Improving Writing Skills of the Eighth Grade Students Of SMP Negeri 1 Turi Sleman by Using Picture Series

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Abstract: The objective of this research is to improve the writing skills of Eighth Grade Students of SMP Negeri 1 Turi Sleman by using picture series.This research is categorized as action research. It was conducted in two cycles, which was held for two meetings in Cycle 1 and two meetings in Cycle 2. The subjects of this research were 30 students of Class VIII C of SMP Negeri 1 Turi Sleman. The data were collected in two forms, qualitative and quantitaive. The qualitative data were obtained through observations and interviews with the students and the English teacher. The data were in the form of field notes, observation sheet and interview transcript, while the quantitative data were obtained from pre-test, progress-test and post-test. This research used five criteria of validity; they were democratic, outcome, process, catalytic, and dialogic validities. Furthermore, this research implemented three triangulation techniques; they were time, space and investigator types of triangulation. The result of this research shows that the implementation of picture series in the teaching and learning process of writing skill obviously could improve the students' writing skill. The actions made significant improvement to their writing skills, especially in the aspect of content and organization. Implementing picture series could also improve the students' motivation in learning writing. Moreover, by comparing the means of scores from the pre-test, progress-test and post-test, it can be concluded that the students' writing scores increased. The mean of the students' writing scores increased from 38.33 in pre-test, to 57.86 in progress-test and to 75.67 in post-test.

Keywords: *writing skills, picture series*

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Introduction

Among the four skills, writing is considered important for the students to be learned in order to be able to communicate in the written form well. It is because most of the academic achievement was assessed by writing aspects. However, writing is also considered as a difficult skill for students. The learners should not only master the skill in generating ideas and organizing the ideas, but also skillls in expressing those ideas into a readable text. So, the messages can be communicated successfully.

Based on the information obtained in the observation on the English teaching and learning process conducted in SMP Negeri 1 Turi, the researcher identified some problems related to learning writing skill. Those problem were related to the difficulties in finding and generating ideas, difficulties in writing good sentences and in using appropriate grammar, poor vocabulary mastery, low motivation and uninteresting media.

In order to solve the problem, the picture series was selected since it could be a media to help students in generating ideas (White and Arndt, 1997: 35), in writing in a good order (Wright, 1997: 72) and it could also help students in vocabulary mastery (Harmer, 2007: 67). Through the implementation of picture series, it was expected that the students got more engaged and more motivated in the writing lesson.

Research Method
The type of the research is action research. The subjects were 30 students of Class VIII C at SMP Negeri 1 Turi, Sleman in the academic year of 2016/2017. The research was conducted on November 14th-30th 2016. There were two cycles in this research. The data collected were qualitative and quantitative. The data collection techniques for the qualitative data were obtained by doing interviews, observation and documentation while qualitative data were obtained by doing scoring of students' tests. The instruments used in the research were an observation sheet, interview guideline, and writing test. The procedure of this research were planning, action, observation and reflection. The data analysis techniques for the qualitative used five processes from Burns (2010: 104). They were coding the data, comparing the data, building meanings and interpretations, and reporting the outcomes while the quantitative data were analyzed by using form of tables and employing Repeated Measures of ANOVA of IBM SPSS Statistics.

Findings and Discussion
The result of this research showed that the implementation of picture series succesfully improved the students' writing skill. The actions made significant improvements of the students' writing skills in the aspects of content, organization, language use, vocabulary and mechanics. Implementing picture series was also effective to improve the students' motivation in learning writing. There are some reasons for this. First, implementing picture series in the writing lesson helped students in finding and generating ideas by giving them visual stories. It helped students in building their imagination. Second, the picture series helped students in the organization since it shows the sequence of the story. Third, by implementing various picture series based tasks and activities, it stimulated the students in finding new vocabulary. Finally, implementing picture series in the form of game activities succesfully made the students more motivated.

Conclusion
In conclusion, implementing picture series in teaching and learning process helped students in improving their writing skills. By using picture series, the students could develop their ideas and write in a good order. Besides, it also helped students in language use and new vocabulary. Moreover, implementing picture series in various tasks and activities made students more motivated and participated in the writing lesson. In brief, the implementation of picture series effectively improved the students' writing skill in the teaching and learning process.

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