punctuations.
		1	
		0	
3	Mechanical Accuracy (Capitalization)	3	Almost no inaccuracies in capitalization. Some inaccuracies in capitalization.
		2	Low standard of accuracy in capitalization.
		1	Ignorance of conventions of capotalization.
		0	

Adapted from Weigle (2009)

The data of the research was analyzed by using statistical analysis. First, the students individual score was computed. Next, the researcher computed the mean score of each group.

After getting the mean score of both experimental and control groups, the researcher computed the square deviation. All of the formula that used was proposed by Arikunto (2013). The last, in order to prove whether the hypothesis is accepted or rejected, the researcher needed to test the hypothesis on the data analysis. Before doing the test, the researcher stated the criteria of testing hypothesis; if the t_{counted} is higher than t_{table} ($t_{\text{counted}} > t_{\text{table}}$), the hypothesis is accepted. On the other hand, the hypothesis is rejected when the t_{counted} is lower than the t_{table} ($t_{\text{counted}} < t_{\text{table}}$).

FINDINGS

To find out the students' writing ability through Picture Series, the researcher examined the students before and after giving treatment. The pre-test for experimental class (VIII E) was conducted on August 30th, 2019 and for also the pre-test for the control class (VIII B) was conducted the day before the experimental class was giving a pre-test. The pre-test was used to measure the students writing ability before treatment. Post-test was given after treatment, in order to find out the effectiveness of the treatment. The test was focused on the mechanics in writing are capitalization, punctuation and spelling.

Having noted the pre-test score, the researcher analyzed the standard score by dividing students individual gained score and maximal score and times the result by 100 as a constant value. In order to get the t-test value which would show whether the technique that the researcher applied significance or not, first, the researcher applied the formula that proposed previously to find the mean score of students' pre-test. The result of pre-test for both classes or groups is presented as seen in table 3.

Table 3. Experimental Group's Score and Deviation of Pre-test and Post-test

No	Initials	Standard Scores		Deviation ($x_2 - x_1$)
		Pre-test (x_1)	Post-test (x_2)	
1.	AN	44	89	45
2.	AAS	33	44	11
3.	AO	67	100	33
4.	AR	67	78	11
5.	BAS	56	78	22

6.	CLS	67	78	11
7.	DPAT	100	100	0
8.	DK	67	89	22
9.	FA	67	89	22
10.	GTM	78	100	22
11.	IKD	44	78	34
12.	ITR	33	89	56
13.	LS	89	100	11
14.	MJK	33	33	0
15.	MRK	100	100	0
16.	MN	67	89	22
17.	NAC	67	89	22
18.	NWK	67	89	22
19.	RH	44	89	45
20.	FNZ	67	89	22
21.	RK	33	44	11
22.	RRS	44	44	0
23.	SLR	89	100	11
24.	SR	44	67	23
25.	TFS	56	89	33
26.	TA	33	44	11
27.	TC	67	100	33
28.	BT	44	56	12
29.	BD	56	89	33
Total				600.00
Mean Score		59.39	80.08	

The table above demonstrates that eight students fulfilled the criteria when paired with the minimum passing grade of 75 in pre-test. It also shows that the highest score obtained by

the students of experimental group was 100 and the lowest score was 33. After the total score was obtained, the researcher computed the mean score by using a formula where sum of individual score of the experimental group on pre-test was 59.39.

In post-test, it indicates that the students had much progress resulting from the treatment by which the highest score students reach 100.00 while the lowest score 33. Moreover, 24 students excelled the passing grade. This of course affected the mean score as shown below. Accordingly, the mean score of the experimental group on post-test was 80.08. It increased by 20.69 points from 59.39 on the pre-test. Put more simply, mean score deviation between the pre and post tests was 20.69.

Table 4. Control Group's Score and Deviation of Pre-test and Post-test

No	Initials	Standard Scores		Deviation ($y_2 - y_1$)
		Pre-test (y_1)	Post-test (y_2)	
1.	BYT	67	33	34
2.	CJ	78	78	0
3.	DA	89	89	0
4.	FHS	44	67	23
5.	FT	67	78	11
6.	GL	78	56	22
7.	IL	89	89	0
8.	JMR	78	100	22
9.	JAK	78	44	34
10.	KD	89	100	-11
11.	LM	100	78	22
12.	LA	78	78	0
13.	MJ	89	78	11
14.	MQV	56	89	33
15.	MSP	56	78	22
16.	MJ	56	78	22
17.	MA	33	44	11
18.	MR	78	78	0
19.	MY	44	44	0
20.	NR	89	56	33
21.	NAS	44	44	0
22.	RC	67	89	-22
23.	SK	44	56	12
24.	SS	89	67	22
25.	WW	56	89	33
26.	AAG	67	56	-11
27.	ER	67	33	34
Total				357.00
Mean Score	68.83	69.14		

The pre-test was also administered to the control group. The table above denotes that 13 students met the passing grade of 75. Also, the highest score obtained by the students of the control group was 100 and the lowest score was 33. In addition, the mean score of the control group on the pre-test was 68.83 which was higher by 9.75 points than of the experimental group.

