

THE USE OF PICTURE SERIES IN TEACHING WRITING RECOUNT TEXT

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ABSTRACT

The objective of the research is to investigate the kind of activities take place during the process of teaching writing recount text through picture series and to identify the benefits that the students obtained from writing recount text through picture series. This research used a qualitative descriptive research method. The respondents of the research are an English teacher and seven grade students of Mts Nurul Hidayah Batujajar. The data were obtained from observation and interview. The results of the study revealed that the teaching writing by using picture series can improve students' ability in writing recount text. Specifically, they showed some improvement on process of writing and vocabulary. Moreover, the data from observation and interview showed that there are some benefits, which are the development of students' writing ability, the increasing of students' participation in the class, fun learning's atmosphere and the increasing of students' writing interest.

Keywords: Writing, Recount Text, Picture Series.

A. INTRODUCTION

Writing is one of language skills that have to be mastered by the students. Based on Depdiknas (2003:6), English learning process includes listening, reading, speaking, and writing as the form of spoken and written cycle. Additionally, right now, Carter, et al (2002: 269) argues that writing is important for career and personal life because others will judge our thinking ability according to what we write and how we write it. A well-written job application letter, for example can make someone get a job or be turned away. Therefore, good writing skills are necessary to communicate our knowledge and thought clearly and effectively.

Based on the explanation above, it can be concluded that writing is important for our life. It can be a great tool to help us know more about the way we think because it can solidify ideas and thoughts, and allow us to reflect on them better than if the ideas remained evolving in our head. Besides, it helps us to learn how to form language, how to spell, how to put together a plot and how to make a logical argument or how to persuade, mainly through writing. Hence, writing is needed to be mastered by all people, especially the students because writing is how much of the world communicates. If we do not write, it means that we cut ourselves off from a large community. Learning from this fact, nowadays, teaching writing to the students becomes a necessity. However, many teachers neglected the writing skill in their teaching. This happened because writing is regarded as the most difficult skill to be taught in English subject. And this happened for many reasons. For example, because of the teachers didn't have good ability in teaching writing, teachers lack of creativity, students have lack of motivation, and many other aspects involve in this situation.

Writing involves several components which have to be considered including word choice, use of appropriate grammar, syntax, mechanics, and organization of ideas into coherent and cohesive form (Gebhard, 1996) and writing mechanics such as punctuation and capitalization (Hartfiel, et al., 1985: 102, cited in Cahyono, 2001: 44). Thus, in producing writing students need to focus on how to generate ideas, how to organize them coherently, how to use discourse markers, and rhetorical conventions to put them cohesively into a written text, how to revise text for clearer meaning, how to edit text for appropriate grammar, and how to produce a final product (Brown, 2001). Therefore, it is understandable that writing is supposed to be a difficult language skill. To solve the problem, teacher should be more creative in teaching writing and offer students with an interesting and useful technique. A number of interesting classroom techniques emerge to solve the widely believed opinion that writing is the most difficult skill among the four language skills. One of the techniques is by using picture series to facilitate the students to find the idea easily, to organize it in a well-organized paragraph, and last to love writing.

Based on the description above, this research aims to investigate the kind of activities take place during the process of teaching writing recount text through picture series and to identify the benefits that the students obtained from writing recount text through picture series.

B.LITERATURE REVIEW

1.The Nature of Writing

Writing is a communicative act; it is a way of sharing information, thoughts, experiences, or ideas, between ourselves and others. According to Scott (1996, cited in Rozimela, 2004), writing activities are directed to writing for communication, not writing for exercise. This means that the teachers need to realize that writing activities are an important part of English teaching. Accordingly, they should be able to help students develop their writing ability.

Writing involves several components which have to be considered while a student is writing, for example contents, rhetoric, vocabularies, grammatical structure, and writing mechanics such as punctuation and capitalization (Hartfiel, et al., 1985:102. Cited in Cahyono, 2001:44). These considerations imply that writing is not simple activity because there are a lot of aspects to be deliberated in the process of writing. Thus, regarding the complexity of writing the appropriate approach should be implemented in order to cope with the obstacle.

In addition, Nunan (1991: 271) claims that producing a coherent, fluent, extended piece of writing in one's second language is an enormous challenge. Therefore, it is important that English teacher facilitate the students that they will no longer consider writing a difficult skill.

