

Optimizing Picture Series to Enhance Writing Skills of Senior High School Students

Priyo Raharjo

Universitas Muhammadiyah Malang, Jawa Timur, Indonesia

Malang

E-mail: Priyo_Raharjo@yahoo.com

Received: January 10, 2018

Accepted: January 17, 2018

Published: February 9, 2018

Doi : <http://dx.doi.org/10.30587/jetlal.v2i1.2427>

Abstract

This paper is aimed to improve writing skill of senior high schools students by using picture series technique. To achieve the objective, this paper focuses on 3 (three) previous studies about teaching writing using picture series. Those studies are taken from some English thesis and journal about picture series. After compiling and understanding all the findings of those research, the conclusion is given based the usage of picture series in several written form and also the effectiveness of techniques by using pictures series during the process of students writing activities.

The discussion told that the improving of students writing skills using picture series, mostly the previous researcher uses pre-test and post-test as data collection. The result of post-test writing is always higher or better than pre-test after using picture series technique. Most of previous researchers use quantitative research method because the result of the research can be measured accurately.

The application of picture series can be improved in the written form of narrative text, descriptive text, and recount text. The usage of picture series is expected to improve the students' writing ability as it can help them with the new ideas and vocabularies. Implementing picture series is also effective to improve the students' motivation in the writing process. The common writing problems in the aspects of content, vocabulary, language use and organization also can be reduced by implementing picture series in the teaching and learning process of writing.

Key Words: *teaching writing, picture series, student' writing skills*

1. Introduction

In learning English, there are four language skills that should be learnt, they are listening, reading, speaking, and writing. Listening and reading belong to receptive skills in which the language users require the ability to receive spoken and written language, while speaking and writing belong to productive skills in which the language users require the ability to produce language both spoken and written (Harmer, 1983: 44). Writing is one of the skills that are learnt in the English class. In writing class we often find the students who cannot write an English composition spontaneously or easily, they might get struggle when they write, they might be have some difficulties in making a good sentence, they might have a trouble with the right sentence structure and the good word order. Brown (2001: 335) explained that writing is the representation of spoken language, written language is almost same with spoken language, and the difference is the performance of written language is conveyed in graphical. Besides Brown also mentioned that written products are the result of thinking, drafting, and revising procedures, specialized skills is required in written language, and that not every speaker develops naturally.

The conclusion based on statements above that writing is a process of expressing the idea into a written form, and it needs specialized skills that not every students can develop it naturally, it needs the teacher who is able to motivate and encourage the students to develop their writing skills, and they are expected to be able to develop their writing skills and make a good composition. Harmer (1998: 261-262) stated the teacher not only needs to deploy some or all of the usual roles when they ask students to write, but also they should have the ones of these important roles when they are teaching writing, the roles are: motivator, resource, and feedback provider. In addition, Bruner (1960) said that adults' role is to scaffold activities for them when learning. Therefore, the materials given to them should be appropriate with their capacity (Sabillah *et.al.*, 2009). At senior high school level, the students range from 15-19 years old. It means that the students are categorized as adult learners. In general, there are some characteristics that are common to senior high school students, for example, they have a strong intrinsically

motivated, they like to interact with others by asking questions, discussion, presentation, and giving opinion. It means that teaching method and technique given should be appropriate with characteristics of senior high school student level.

To teach writing successfully and to reach the objectives, the teacher should be able to teach by using certain techniques, as Raimes (1983) mentioned that there are 8 (eight) techniques of teaching writing, they are teaching writing by using picture series, teaching writing by planning the class, teaching writing by using readings, teaching writing by using all language skills, teaching writing by practical writing, teaching writing by using controlled writing, teaching writing by using teaching organization, and teaching writing by responding to students' writing. Considering those techniques, we can teach writing for the students using creative, easy, and fun activities through the pictures media. Pictures provide a shared experience for students in the class, common base that leads to a variety of language activities. We can find a valuable resource in pictures, such as drawings, photographs, posters, slides, cartoons, magazine advertisements, diagrams, tables, charts, and maps. By using pictures, all the students will immediately need the appropriate vocabulary, idiom, and sentence structure to discuss what they see. So pictures are valuable, too, in that they provide for the use of a common language forms.

Other important reason to choose picture as the resource is because everybody likes to look at pictures, their use in the classroom provide a stimulating focus for students' attention. Pictures also bring the outside world into the classroom in a vividly concrete way. The technique that is used in this research is picture series, because the picture is attractive for the students, besides it can provide students' attention when they are asked to write the text. The picture contains sequence of interesting and interactive pictures that forms the certain explanation or story. The pictures might be in the strip forms that tell the story continually. It can used in several written form, especially in descriptive, recount, and narrative writing. Therefore, after treatment using this technique the students are expected to be able to write a certain text correctly.