Students' individual scores of the control group in post-test rocketed as well. The highest score obtained by the students achieved the score of 100, while the lowest score achieved the score of 33. Having tabulated the students' individual score, the researcher analyzed the mean score of control group. So, the mean score of the control group on the post-test was 69. This score went up 1 point from 69.14 on the pre-test. Besides, mean deviation score between the experimental and the control groups on the post test was 11.08.

DISCUSSION

In preliminary observation, the researcher found that the students lacked some skill in writing. Based on the observation the researcher does before, it seemed that the students were rarely taught to write in English. As a result, there were some problems occurred. First, they did not have the skill to construct the sentences in simple past tense form. Second, students did not have any ideas to write. They went blank when they were asked to write a text. Third, the students had many problems in using proper grammar. Fourth, students also did not have any motivation and were not interested in doing the task since the writing activities were not exciting.

There were some factors that make students writing skill was low. It could be caused by both of the teacher and students. Firstly, the teacher gave the writing assignment to reduce her job. It was because when the assignment was given, the students needed to do it in their own way at school. When the students could not do it on time, the assignment became a homework that needed to be done at home. By looking at this, we saw that the teacher did not guide the students in writing so well. Secondly, the students had difficulty in expressing something due to the fact that the teacher was not guiding them well. Thus, the researcher tried to come up with a solution which was Picture Series.

Picture series such as comic strip, provides the subject matter for writing narrative and for speculating about the story beyond the pictures in the strip. It is a set of pictures that show a

similar scene or tell a similar story. It provides material that offers guidance on sentence structure and organization yet lets the students write about new subject matter.

In this research, the researcher also used experimental design by using two kinds of test. They were pre-test and post-test. The aim of pre-test was to know the students' ability in writing skill, especially in using mechanics before having the treatment. The test was in the form of written test. They have to write a narrative text based on the picture had been provided. On the other hand, the students were reminded that they had to use the right mechanics.

The researcher started by giving the pre-test some of the students could get equal or higher score than the standard score. The researcher found that the students had difficulty in using punctuation and capitalization, because the students could not place in the correct way. For example, they could not place capital letter in a sentence correctly, "long time ago there lived" the use of capitalization was not correct because capital letter should be placed at the first letter of sentence.

Next, the treatment was administered the students by using Picture Series as a medium. The researcher assumed that this medium made students enjoyed to learning writing skill. The researcher believed that Picture Series was one of the media that made the students easy to learn punctuation, spelling and capitalization in writing narrative text. There were some steps, in teaching mechanics writing. First, the writer explained about the use of punctuation, capitalization and spelling through narrative text. Second, the researcher distributed the test to the students. The test is about Picture Series without punctuation and capitalization. And the last, the students re-wrote the story by using correct punctuation, capitalization, and spelling.

After conducting the treatment, the researcher administered the post-test to the students. The researcher found the most of the students could get higher score in post-test than pre-test. The means score of the post test was 77.59 whereas the mean score of pre-test was 58.62. It showed that the mean score of the post-test was higher than pre-test. The result affirmed that the students' ability in using mechanics writing narrative text had been developed by using Picture Series as medium.

Lastly, by looking at the results of t_{counted} which was 6.60 and the t_{table} which was 1.674, it can be concluded that the Picture Series is effective to teach writing narrative text because the value of the t_{counted} is higher than t_{table} . Therefore, the hypothesis of the research is accepted. The conclusion is also supported by the student's opinions about Picture Series which was stating that they strongly agreed that they had fun while write narrative text. They

also felt that medium was educating and motivating them to be more active in learning in daily basis or in a mere classroom.

The result of the test shows that the implementation of Picture Series was effective in teaching mechanics writing to the students. It showed that teaching mechanics could be taught through Picture Series. After getting the result of post-test, the researcher found that the ability of eight grade students of experimental group at SMP N 6 Palu in using mechanics writing was developed by using Picture Series.

Based on the previous study, there are two related studies of Picture Series. First, it was done by Pratiwi (2013) entitled "*Improving the Ability of the Eight Grade Students of MTs Al-Istiqomah Palu Timur in Writing Short Paragraph through Serial Pictures*". Second, it was done by Herawati (2017) entitled "*The Application of Picture Series to Improve the Ability of the Seventh Grade Students at SMPN 12 Palu to Write Procedure Text*". Both of them used experimental research design. It proves that Picture Series is effective to improve students writing skill.

CONCLUSION

After doing the research, the researcher concludes that picture series is one of much more effective techniques that could help the students to improve their writing skill. It was indicated by the data presentation and analysis in previous chapter. It was showed by the value of $t_{counted}$ was higher than t_{table} . It means that research hypothesis is accepted. Furthermore, the researcher concludes that the implementation of Picture Series can improve the writing skill of grade eight students of SMP N 6 Palu.

After conducting the research dealing with Picture Series, the researcher has some suggestions for some parties, such as the students, the teachers, and the next researcher. Firstly, the suggestion is given to the students. Since Picture Series in this research has been conducted individually the students should learn writing through Picture Series in order to make easy for them in developing their writing skill. Secondly, for the teacher, the teacher should prepare various types of text which can attract the students' interest when learning punctuation, capitalization and spelling which are the important parts in writing. Finally, the researcher wants to give suggestion to other researchers. It is important for the next researcher to actually observe the students difficulties in the process of teaching and learning English before doing the research at the school in order to help the further researcher to find out the appropriate technique to help the students in solving their problems.

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