2. Writing Process

Nunan (1991:91) states that there are three stages of writing. They are pre-writing, writing, and post-writing.

a.Pre-writing

Bello (1997: 1-2) states that writing process usually begins with some forms of pre-writing activity in which learners work together in group to generate ideas about a particular topic. This include sharing the free writing topic, brainstorming, making a list or simply reflecting on an experience. Generating the topic is usually the hardest part in this stage. According to Nunan (2003:97), brainstorming, word mapping, and quick writing can be a help for the writer to solve this part because by doing them, he can develop his thoughts before doing the next part – planning and organizing the writing in the form of an outline.

b.Writing

In this stage, the writer should deal the ideas with details that he has discovered in pre-writing stage. This stage also includes the process of drafting in which he should develop the outline into a good paragraph and make it coherent. Here, the writer needs to focus on the development and organization of the ideas more than the development of perfect grammar, punctuation or spelling (Nunan, 2003:98). It means that in this stage, there is only a rough draft that is not perfect yet, so that it is the best time for him to receive some comments or feedbacks from his teacher or his peers for revising and editing.

c.Post-writing

In this stage, the writer may add several ideas that he thinks necessary for his writing, revise, and edit his composition. The most important for him to do in this stage is to make connection in grammar, mechanics, spelling, and punctuation to make sure that his writing is completely understood both content and organization. As stated by Calderonello and Edwards (1986:4), writing is a process of revising and successful writers know that revision is not only correcting errors or an activity confined to the very end of the writing process, but also an activity in which the writers make changes throughout the composing process – adding, deleting, substituting, and rearranging materials in their texts to make the meaning clear to their readers.

From the explanation above, the process of writing involves several components which have to be considered including word choice, use of appropriate grammar, syntax, mechanics, and organization of ideas into coherent and cohesive form (Gebhard, 1996) and writing mechanics such as punctuation and capitalization (Hartfiel, et al., 1985: 102, cited in Cahyono, 2001: 44).

Accordingly, in producing writing students need to focus on how to generate ideas, how to organize them coherently, how to use discourse markers, and rhetorical conventions to put them cohesively into a written text, how to revise text for clearer meaning, how to edit text for appropriate grammar, and how to produce a final product (Brown, 2001). This means that it is not a simple and an easy task for the teachers to improve their students' ability in writing.

Therefore, teacher needs a good media to help the students improve their writing skill. As pointed by Cahyono (1997) that media have an importance role in helping students learn. One of ways considered effective in teaching writing is by using pictures series.

3. Picture Series

Picture series is a kind of media which belongs to picture category. Yunus (1981:49-53) classifies pictures into three types they are composite picture, picture series and individual picture. In addition, Wright (1997, cited in Hakim 2010:34), suggests the pictures series are pictures, which show some actions or events in chronological order. They tend to range from four to eight pictures. According to Lindstormberg (2004), by using picture series, the students will be interested and will enjoy the teaching and learning process. The pictures lead the students to focus directly on words. It is in line with Le's statement (2005) that the use of picture series gives positive effects such as motivation, enthusiasm, understanding about ideas generation, independence in constructing sentences, high sentence production and cooperative learning. Furthermore, Wright (1989) proposes that there are some roles that pictures can have in the teaching of writing. Firstly, pictures can motivate students and make them want to pay attention and take a part. Secondly, pictures contribute to the context in which language is used. Thirdly, pictures can be described in an objective way or responded to subjectively. Fourthly, pictures can cue responses to questions. Finally, pictures can stimulate and provide information to be referred to in conversation, discussion and storytelling.

In using picture series, the teacher can apply certain principle such as modeling, inquiry and learning community. According to Harmer (2001), in learning community, students can enhance broader skills of cooperation. Thus, through learning community or cooperative learning or students can improve both academic and social skills. Regarding to the importance of cooperative learning, Richards and Lokhart (1994) claim that cooperative learning gives a number of advantages. First, it reduces the dominance of the teacher over the class. Second, it increases the amount of students' participation in the class. Third, it increases the opportunities for individual students to practice and use new features of the target language. Fourth, it promotes collaboration among learners. It also enables the teacher to work more as a facilitator and a consultant. The last, it can give learners a more active role in learning.

C. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

A descriptive qualitative was employed in this study in order to investigate the use of picture series in teaching writing. Referring to the objective of this study, the design is considered appropriate since it is a method used to describe or analyze the results of the study but not used for make broader conclusions (Sugiyono, 2005)

This study was conducted at Mts Nurul Hidayah Batujajar. The participants of this study were an English teacher and seventh grade students of Mts Nurul Hidayah Batujajar. The data were obtained through classroom observation and interview. The lessons observed were writing lessons. During observations, the researcher was an observer and did not take part in any classroom activity. Field notes on the teacher's use of reading assessments were taken during each observation. The interviews were semi-structured. The interview was conducted in order to investigate the benefits that the teacher obtained from the use of picture series in teaching writing recount text.

D. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

The analysis of the data from the observation and interview showed that the use of picture series was effectively used in helping students' improve their writing ability.

1. Teaching Writing Descriptive Text Through Picture Series

Based on the results from observation above, it can be concluded that the picture series that was used in the teaching writing descriptive text is divided into three stages; pre-writing, writing, and post-writing as proposed by Nunan (1991).

a. Pre-writing stage

Based on the data obtained, there were some learning activities used by the teachers in pre-writing stage as follows:

- 1) Brainstorming by asking the students about their activity in last holiday.
- 2) show the pictures about person and asking the students to mention several verbs related to the picture given.
- 3) give an example of recount text.
- 4) Ask the students to analyze and explore the text in terms of generic structure of a recount text, the verbs, and the connectors.
- 5) Group the students by asking them to count until six and those who mentioned the same number become one group.

b. Writing

This stage covered several activities as follows:

- 1) Give each member of the groups a picture about My last Sunday Activity, which is different from the picture if other member of the groups. So, in a group will be four different pictures.
- 2) Then, based on the given pictures, ask the groups make one or more sentences
- 3) Asked each group to present its work before the class.
 - c. Post-writing
 - 1) Submit the results of the students' group work
 - 2) Close the class activity by summarizing the lesson

In the first observation, the teacher started the class by greeting the students and checking the students' attendance. All students attended the class that day. When the students were ready for the materials, the teacher then recall the materials and activities in the previous meeting. Furthermore, the teacher stated the objective of teaching is writing recount text. Then, she asking the students about several activities about their activities in last holiday. Furthermore, the teacher showed the pictures about activities and asked the students to mention several verbs based on the picture given. The data revealed that the activity was able to activate students' vocabularies.

Furthermore, the data from observation showed that the students enjoyed inexploring the verbs related to the picture. It can be seen that all students were active and enthusiasm in expressing what they see. They were able to mention the verbs related to kind activities in the pictures. In addition, the students also were able to make the sentences using the verbs. After that, they were able to arrange several the sentence based on the pictures given. This indicates that picture series gives fun learning atmosphere and motivating effect that the students were willing to learn. It is supported by Lindstormberg (2004) who argues that by using picture series, the students will be interested and will enjoy the teaching and learning process.

In addition, in pre writing stage, the teacher also introduced a recount text though a model of text. Through the model text, the teacher and students work together to explore the cultural context, social function, schematic structure, and linguistics features of the text using spoken language to focus on written text. Then, she grouping the students by asking them to count until six and those who mentioned the same number become one group.

In writing stage, the teacher shared different pictures to the students and asked them to develop a recount text based on the pictures given in group. Then, the data from the observation revealed that the students enthusiastically worked together in developing texts. In developing the text, they discussed the activities and the correct order of the pictures. They shared information they have by discussing what they see in the picture and then wrote what they have discussed in paragraphs, in this case recount text. In other words, the students started their writing by collecting the vocabularies in the picture series from sharing ideas with their friends in the group. Sometimes, they also used Indonesian language first. Then, they arranged the words into free sentences and gave supporting details. If they did not know the words in English, they opened the dictionary or asked their friend. This indicates that in this stage the students were given the chance to exchange the knowledge and information based on what they have discussed and learnt in the previous stages. This findings is relevant with Richards and Lokhart (1994) that cooperative learning can increase the amount of students' participation in the class.

From the observation, it is clearly found that by using picture series, the students can write easier. It could be seen from the activity that all the groups were able to finish the task in thirty minutes. In addition, the students also were able to write a text that has schematic structure, linguistic features and knowledge of the field in accordance with recount text. This indicates that through learning community or cooperative learning or students can improve both academic and social skills. It is supported by Harmer (2001) who argues that learning community, students can enhances broader skills of cooperation.

