Using Picture Series To Enhance Students’ Ability In Narrative Writing

Khotimah*¹, Bukhari Daud¹ and Burhansyah¹

¹Syiah Kuala University, Banda Aceh

*Corresponding author: khotimahti139@gmail.com

Abstract

The objective of this study is to figure out whether the use of picture series can improve students’ ability in narrative writing skill, especially on the content aspect of the third grade students at MTsN Rukoh Banda Aceh. Most of the third grade students at MTsN Rukoh Banda Aceh felt difficult to generate and develop their ideas in writing form. By this reason, the researcher conducted experimental-quantitative research with the pre-test and post-test control group design to the students by using picture series to help them improve their writing. The samples of this study were class XI–1 as the experimental class and class XI-5 as the control class, which were chosen by using random sampling. In this study, the data was collected by means of writing test, consisting of pre-test and post-test. The result of this study showed that the improvement of the experimental class was higher than that of the control class. It was known from the comparison of the improvement of their average score in both classes on the content aspect of writing that is 7.26 in the experimental class and 3.28 in the control class. Besides, the result of the hypothesis testing shows that the score is 0.000 which is lower than 0.05 (0.000<0.05), which means the research hypothesis that “the use of picture series can improve the students’ ability in narrative writing skill especially on the content aspect” is accepted.

Keywords: Writing skill, Picture series, Narrative

1. Introduction

Writing is one of production skills to communicate or convey writer’s ideas, opinions, imaginations, thoughts, knowledge, etc in written form. Based on the national curriculum, junior high school students should be able to write simple and short text in some text types such as narrative, descriptive, procedure, etc. Because of that, it should be taught to the junior high school students. But, some students found it a difficult and uninteresting skill to be learnt (Anggraini & Usman, 2016). There are some problems that students face when writing. First, students do not have topics or ideas to write. Besides, students find it difficult to organize a text (Smith, 2009). Similar problems were also experienced by the third grade students of MTsN Rukoh Banda Aceh. First, most of the students
found it difficult to write supporting idea(s) to clearly describe the main idea of a paragraph. They only wrote the topic sentence without supporting sentences. Besides, there were some students who could not write the text following the schematic structure of narrative text. The third grade students of MTsN Rukoh had studied some types of texts, each of which has different schematic structures. Because there are so many things about text that the students should remember, it made them as beginners of English confused or forget the schematic structure of narrative text, which influenced their writing score. Then, there were a few students who felt difficult when they tried to relate one sentence to the other sentence. They were unable to properly use temporal conjunctions such as next, then, finally, etc. Consequently, their writings were not coherent and cohesive.

Media can be an important part in teaching learning to enhance students’ ability in all English skills including writing. There are some media that can be used in the teaching process by teachers, such as picture, video and diagram (Christine, 1991). Teachers can use these media depending on the material and skill. Based on some related references, the writer assumes that using picture as media may facilitate the improvement of students’ writing skill. The ideas are supported with the statements by the following experts. Aschawir (2014) mentioned that pictures can stimulate and encourage students to develop their ideas, mental and imagination to write. Then, Patricia et al., (1998) mention that story concept, recognizing details, sequencing, and development of character can be understood by the students through the use of pictures. They add that pictures help students to write. Based on the problem above, the writer was interested to conduct research to improve the third grade students’ narrative writing skill especially on the content aspect by using picture series.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Writing

Writing is a language production in written form (Manchon, 2009). He further defines that writing is a production skill which is in graphic symbols form, or making marks on flat surface of some kind. Graphic symbol in this sentence means letters, words, or related sentences and paragraphs.

Most foreign language writers “write to learn” (Manchon, 2009). Harmer (2004) explains “write to learn” means that writing helps foreign language writers to learn a language. In other words, writing encourages them to focus on accurate language use and may provoke their language development, because in the writing process they use some references to get idea(s), then learn and think how to write sentences with correct grammar from books, and choose appropriate words, etc. So, it makes their language better (Mawaddah, et al. 2016).

Manchon (2009) mentions that writing is learned and taught in the foreign language context depending on the educational purpose and social practice. Based on 2013 Curriculum, students of junior high school are required to be able to write short and simple texts or paragraphs in some genres. On the basis competence of 3.11 and 4.12, the aim of studying narrative text is for the third grade students of junior high school to be able to identify the schematic structures and language features of narrative text, as well as to write short and simple paragraphs of narrative text, especially on folklore.
2.2 Stages of Writing
For our writing to convey clear ideas, to become coherent and cohesive paper which is easy to be understood by readers, we should do some steps of writing process. Aschawir (2014) divides the process of writing into four steps: pre-writing, writing, revising or editing, and proofreading, which will be discussed below. According to Aschawir (2014), pre-writing is generating ideas and preparing to write. In this process, writers attempt to get and gather their ideas what they want to write. The ideas can come from the writer’s experiences or imaginations. Besides, the ideas can emerge from some information that writers got from books, articles, videos, news, etc. To avoid the writing conveys large ideas or topic, particularly those unrelated, writers should limit and eliminate them by listing. After that, they should organize the ideas from general topic to specific one, so that those coordinate into cohesive units.

