USING PICTURE SERIES ENHANCES STUDENTS’ ABILITY IN WRITING NARRATIVE

Fitra Murni AR
fitramurni_ar@yahoo.com
SMAN 3 Padang Panjang, Indonesia

Abstract
Even though the students have enough knowledge in grammar and vocabulary, they still do not want to speak, and they still have some mistakes in telling stories. This classroom action research was conducted to see the improvement of students’ ability in writing narrative by using picture series. The research was done at SMAN 3 Padang Panjang, the second year social students 4 (XI IS 4) in the 2013/2014 academic year in three cycles. There were 27 students in this class. The data were collected through pre-test, formative test and observation. The students were led to tell the stories by using picture series, and then they were guided to tell the stories well. Through observation and formative test, it seemed that the students liked and enjoyed writing narrative. It could be seen from their achievement improved from cycle to cycle and from their test results. In conclusion, the students’ writing ability can be improved if they know what and how to speak, and the use of the appropriate teaching aids is very important. One of teaching aids that can be used to enhance students’ ability in writing narrative is picture series. It is suggested to English teachers to use picture series in teaching narrative.

Keywords: picture series, writing, narrative

INTRODUCTION

1. Background

English is one of the difficult subjects found by the students at school. As English teachers, it is a big problem. What should we as English teachers do to face this problem? The most important thing is to create an atmosphere as good as possible where the students find English interesting and fruitful even the students think and act in English.

The new curriculum stated that the students are expected to be able to use spoken and written English. One of the approaches used now is Genre-based approach. It is believed that it is the most appropriate one to meet this demand.

In relation to the genre-based approach students should be able to master some types of texts. According to curriculum 2004, the genre for grade eleventh are narrative, report, hortatory exposition, analytical exposition and spoof.
In this case, the researcher will apply narrative texts for the research. The reason is narrative texts are always provided in each semester and each grade.

From the learning process done, it was discovered that students are not able to write. Writing is such a scary and confusing thing for the students to do. They are difficult to express their feeling or ideas in writing. Various attempts have been done to improve students’ ability in writing, but they are not working in other word, students’ ability in writing remains unimproved.

Actually writing is an instrument of both communication and self-expression done in written form by the writer to convey his/ her thoughts. It is one of the ability that has to be mastered by the students.

In writing, there are sort of things that students should master. Purwanto and Djeniah (in Arnita, 2007:1) stated that writing is an ability to express idea, imagination and meaningful thought. Thus, writing is a significant requirement to achieve the teaching and learning process.

Even, Ismiati (2011:27) said that writing is an oral language skill which is productive and expressive. In other word writing is an significant skill in a language.

To come to a sufficient capability, for instance, each student has to pass through two cycles of learning, oral and written cycles. In writing cycle, a student should go through three phases of learning. They are taught to have involved optimally all the students potential to achieve sufficient writing ability. The students are hoped to have good skill to express their feeling or ideas into writing.

It was found that students still find difficulties to write a story (a narrative) they have known. Students still have some problems, such as, choice of words, the use of language features, class of words, punctuation, spelling and text organization.

Writing a story (a narrative) happens when somebody did / heard something or story. She/ he might write a story to other people. By using picture series, the stories are told in a good order or text organization. From that, people can know the stories directly.

One thing that should be considered is the use of correct language features/ tense to write a story. Students are still in doubt in using the right tense in writing a story. Even more, they still use Simple Present in writing a story. They still find difficulties in using Simple Past Tense. This is caused by the lack of contextual practice using tense.

Besides, exposing the students with choice of words / class of words, correct tenses and text organization in a less contextual environment have brought about students’ failure in enhancing their own writing ability. Most learning activities emphasize on the knowledge of writing. For example, the students are only asked to copy a paragraph or text. This might cause the students’ failure in enhancing their writing ability. They are not accustomed to writing by themselves.

In addition to this, the tests meant to measure the students’ writing ability are still dominated by items on the knowledge how to write. The tests do not ask the students to write by themselves. It can be said that the tests do not test the students (what should be tested) well.

In fact, writing classes are not successful yet in motivating the students to enhance their writing ability. This is caused by:

1. Learning activities do not make the students write in English.
2. The students are lack of vocabulary, class of words and tenses.
3. Writing task are not interesting,
4. The students do not know what and how to write a story/narrative (the students do not know the text organization).