Raimes (1983) told the general strategies for using any pictures:

1. Whole-class discussion which then leads to writing can be generated by many types of pictures.
2. To provide a student audience for the student writers, give a half the class one picture, and the other half another.
3. With students working in pairs or small group, give each student of pair or each group a different pictures to work with, it can make teacher frees of obtaining class sets of pictures, and also provides students with a real communicative task. When the students have the only copy of a picture, they should be able to inform the rest of the class about it.
4. Real communicative tasks can be developed by using in the classroom pictures that the students themselves provide. The advantages are: the teacher can relieved of the task of finding a picture and the students have something to write about in the classroom. The other advantage is students can be asked to provide their own favourite picture, they can choose the picture that they like, therefore, they will be interested to participate the lesson.
5. Teacher can ask the students to use their imagination to visualize what happened just before the moment in the picture and what will happen next, it will be easier for the student to predict the event that might be happened when they see it in the picture, they will be able to express write their idea easily.

Besides knowing the significance of the techniques, we need also to consider about the gaps or common problem that faced by students during using this techniques. Some of the gaps are first, the interpretation of a student to understand the pictures can be different to another student. Second, some students will get difficulties to transfer and elaborate information from the pictures series into writing activities. Halimatus Sa'diyah, in her journal (The English Teacher Vol. XL: 164-182) obtained data from the questionnaire and the observation checklist showed that the picture series-aided learning strategy was able to improve the students' attitude toward the learning process as well as their learning behavior in doing the writing task. The use of the picture series also promoted the students' positive behavior toward the learning process. This is supported by the observation checklist data showing that the students' degree of seriousness was considered high according to the criteria stated in the description of the instrument. It was found that almost all the students paid attention to the teacher's explanation and instruction. Most of them (approximately more than half the class) were actively involved in the learning process, making comments

or asking questions about the instruction as well as about the picture to either the teacher or their classmates. Almost all of them observed the pictures closely.

After understanding the gaps above, we can conclude that the purpose on this paper is actually to apply the usage picture series in several written form and also to propose the effective techniques by using pictures series during the process of students writing activities, including pre-writing and post-writing activities.

2. Discussion

The discussion in this paper focuses on some findings of previous research about pictures series. After considering the findings, it is expected to take the important points and conclusion about the usage picture series in several written form and also to know the effective techniques by using pictures series during the process of students writing activities. First research (journal) is from Halimatus Sa'diyah (The English Teacher Vol. XL: 164-182) that discuss about *Improving Students' Ability in Writing Descriptive Texts through a Picture Series Aided Learning Strategy*. The subject of the study is a class of tenth grade students of a public senior high school in East Java, Indonesia. The required data were collected through the use of a questionnaire, an observation checklist, and a scoring rubric. The data from the questionnaire indicated that the majority of the students had a positive attitude toward the use of the picture-series to learn descriptive text writing. Moreover, it was found from the observation data that the students participated actively in the learning process. Finally, the study also proved that the strategy improved the students' writing with their average score increased from 56.86 (0-100 scale) prior to the teaching-learning process to 77.87 at the end of the treatment.

By considering the previous result above, the usage of picture series is appropriate to be applied for descriptive text. The picture series in this research is not only as media but also effective technique to deliver the material well during the teaching process. Students will feel easy to describe the objects in the picture series. Therefore, the enthusiasm and the curiosity of the students let them to develop writing sentence/paragraph easily. The next previous research was conducted by Linda Litasari about *An Experimental Study On The Use Of Picture Series In Teaching Writing Narrative Text At The Tenth Grade Students of SMA Negeri 2 Banjarbaru*. The sample of this research are X6 students as experimental class and X8 students as control class. The result of this research shows that the use of picture series in teaching writing has improved the students' student's ability in writing narrative text. This is also proven through the calculation of t-test. Since t-test result from both result of pre-test and post-test is higher than t-table, it means picture series has given some effects in improving the students' ability in writing narrative text at the tenth grade students of SMA Negeri 2 Banjarbaru. Based on the research, it is concluded that picture series is a useful technique to use to improve the students' achievement in writing skill, especially in writing narrative text, since the students' achievement increase after they are taught by using this technique. Therefore, it is suggested that the teacher to continue to use picture series in the next lesson.