Aschawir (2014) states that writing a first draft or discovery draft is putting our thoughts down on paper. In other words, after writers list some ideas and determine a topic, they can develop them onto paper to be good paragraph(s) or text. In this process, writers begin to write a general topic and develop it by adding some related supporting ideas or sentences. They can write and organize some paragraphs or long paragraphs and relate them with the main topic (Rizki et al. 2017).

After writers have finished writing a text, they should revise and edit it. Grenville (2001) states that revising means “re-seeing” which involves the processes of cutting something out that you think is unimportant, adding something if you think it is needed, and moving or rearranging something in order to make the writing accurate. Leki (2011) adds that after writing a text, writers should compare their writing with an image in their mind of what they want to communicate. In other words, writing consists of messages or writers’ thoughts that they want to convey or share with readers. After writers think that they have constructed a cohesive, coherent, accurate document and it has consisted of what they want to communicate to readers, then they should do proofreading before publishing it (Dewi, et al. 2017).

Furthermore, Aschawir (2014) mentions that at this stage, writers scan their paper for grammar, punctuation and spelling errors. To help writers scan the manuscript, they can use their finger to follow the text as they read it. It may need longer time, because writers should pay attention to each word, sentence, moreover paragraph. But, this is a better way to avoid errors (Sharma & Joshi, 2013).

2.3 Micro and Macro Skills in Writing
Learners need to acquire micro skills and macro-skills of writing in order to be able to produce writing. Ur (1996) states that writing should maintain between micro aspect and macro aspect. In micro aspects, students practice specific written forms at the level of word or sentence for instance handwriting or typing, spelling, punctuation (Fata, et al. 2015). On the other hand, in macro aspects, students emphasize on content and organization. In this case, they express themselves by using their own words, state a purpose for writing, and specify an audience. More description is given by Brown (2007); he states that
micro-skills are related to imitative and intensive types of writing task, whereas macro-skills are related to responsive and extensive writing.

2.4 Media

Christine (1991) states that media is a tool which has a function to transfer or deliver messages. It can convey complex ideas at a glance and can make a written message more impact. There are many kinds of media which can be used by teachers in the teaching and learning process, depending on the material and skill, such as audio, video, picture, chart, etc. Media is very important in the teaching learning process. This opinion is supported by Christine (1991) in her statement as follows:

*Without application of teaching media in classroom, none of learning theory principles could be fulfilled. It would take a lot of exertion to reach a good teaching communication without application of teaching media. It's impossible to coordinate teaching with learning without using media (p.89).*

Picture is one type of media that can be used in teaching learning. In this study, the writer focuses on picture series. Picture series is sequences of pictures that tell a story. It consists of three or more pictures. There are several experts who argue that the use of picture series as instructional media can improve students’ ability in writing. First, Wright (1989) states that “Sequences of picture can be kept as they are used to contextualize a story or description of a process” (p. 201). Second, Marble (2012) conveys that pictures can be used to help students to develop details, ideas, or sequences of story.

He adds that pictures can encourage students to write and develop their written language. Third, Gregoria, et al. (2015) mentions that picture series applied is a suitable strategy for EFL students to increase their narrative writing skill in English. He also adds that applying picture series in teaching writing can increase students’ motivation to enhance and practice their narrative writing skill. Then, Febriani (2014) argues that the use of picture series could be an effective way to improve the students’ writing. She also states that picture series create a new atmosphere for students in the classroom and enhance students’ interest in writing. Furthermore, Asrifan (2015) states that teaching writing by using picture series as media is suitable to be applied to students in generating and organizing their ideas in the writing process through picture.

2.5 Narrative Text

Hartono (2005, p. 9) mentions that narrative is one kind of genres that aims to entertain the reader. Besides, Rugayamanan (2012) states that narrative is a text which retells the story or previous experiences. They also state about the schematic structures and language features of narrative. The language features of narrative are orientation, complication, and resolution. And the language features of narrative are specific participants, using past tense, conjunctions, adverb of time and place, and using verbs.