At the end of the lesson, each the leader of the group presented its work in front of the class. It was found that through the activity, the students not only using the language, but also writing the language and speaking with the language.

The last, the final observation was on Friday, April 07, 2017. It was found that the students were able to rewrite the story with their own words. And their vocabulary mastery increased. It can be seen from their writing results that they were able to write more than three paragraphs. In addition, the students' ideas in writing a recount text also improved significantly. They also could develop the content and organize the ideas into a good text based on the picture series. This can be seen that the students can write the text based on the generic structure and language feature of recount text.

2. The Benefits from Writing Descriptive Text through Picture Series

The result of interview found three benefits from the use of picture series in teaching writing. The benefits attained the development of students' writing ability, fun learning's atmosphere and the increasing of students' writing interest. The aforementioned benefits are described below.

a. Students Developed Their Writing Ability

Based on the data of teacher's interview, it was found that students developed their writing ability. The development of writing ability in this research can be seen in the following excerpt:

After practicing to write recount text by using picture series regularly many students can express their idea easily and develop their ideas in writing easier. In contrast, before using picture series they got difficulty in creating idea while writing.

(T) (Interview, translated version)

The above excerpt showed that the use of picture series as a teaching media could help students in writing. Related to the development of students' writing ability, student two perceived that after learning descriptive using picture series, she was able to create paragraphs more than usual, as can be seen in the excerpt below.

Picture series helped me in developing ideas while writing. By looking the picture, I can know what to write that make me easier in to develop some sentences to be a paragraph.

(S2) (Interview, translated version)

The findings above is in line with Le's statement (2005) that the use of picture series gives positive effects such as motivation, enthusiasm, understanding about ideas generation, independence in constructing sentences, high sentence production and cooperative learning.

b. Picture Series Created Fun Learning's Atmosphere

All respondents said that they enjoyed writing by using picture series. It is supported by interview result of student one below.

I am happy to write by using picture series. By looking at the picture, there are many words that I want to read. I enjoyed describing everything I saw in those picture.

(S1) (Interview, translated version)

This finding showed that by using picture series, the students were interested and enjoyed the teaching and learning process as stated by Lindstormberg (2004).

c. Students were Motivated to Write

After writing by using picture series regularly, the students were motivated to write better, as stated by student five below.

When I asked to write I was confused to start writing. I thought that writing activity is boring because the teacher always asks us to write in a piece of paper. But, after being introduced by picture series I found that writing is interesting. I enjoyed writing by using picture series. It makes me want to write and write again.

(S5) (Interview, translated version)

The findings above showed that picture series as one media to increase students' engagement in writing activity. Therefore, this technique has been found to be an effective means of arousing interest in writing.

E. Conclusions And Suggestions

1. Conclusions

English teachers should be more creative in teaching writing and should try to offer students with interesting and useful teaching and learning techniques. One of teaching techniques is to use the picture series. Accordingly, this research aims to investigate the kind of activities take place during the process of teaching writing recount text through picture series and to identify the benefits that the students obtained from writing recount text through picture series. Based on research result, several conclusions from the findings are drawn as follows.

Firstly, regarding the kinds of activity that take place in the process of teaching recount text through picture series, it is found that there were several activities that are divided into three stages: pre-writing, writing and post writing.

Secondly, concerning with the benefits of writing recount text through picture series, the gained data indicated that the use of picture series was effectively used in helping students' improve their ability in writing recount text. This research revealed that the teaching program spawned several benefits from the use of picture series in teaching writing. The benefits attained the development of students' writing ability, the increasing of students' participation in the class, fun learning's atmosphere and the increasing of students' writing interest.

Therefore, it is suggested that the teachers use this techniques to teach English in their classroom.

2. Suggestions

There are several suggestions in the use of picture series in teaching writing as follows:

First, it is advisable for the teachers to use picture series to enrich ideas, promote students' attention, help them focus on the learning process, and enhance participation. Second, the topic of the teaching should be connected with the students' context. Third, the use of colorful picture will be more interesting. Fourth, the use of picture series can be implemented for other genres such as narrative text, procedure text, report, storytelling, etc.

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