Writing narrative text is not difficult thing in this previous research as long as the teacher gives clear picture related to the goal and content that will be develop by the students. It is suggested that the picture series in narrative text should contain topic, characteristics, setting, and time, so the students can develop the picture easily. The last research about pictures series was conducted by Siti Nurjanah, entitled: *Improving Writing Skills of Tenth Grade Students of SMAN 1 Prambanan by Using Picture Series in the Academic Year of 2011/2012*. To achieve the objective, the researcher did collaborative work with other team members. The collaborative work involved the English teacher as the collaborator, the students of grade XG and the researcher herself. The main subjects of this study were XG students of SMA N 1 PRAMBANAN who were in the first semester by the academic year of 2011/2012. This study, which lasted for three months, was carried out in two cycles. The data were obtained from the observation during the implementation of the actions, interview with the students and the collaborator, students' writing tasks, and tests. Based on the result of the research, the use of picture series in this study is believed to be effective to improve the students' writing skills. The students' writing problems in the aspects of content, vocabulary, language use and organization can be reduced by implementing picture series in the teaching and learning process of writing. Implementing picture series was also effective to improve the students' motivation in the writing process.

Focus in this previous research, the real problems that almost faced the students in writing is lack of motivation, vocabularies, and develop the idea. By applying picture series, the students will be curios to continue the

next picture or next story in of all the pictures. They also obtain kinds of vocabularies through paying attention pin detail to parts of each picture. The picture series makes the students also feel enjoy arranging the sentence or paragraph based on the genre of writing given.

The table below shows the findings comparison of those three previous researches.

No	the previous research about picture series	Level	Genre of writing	Result of Implementation
1	<i>Improving Students' Ability in Writing Descriptive Texts through a Picture Series Aided Learning Strategy</i>	Senior high school (10 th grade students)	Descriptive text	The students participated actively in the learning process. The study also proved that the strategy improved the students' writing
2	<i>An Experimental Study on the Use of Picture Series in Teaching Writing Narrative Text at the Tenth Grade Students of SMA Negeri 2 Banjarbaru</i>	Senior high school (10 th grade students)	Narrative text	The use of picture series in teaching writing has improved the students' student's ability in writing narrative text
3	<i>Improving Writing Skills of Tenth Grade Students of SMAN 1 Prambanan by Using Picture Series in the Academic Year of 2011/2012</i>	Senior high school (10 th grade students)	-	Effective to improve the students' writing skills; Effective to improve the students' motivation in the writing process

Considering those previous research above, we can conclude that with the similar subject (students of senior high school students), and different genre of writing (descriptive and narrative), the result shows that the usage of pictures series is the effective technique to improve and enhance writing skills of senior high school students.

3. Conclusion and Recommendation

After understanding the previous studies about picture series, it can be concluded into some points that:

- The implementation of picture series is getting improved while the result of post-test is higher than pre-test of writing. Furthermore, during the process the aspect of motivation (enthusiasm and curiosity) developing ideas and the usage of vocabularies become important aspect must be considered. This measurement done in order to get valid result based on research methodology; therefore the previous researchers mostly use quantitative approach to be applied in picture series studies.
- The development of picture series applied in the genre of writing can be in the narrative text and descriptive text. It is suggested also to develop the picture series in the recount text because these three genres of writing have big opportunity to make the students curious in writing.
- On the basis of the results of the study, it is suggested that teachers use picture series to enrich ideas, promote students' attention, help them focus on the learning process, and enhance participation. As the present study does not take into consideration such variables as learner learning style (visual, auditory, or tactile), it is recommended that future researchers measure the effect of students' learning styles on the effectiveness of a picture series-aided learning strategy using a more sophisticated design such as an experimental design.

References

- Ariningsih, Dwi. 2010. *The Effectiveness of Using Picture Series to Improve the Students' Writing Skill Viewed From Their Learning Motivation*. Thesis. Universitas Sebelas Maret Surakarta.
- Brown, H. Douglas. 1994. *Principles of Language Learning and Teaching*. New Jersey: Prentice Hall Regents
- Brown, H. Douglas. 2011. *Teaching by Principles. An Interactive Approach to Language Pedagogy*. San Fransisco State University
- Harmer, Jeremy. 1998. *How to Teach English*. Harlow: Longman
- Hestri, Suli. 2013. *The Effectiveness of Using Picture Series to Improve Students' Writing Ability in Recount Text at the Eight-Grade Students of SMPN 33 Purworejo in the Academic Year of 2011/2012*. Thesis. Universitas Muhammadiyah Purworejo.
- Litasari, Linda. 2011. *An Experimental Study On The Use Of Picture Series In Teaching Writing Narrative Text At The Tenth Grade Students of SMA Negeri 2 Banjarbaru*. Thesis. Universitas Lambung Mangkurat.
- Nurjanah, Siti. 2012. *Improving Writing Skills of Tenth Grade Students of SMAN 1 Prambanan by Using Picture Series in the Academic Year of 2011/2012*. Thesis. Universitas Negeri Yogyakarta.
- Raimes, Ann. 1983. *Techniques in Teaching Writing*. New York: Oxford University Press
- Sa'diyah, Halimatus. *Improving Students' Ability in Writing Descriptive Texts through a Picture Series Aided Learning Strategy*. The English Teacher Vol. XL: 164-182.