3. METHOD

This study is experimental-quantitative research. According to Key (1997), experimental research is a researcher’s attempt to control all factors that may
affect the result of an experiment. The design of this study consists of pre-test, treatment and post-test. The writer used the scheme of pretest-posttest control group design proposed by Ary, et al. (2010) as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Pre-test</th>
<th>Treatments</th>
<th>Post-test</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Experiment</td>
<td>$Y_1$</td>
<td>$X$</td>
<td>$Y_2$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Control</td>
<td>$Y_1$</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>$Y_2$</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Where:
$Y_1$: Pre-test
$X$: Treatment
$Y_2$: Post-test

The population of this study was the third grade students of MTsN Rukoh, Banda Aceh. There were five classes of third grade with each class consisting of 30 to 38 students. Furthermore, the sample of this study was IX-1 as experimental class and IX-5 as control class. The writer selected this sample by using random sampling (lottery sampling).

The instrument for data collection of this study was writing test. Specifically, the writer gave pre-test and post test in the form of writing task. The pre-test was administered before the giving of treatments by means of picture series in teaching writing and the post-test was given after the treatments.

The writer collected data through pre-test, treatment and post-test. The data collection activities of this study were conducted in five meetings: one session for pre-test, three for treatment, and one for post-test.

4. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION
4.1 Findings

As shown in Table above, in the pre-test on the content aspect of writing, it is known that the mode score is 5. Furthermore, it can be seen that the minimum score is also 5, while the maximum score is 15 and the total score in this test is 210. Then, from the result of post-test based on the table above, it shows that the mode score on the content aspect of writing is 15. It also presents the minimum score in this test which is 10, while the maximum score is 20. Besides, it can be found that the total score of the post-test in the experimental class is 435.

Furthermore, based on the result of both tests in the experimental class, it can be found that there is a difference in the total score between the pre-test and post-test as presented in Table 4.1. In the pre-test, the total score that was achieved by the students is 210, while in the post-test it is 435. This finding
shows that there is a considerable improvement of score after the treatments, namely 225.

**Table 3. Pre-Test and Post-Test Score of the Control Class on Content Aspect**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Pretest</th>
<th>posttest</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Valid</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mode</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missing</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minimum</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maximum</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sum</td>
<td>215</td>
<td>320</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Based on Table 3, the mode score in the pre-test on the content aspect of writing in the control class is 5. Besides, it is known that the minimum score in this test is also 5, while the maximum score is 10. Then, it can be seen that the total score of this test is 215. Then, the table shows the mode score in the result of post-test writing on content aspect is 10. It also shows the minimum score in this test is 5, while the maximum score is 15. Besides, it can be seen that the total score of post-test in the control class is 320.

Furthermore, there is an improvement of the total score between pre-test and post-test in this class. It can be seen that the total score in the pre-test is about 215, while that in the post-test is 320. It means that there is an improvement of the total score in this class, namely 105.

**Table 4. Average score of Pre-test and Post-test on Content Aspect**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Pre-test</th>
<th>Post-test</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Experimental Class</td>
<td>6.77</td>
<td>14.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Control Class</td>
<td>6.72</td>
<td>10.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As can be seen in the table above, there are improvements in the mean scores in both the experimental and control classes. In the experimental class, the average score is about 6.77 in the pre-test, while it is about 14.03 in the post-test. It means that there is a significant improvement (i.e. 7.26). Then, in the control class, the students achieved the average score of 6.72 on the content aspect in the pre-test, while they got the mean score of 10 in the post-test. In this class, the average score that the students got also improved (i.e. 3.28). But, when the improvements are compared, the improvement of the experimental class is 7.26 which is higher than that of the control class, which is only 3.28.

**4.2 Discussion**

Based on table 1, which shows the result of post-test on the content aspect, and table 2, which shows the average score on content aspect, it can be seen that there is a significant improvement that the students achieved after the treatments were conducted in the experimental class, and the improvement of the experimental class is higher than that of the control class. Besides, based on the result of the hypothesis testing, the significant score (0.000) is lower than 0.05 which means that the research hypothesis (Ha) of this study that the use of picture series can improve the students’ ability in writing of narrative text especially on the content aspect is accepted.
5. CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

This study proved that the use of picture series can improve the third grade students’ ability in narrative writing skill especially on the content aspect. This improvement can be seen through two points. The first point is the improvement of the average score in the post-test, which was conducted after the researcher gave the treatments. As can be seen in Table 3 in the previous section, the result of the mean score of pre-test in the experimental class is 6.77, while that of the post-test in the experimental class is 14.03. It shows that there is a significant improvement (i.e. 7.26).

It is suggested that English teachers use picture series in teaching writing of narrative text since the result of this study showed that the use of picture series was useful to help the students generate and develop their ideas. Hence, the students’ ability in writing narrative text improved especially on the content aspect. This research discusses the implementation of the use of picture series to enhance students’ ability in narrative writing skill especially on the content aspect. It is suggested that other researchers conduct further studies at different levels of English learners such as second grade students of junior high school, as well as senior high school students.

REFERENCES


Using Picture Series To Enhance Students’ Ability In Narrative Writing by Khotimah, Bukhari Daud, Burhansyah