

**IMPROVING STUDENTS' SKILL IN WRITING A DESCRIPTIVE TEXT
BY USING PICTURES IN GRADE SEVENTH STUDENTS OF SMP N 5
YOGYAKARTA IN THE ACADEMIC YEAR 2016/2017**

E-Journal



By:

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15222299009**

**ENGLISH EDUCATION STUDY PROGRAM
FACULTY OF LANGUAGE AND ARTS
STATE UNIVERSITY OF YOGYAKARTA
2016**

IMPROVING STUDENTS' SKILL IN WRITING A DESCRIPTIVE TEXT BY USING PICTURES IN GRADE SEVENTH STUDENTS OF SMP N 5 YOGYAKARTA IN THE ACADEMIC YEAR 2016/2017

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Abstract

This research is aimed at improving the writing skill of grade VII students of SMP Negeri 5 Yogyakarta in the academic year of 2016/2017 using pictures as the media of writing input. The research was conducted through action research that consisted of two cycles. Each cycle consisted of three meetings. The data were obtained from the observation during the implementation of the actions in the teaching and learning process; interview with the English teacher and the VII grade students of VII H; and discussion with the English teacher. The data were on forms of field notes, observation's checklist, scoring action and document. The validity of the data was gained by applying democratic, outcome, process, catalytic, and dialogic validity. The findings of the study showed that the use of pictures found to be effective in improving the students' writing skill. The students made a good improvement in grammar and organization mainly. They also showed enthusiastic and interested in doing the tasks given in post-writing process.

Keywords: writing, pictures

Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk meningkatkan kemampuan menulis siswa kelas VII SMP Negeri 5 Yogyakarta tahun ajaran 2016/2017 dengan menggunakan gambar sebagai media *input* menulis. Penelitian ini dilaksanakan melalui Penelitian Tindakan Kelas yang terdiri dari dua siklus. Tiap siklus terdiri dari tiga pertemuan. Data diperoleh dari observasi selama implementasi dari tindakan dalam proses pembelajaran; wawancara dengan guru Bahasa Inggris dan siswa kelas VII H; serta diskusi dengan guru Bahasa Inggris. Data berbentuk catatan lapangan, *checklist* observasi, tindakan penilaian dan dokumen. Validitas data diperoleh dengan menerapkan validitas demokratis, hasil, proses, katalitik, dan dialogis. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa penggunaan gambar nampak efektif dalam upaya meningkatkan kemampuan menulis siswa. Siswa menunjukkan peningkatan yang baik utamanya dalam *grammar* dan *organization*. Mereka juga terlihat antusias dan tertarik dalam melaksanakan tugas-tugas yang diberikan dalam proses *post-writing*.

Kata kunci: menulis, gambar

Introduction

English as an international language is needed to learn and master so that people can face the global era. English as a means of communication can be done in written and spoken form. The written form can be done using written text such as sending message, email, text, etc. Finocchiaro (1974:86) states that writing has been characterized as written thinking. It means the process of writing is to develop the ideas into good sentences in order to inform the other. There are many genres of text. One of them is descriptive text. Writing this text needs knowledge and skill. The students need to understand the generic structure, linguistic features, and social function of descriptive text to write it. Moreover, Harmer (2001: 265) states that writing is a language skill which involves the activity of producing the language. That is why writing skill tends to be considered more active than the receptive skills. During the process of producing the language, language activation occurs in which any language knowledge already mastered are used (Harmer 2007: 67). The writer needs more efforts to produce a product in line with grammatical rules of English language. In addition, they also should be able to develop their ideas to achieve a good result of writing which related to the topic as required. Writing process involves several stages. According to Birnie (2015: 01) there are six processes in writing. They are prewriting, planning, drafting, revising, editing, and sharing.

However, the students of Grade VII of SMP Negeri 5 Yogyakarta faced some problems in writing. They looked bored in writing the text. They were not interested and motivated in the writing activities. They also did not know the vocabulary in English. They also needed much time to write the text and sometimes they were tired in handwriting.

Pictures could be used to solve the problems. Hill (1990:1) promotes that pictures did not only bring images of reality, but also has function as a fun element in the class. Sometimes it is surprising, how pictures may change a lesson, even if only employed in additional exercises or just to create the atmosphere. Moreover, Wright (1998:2) states that pictures are not just an aspect of method but through their representation of places, objects, and people, they are essential parts of the overall experiences that we must help our students to cope with. It can be said that picture is a thing we see, that is produced by painting, drawing, or photography of object, places and people.

Picture was chosen because it has many advantages. Firstly, picture can be applied in teaching writing. Secondly, it can be applied in some genres, such as descriptive, recount, and narrative. Thirdly, picture provides clear object that is useful to help students to understand the language items that are given to them. Fourthly, picture gives more interest and motivation in learning because the students can be attracted to the object in the picture and also the color in the picture. And the last, the direction for writing in picture media can be made as clearly as possible so that the students will not be confused.

Research Methods

This research is a classroom action research which was emphasized in improving students' writing skill. It is qualitative research. The nature of this action research is collaborative which involved the English teacher as the collaborator and the researcher herself. Pictures were used as media to improve the students' writing skill. The subjects of the research were the 32 students of class VII H of SMPN 5 Yogyakarta. It was because the students in the class had problem in writing skill. Observation checklist, interview guidelines, and field notes were used as the instruments to collect the qualitative data while pre-test and post-test were used as the instruments to collect the quantitative data.