By drawing picture series, it is believed that what are drawn is able to enhance the students’ writing ability. Through picture series, the students can get information such as, the participants involved, where and when the story of the song happened even what the story was about. The students will write better if they know what and how to write. Enjoyable and challenging teaching aids should be prepared well, so that the students’ can develop their ideas of what and how to write well.

2. Identification of the problem

The second year social students 4 (XI IS 4) of SMAN 3 Padang Panjang are difficult to write a narrative text. This is caused the students do not know what and how to write a narrative text. For example, when the students are asked to write a story, they look nervous, confused and even they are not able to do it. Most of them do not know how to start the narrative and how to write narrative in good order/generic structures. This condition make the students find English is complicated, boring and frightening. Indeed, they feel that English is not interesting. As a result of this condition, what the curriculum wants the students to get fails.

3. Focus of the research

Based on the above identification of the problems, the researcher needs to clarify the research focus. The problem to be researched is an effort to enhance students’ ability in writing a narrative text by using picture series.

4. Research Questions

Students writing ability is mostly influenced by the teaching aids/media used in writing classes. One of the teaching aids that can be applied is picture series. It is believed that picture series can be used to guide or facilitate the students to produce a good and coherent narrative text. Therefore, this ability can be enhanced by using enjoyable and challenging teaching aids in order that the students know what and how to write. For the case, this research, this research is conducted to find an answer to the question, “Can picture series enhance students’ ability in writing narrative text at the second year social class 4 (XI IS 4) of SMAN 3 Padang Panjang?”

5. Objectives of the Research

The objectives of this action research are:
1. To explain whether picture series better enhances students’ writing ability of narrative at the second year social class 4 (XI IS 4) of SMAN 3 Padang Panjang.
2. To enhance the creativity of the students at the second year science class 4 (XI IS 4) of SMAN 3 Padang Panjang in writing narrative.
REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

1. Theoretical Background

It is believed that writing is the most difficult skill for students to master. The problem that students face not only in producing and organizing ideas, but also in planning and translating the ideas into a readable text. This writing skill is very complicated. Students have to give more attention to some aspects namely, the way of English written text / the generic structures of text, spelling, class of words, choice of words, punctuation and etc.

It seems that, writing is likely the least important the four skills (listening, speaking, reading, writing) for many students. They are interested in writing just for study purposes and as an examination skill. Because of the development of technology, writing has become more important such as, e-mails, facsimiles, and also business letters. They are written English. In other word, Writing English is needed. Therefore, writing is one of the important means of communications.

Because of that, in writing, some skills are needed to produce or create a good writing result such as, spelling, punctuation, class of words, choice of words, grammar and so on. Indeed, in writing we have to know how to write and what to write. It seems that students are not able to write well.

To face this problem, picture series is the effective way. By using picture series, it is believed that the ideas can be developed. No one would be doubtful the potential of the picture series. The students can write easily as well.

Picture series is a set of picture containing of events, characters and setting of narrative or a story. Moreover, Raimes (1983: 15) explains that sets of pictures in sequences which provides a subject matter for narrative text and for speculating about the story beyond the picture in the strip; a set of parallel pictures which show a similar scene of a story which provide material that offer guidance of vocabulary and sentence structure.

Bryne (1983: 26) argues that picture series is useful because the learners generally respond favorably to tasks which relate to some kinds of visual context. He adds that all types of the pictures can be given individually and some sets of them (series).

Hughes (1999:84) also says that a picture series can be elicited narrative. He also adds that it make the form of quite realistic transfer of information. It can improve comprehension and logic skill by arranging the pictures and text, by doing this strategy each emphasizing a particular comprehension skill, sequencing, cause and effect, main ideas, drawing conclusion, predicting and transfer of information.

2 Conceptual Framework

Initial condition that has been identified revealed that the learning activities did not show students’ ability in writing. The students had low writing ability. Based on this fact, a series of planning and action should be done to enhance students’ ability in writing narrative. There were several activities done at the planning stage namely designing lesson plan, preparing teaching aid (picture series), and designing observation instruments. Then, the implementation (action) was carried out in cycles. This action research was planned in two cycles.
Cycle 1

1. Planning
The researcher planned the activities on applying picture series in teaching writing skill. Before coming to the classroom, the researcher did the following things:
- Preparing the lesson plan of teaching writing by using picture series.
- Preparing picture series in teaching writing.
- Preparing a research instrument (observation sheets, field note, a test of speaking).
- Arranging the research schedule.

2. Acting
In this phase, the researcher did the action by applying the scenarios of teaching that had been designed in planning phase. The researcher also collected the data while the process of action was going on. The researcher also gave final test at the end of cycle of action.

3. Observing
While doing the action, the researcher and observer observed the teaching and learning process, the activities done by the students and the teacher herself. The researcher took field note for each step in teaching and learning process and the observer filled out the observation checklist. Taking photographs and video are also done by the researcher with other data resources. This was to see the classroom events and interactions.

4. Reflecting
In this last phase, the researcher discussed and interpreted the data with the observer. There were two kinds of data: quantitative (writing test) and qualitative data (observation). The researcher and observer analyzed both data and make the conclusion. Finally, the researcher and observer reflected and interpreted the result and discussed the weakness of the process to make an improvement for the second cycle.

Cycle 2
In cycle two, the activities were rather the same with the first cycle, but there were some emphasis based on the revised plan.
Since there were several things had to be done to deal with in enhancing students’ writing skill, cycle 1 focused on two things. First, students are given a set of picture series, and asked to say what the story is about. Students are asked to find the characters in the story on the picture series. Second, students are asked to tell/ conclude what is the story of the picture series by using their own sentences. Teaching and learning processes during cycle 1 were observed as a reflection for the second cycle. Based on the result of cycle 1, it was revised the plan for action at cycle 2.
Besides reviewing cycle 1, cycle 2 elaborated in details about picture series. Students were asked to say a sentence (Simple past) from the picture series and then discuss with other students.
Based on the result, it is believed that having passed the two cycles, students are expected to have mastered the correct tense for narrative (Simple Past Tense). But, in
writing a narrative there is another important thing necessary namely generic structure of a narrative text. So, there are two things are emphasized at cycle 2. First, identifying the generic structure of a narrative text and second, writing a narrative freely.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

1. Method
The method of the research used the qualitative research.

2. The subject of the research
The subject of this research is the second year social students 4 of SMAN 3 Padang Panjang, West Sumatera. This class was chosen because of the following reasons: Firstly, the students in this class have low motivation in English. This can be seen from their ways in learning English and their English marks. Secondly, they are not interested enough in writing task.

3. Research Setting
This classroom research was done at SMAN 3 Padang Panjang, West Sumatera, exactly at XI IS 4.

4. Research Design
The first thing to do was to give pre-test to the students. The students were asked to write a story that they have known. The result of these tests was analyzed, and these become input for designing the learning process at cycle 1. Next, this research was designed to pass through three cycles (cycle 1, cycle 2, and cycle 3). Each cycle consisted of two meetings.

Because the title of this research is “Using Picture Series Enhances Students’ ability in writing narrative at the second year social class 4 (XI IS 4) of SMAN 3 Padang Panjang”. There were a number of things which should be provided. First, picture series that were drawn by the students could help them in writing narrative. These are some activities done by the students at each cycle.

Cycle 1
To create a good writing with received English, the students need to be provided with appropriate choice of words, class of words, and also grammar. The first cycle is focused on the mastery these components. It is started by asking the students to draw the picture series based on their stories.

Then, the students will do various and challenging tasks related to the story into some parts of pictures (picture series). Finally, the students are asked to write narrative based on the picture series they have.

Cycle 2
In this cycle, what has been done at cycle 1 is reviewed. Cycle 2 would emphasize on the grammar (tense) used in writing narrative. It is known that to write narrative from the picture series are is quite difficult. In writing narrative, Simple Past tense is mostly used.
Cycle 3

After passing the two cycles, the students are expected to master language components and tense (grammar) used to write narrative by applying the appropriate choice of words, tense / language features (Simple past tense) and class of words. Besides, discussing what has been talked at the two cycles (cycle 1 and cycle 2), at cycle three the students are hoped to know what to write and how to write narrative. Cycle 3 gives more emphasis on the generic structure of narrative. The students were given various narrative texts and asked them to identify the generic structure of the texts. At the end of cycle 3, the students were given a test by giving them picture series and asked to write narrative based on the picture series they draw. This test was to see if any improvement in the students’ ability in writing a narrative by using the teaching aids called picture series.