In line with Kemmis and McTaggart (1988), the procedures in this research were: (1) identifying the problem; (2) planning the action; (3) implementing the action; (4) observing/ monitoring the action; (5) reflecting the result of the observation/ action; and (6) revising the

plan. The validity of the data was gained by applying democratic, outcome, process, catalytic, and dialogic validity as stated by Burns (1999: 161-162). Time triangulation and investigator triangulation were used to obtain trustworthiness. There were three observers in this study, i.e. the researcher herself, the English teacher, and the collaborator.

Findings and Discussions

In doing this research, the researcher acted as a teacher and delivered the teaching and learning process. The English teacher acted as the collaborator and observed the teaching and learning process. There were two cycles in this research. Each cycle consisted of three meetings. At the end of each cycle, the researcher did the reflection. Each cycle consisted of three meetings. Before implementing the actions, the researcher conducted a pre-test to measure the students' writing ability. The problems were content, grammar/language use and mechanics. Some steps were also conducted to determine the problem. The English teacher and the students were interviewed to confirm the data gathered from observation. At the end of each cycle, the researcher did the reflections.

The result of the research showed that there were some students' improvements in writing descriptive texts using pictures. The students could use the appropriate vocabulary in their writing. They could write a text with more detailed information based on the picture and used correct capitalization, spelling, and punctuations; they produced longer paragraph with sufficient supporting details. The students could get the ideas and inspirations to write a descriptive text after they had seen the picture and knew the steps. The pictures gave them a stimulus so that they could have something to write in their paper. This result is supported by Wright (1997: 2) stating that picture contributes to have a specific point or stimulus. The students felt comfortable while make a story in a good organization and paragraphing according to the generic structure of a descriptive text. The students' skill in exploring the ideas improved. The students were able to explore their ideas to write and more relevant to the topic. The mean score of content improved from 69.50 (pre-test), 85.63 (post-test 1), 83.20 (post-test 2). The students' skill in vocabulary also improved. The students mastered more vocabularies. They began to be able to choose appropriate words for their writing. The mean score of vocabulary improved from 72.50 (pre-test), 90.70 (post-test 1), and 87.75 (post-test 2). The students' skill in organization also improved. The students were more fluent in expressing the ideas and their writing was logical. They were able to organize the generic structure of the texts. The mean score of organization improved from 74.10 (pre-test), 90.18 (post-test 1), and 85.75 (post-test 2). The students' skill in language use also improved. The students made better sentences and used simple present tense, noun phrase, conjunction, and adverb in a better way. The mean score of language use improved from 61.08 (pre-test), 80.20 (post-test), 84.00 (post-test 2). The students' skill in mechanics also improved. The students' skill in writing was better organized in paragraphing and also much better in spelling, capitalization, and punctuation. The mean score of mechanics improved from pre-test (76.00), post test 1 (83.50), post-test 2 (77.60).

Besides, the students could apply the appropriate tense in their writing. They had enough opportunity to write; the teaching-learning focused more on writing skill. Through this action, the students had more practices in writing descriptive texts using pictures. They could create a better writing than before including in constructing the present sentences by using simple present tense. The students could also differentiate the use "There is" and "There are". It could be seen in the students' worksheets in which the mistakes were fewer than before. The results of the test also support the positive improvements. Moreover, their attitude towards writing had changed to be better. It was not hard to ask them to write a descriptive text. They were also interested and motivated to join and to get involved in teaching and learning process. They became more active in teaching and learning process. They showed positive attitudes towards writing lesson. The students became more active and enthusiastic both in responding to the researcher and finishing the exercises given. They asked

questions to the teacher and also answered the teacher's question. The use of picture in the teaching learning process of writing skill could make the students motivated and confident when they were asked to write in groups and individually by seeing the picture first. They did their writing without being asked many times and did not complain anymore. By seeing the pictures, the students could spend shorter time when they were asked to write and most of the students could finish their writing on time. It is because the pictures could help them by presenting certain topic which can be written down. Some students discussed actively about the topic in the pictures in their own group after they saw the pictures. Their motivation could be seen from their activity during the action. They paid close attention when the researcher showed the pictures. They felt comfortable and did not look bored. It was easier for students to write the story based on the picture because they still remembered what they saw. This finding is supported by Wright (1997:10). Picture plays a key role in motivating students, conceptualizing the language they want to use, giving them a reference, and helping to discipline the activity.

Conclusions

Based on the results of the research, it could be concluded that the use of picture improved the students' skill in writing descriptive text in five aspects. The aspects were: content, organization, vocabulary, grammar, and mechanics. The most significant improvement was in the aspect of organization and grammar. The use of picture that applied in writing made the students interested to the media. They had high motivation to join the teaching and learning process and they had good spirit to learn English while the picture media is applied in writing class. The students paid attention more when the researcher used and showed the pictures. They felt comfortable and they did not look bored. It was easier for the students to write the descriptions on the paper because they still remembered what they saw while the teacher showed the pictures. It proved that the use of picture as the media in the teaching and learning process improved the students' writing skill.

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