5. Research Instrument

Note:
Gram : grammar (language rules used)
Vocab : vocabulary (choice of words)
Mech : mechanics (punctuation and spelling)
Relev : relevance (content)
Scale :
8 : very good  5 : weak
7 : good  4 : poor
6 : fair

Besides using the above instrument, the students’ activities in writing were also observed by arranging paragraphs to produce a good narrative text.

6. Observation

Because the objective of this research was to enhance the students’ ability in writing a narrative, the students’ activities in writing were observed. These things were observed the students activities in writing an orientation in narrative, how to start (an orientation) and what to be had in an orientation.

For example : Once upon a time, there lived a handsome pigeon and a beautiful white rose ....................

The next things observed were the students’ activities to continue their writing a story/ narrative text and do the next step (writing a complication). How the students relate the first paragraph to the next paragraph.

For example: One day, the pigeon saw the beautiful white rose and he felt in love with her...........

And the last ones were the students’ activities to continue their writing narrative to do the next step (writing a resolution). How the students relate the second paragraph to the next paragraph. How to end the story
For example: But the white rose didn’t love him. Then they made a promise….if the pigeon can change her to be red, she will accept him. The pigeon agreed and cut his wings. Finally he died.

7. Data analysis

There were several things to be considered concerning data analysis. The data that were analyzed were the result of pre-test, and the result of formative test (the test given at the end of each cycle). The analysis used percentage.

D. RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

1. Research Setting Description

The first condition when the action done showed that most students of class XI IS 4 could not write narrative they knew well. They got serious problems when they were asked to write even a single sentence telling a story, for example: Long ago there was a beautiful white rose in a small village.

The second, the students had low motivation in writing narrative. It seemed that they did not want to write narrative they have known. They found writing a hard work. They did not know how to write and what to write. They were bored and incapable of writing.

2. Research Findings

Using picture series as a teaching media can make learning activities fruitful and understandable to students. Elaborating what is told in the picture series will make students eager to write narrative. Their eagerness can be seen from the test result of each cycle.

Students began to write sentences about what they had although at first they could not write a single sentence. This ability gradually improved from cycle to cycle. This improvement can be seen from the following table.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NO</th>
<th>ASPECT</th>
<th>CYCLE 1</th>
<th>CYCLE 2</th>
<th>CYCLE 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Grammar</td>
<td>61%</td>
<td>64%</td>
<td>76%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Vocabulary</td>
<td>71%</td>
<td>71%</td>
<td>75%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Mechanics</td>
<td>67%</td>
<td>78%</td>
<td>82%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Relevance</td>
<td>68%</td>
<td>74%</td>
<td>77%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sum</td>
<td>267%</td>
<td>287%</td>
<td>310%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3. Discussion

It was found that using picture series as a teaching media could enhance students’ ability in writing narrative. Picture series could help and encourage students
write narrative they had known. The activities on how to make use of picture series in writing class can be elaborated in the following research cycles. In order to be able to write narrative well, there are several things concerning language competence the students should keep in mind. The most important aspects are grammar, vocabulary, mechanics, and relevance. By mastering at least the four aspects, the students are expected to be able to enhance their ability to write narrative.

**Cycle 1**

Cycle 1 focused on the students’ activities to draw picture series based on their story. The students were asked to understand the picture series. They were also asked to write narrative of the picture series by themselves.

It was discovered that the activities could make the students enjoy and encourage them to write narrative of the picture series they draw. Some students already knew how to write narrative although it was still simple, such as long ago, there lived a handsome boy named Buyung. He was a good man.

Since writing is difficult and it needs mastery on several aspects, the improvement from cycle to cycle moves slowly and the learning process should be handled systematically. Cycle 1 showed a slight improvement (67 in average). Grammar shows the least improvement because grammar is the most complicated aspect among the other three aspects. The students were not used to writing sentences in correct grammar. They still found problems in tense used in narrative, for instance, they used present in narrative *One day, the pigeon feels in love with her.*

The other aspects (vocabulary, mechanics, and relevance) were still in problem. In vocabulary, some of the students still found it hard to do. They were not successful in the choice of words and class of words. They still wrote. *Her bother was a bad boy.* Another aspect was mechanics. Even though mechanics dealt with punctuation and was thought the easiest one, the students still did not care of them first, because they were not able to use the correct one, for example, *one day she met a boy.* The students also began their sentences without capital letter and also name, they still did not use capital letter, for instance, *hers village was small.*

The last aspect was relevance. This was a problem for most students. Although they could write narrative from the picture series they draw, the result was not successful yet. The content of their narrative was not satisfying.

In conclusion, at this cycle these problems in writing narrative were discussed in order to make the students realize their mistakes and weakness. They had become motivated to write well even though some problems still remained in their mind. They had become aware of their mistakes. All of these improvements could be observed at cycle 1.
Cycle 2

Cycle 2 focuses on the use of the correct four aspects (grammar, vocabulary, mechanics, and relevance). When writing narrative, we must use *simple past tense* (not simple present tense. It was found out that the students did not master simple past tense well, even though they had learnt in the previous semester. The students were exposed by asking one of the students to come to the front and write her writing on the white board. Discussion was done while checking their answers.

The students were given another picture series and asked to write narrative from the picture series. One of the students were asked to write her narrative on a paper and asked the other students to find incorrect sentences of the text written, such as grammar (simple past tense), vocabulary, mechanics, and relevance. Then the students and teacher discussed the correct ones. It was done to convince the students’ understanding in this form of simple past tense. The teacher provided practicing using simple past tense, choice of words, punctuation, and also the content of a narrative in contextual environment.

This step could make the students aware of their mistakes in applying what they discussed and correct it. They began to write narrative in the correct grammar, the suitable choice of words, the right punctuation and meaningful/good content. By continuous practice, their weaknesses/mistakes could be solved.

To sum up, cycle 2 brought students some courage and competence to enhance their ability to write narrative. This can be seen from their test result which shows significant improvement (72 in average).

But there was still a problem or weakness for the students in writing narrative by using the good generic structure of the text). It could be continued and discussed at the next cycle, (cycle 3).

Cycle 3

Cycle 3 focused more on the generic structure of narrative. When we write narrative, we have to realize and remember what the generic structure of narrative is, how to start and end narrative. The students were exposed the narrative and asked to name of the paragraphs. The students were taught the generic structure of narrative which consists of an orientation, complication and resolution.

At this cycle, it seemed that the students could understand how to write narrative and realize their mistakes at the two cycles before.

It can be noticed from their test results. It shows their improvement (79 in average).
CONCLUSION

The improvement of students’ writing ability so far faced serious problems since the students did not know and understand what and how to write. This means that the steps of writing narrative were not clear enough for the students. The students never got enjoyable and challenging writing materials. In fact, these problems can be solved by various techniques and media. In other word, the students’ ability in writing can be improved by using various technique and media.

Picture series help and motivate students to write better, especially in writing narrative text. Picture series are enjoyable and interesting for students. It makes the students understand and know how to express their ideas into writing. The students know what and how to write as well. This aim can be reached if the learning process using songs are handled well in accordance with the steps of teaching writing.

It was revealed that the learning process using picture series could enhance students’ ability in writing narrative at the second year social class 4 (XI IS 4) of SMAN 3 Padang Panjang. It could be seen by data got. The improvement could be proven and shown by the percentage of their achievement from each cycle. At first, the students found writing narrative difficult to do. After listening to the picture series, the students found it interesting and enjoyable. The students could enhance their ability in writing, especially in writing narrative.

This research report can give us a proof that students’ language skill can be improved from time to time if we know the students’ problems. Writing is one of the skills to be improved. For that purpose, my suggestions are: First, enhancing students’ ability in writing should be managed systematically in order that the students know what and how to write. Second, a collection of teaching aids/ media should be available, interesting, enjoyable and fruitful. Third, the ways in teaching writing should be more various (not monotonous) so that the students have high motivation in the learning process. Writing tasks should be challenging and interesting. The last one is students’ writing works should be placed on the class wall even on the class board, so it gives an appreciation to the writers of the writing and make them proud of themselves. For other students, they can read different writing from day to day.

REFERENCES


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