THE USE OF PICTURE SERIES ON STUDENTS’ WRITING ABILITY OF THE FIRST YEAR STUDENTS OF SMA YLPI MARPOYAN PEKANBARU

(Penggunaan Gambar Berseri untuk Meningkatkan Kemampuan Menulis Siswa Kelas VII SMA YLPI Marpoyan Pekanbaru)

Oleh: RUGAIYAH*)

*) Dosen Pend. Bahasa Ingris FKIP UIR

ABSTRACT

Kata Kunci: Picture Series, Students’ ability, and writing Ability

BACKGROUND

Based on 2006 curriculum, English teaching of senior high schools covers four skills, namely listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Among the basic skills, writing is considered to be the most complicated skill because in writing the writer should be able to combine and express his or her opinions in good written forms. In writing, the writer should not neglect the language components (structure, vocabulary, and spelling) because the content of writing can only be understood if those language components are written in correct forms. When the writing skill is taught in the classroom, the students are expected to be able to write in English using a correct structure.

Writing is one of the skills studied by students of senior high schools. It is one of the efforts to train and develop the students’ thought to a problem. It needs a high motivation and continuous training to master it. To develop those skills, especially writing skill. There are 43 units of English subjects to be taught, and each unit is divided into three sub-themes,. Each sub-theme contains reading, vocabulary, listening, conversation, and composition. English writing is taught for 90 minutes a week for the first up to the third year of SMA students.
In this case, the aim of teaching writing is truly to enable the students to communicate in written English. Harries (1971) states that “there are five general components in writing. They are content, form, grammar, style, and mechanics. It means that the students should use those components when they are writing. Bryne (1982:1) states that “writing is how we can produce a sequence of sentences arranged in particular order and linked together in certain ways and it involves the encoding massage that both writer and reader can understand”. It means that by learning how to write, the learners have an ability to write a composition which is arranged in good order and also contains a massage. Furthermore, writing is more than the production of the graphic symbols. It requires the conscious mental effort where it involves how to combine the ideas into a various ways and arrange them into a coherent text.

In fact, it was found the weaknesses of students in mastering English writing skill in daily classroom activities. Based on the observation at SMA YLPI Marpoyan Pekanbaru, it was found that some students often complained with difficulties how to organize ideas. The second, most students faced problems in choosing the diction. The third, problem is caused by the lack of ability in arranging the words in grammatical sentences. The fourth, this problem is caused by the lack of exercises given by teachers, or techniques of teaching used by the teacher that is not relevant to the material. On the other hand, the students need to possess competence in written communication.

There are five components of writing: content, organization of ideas, diction, language use, and mechanic. Based on identification of the problem, this research is limited in organizing ideas, and choosing words in writing quality of short narrative paragraph of SMA YLPI Marpoyan Pekanbaru. In this case, picture series is used to improve the students’ quality in writing.

Through process of writing, the students can develop their thinking, knowledge, and ability. Linguistically, Raimes (1983:12) states that writing can impose the grammatical structure, idioms, and vocabulary of the students. So, writing may fulfill desire of someone to communicate without direct oral communication.

In writing, the teacher can help learners use grammatical structure, idioms, and vocabulary that they have learned. They are involved in the effect of expressing ideas.

Based on the explanation above, it seems that writing and learning are integrative process, where through writing the students describe, argue, discover, create, interact with words and ideas that develop and change overtime. Through writing, understanding and development of those activities are provided all at the same time. It is why the students who can write well have a great advantage over the students who can not write well.

In learning process, especially in language learning, the function of media are allow teacher to illustrates ideas and encourage or stimulate learning processes.

Pictures series as one of the media use can motivate learner to practice their language in real context as initial stage of communicating ideas (Mora:1988:54). Therefore, pictures series can help students in the process of writing activity.

If the teacher selects appropriate picture series for the subject, the teacher would become “facilitator” to guide students to develop their language skills. At last, picture series can indirectly give experience to the students before the teacher gives explanations.
In writing, picture series play an important role to guide writing process concerning giving ideas to be written down. Through pictures, learners can be shown people, places, and things from areas far outside their own experience. Pictures can also represent images from ancient times or portray the future.

Pictures are visual materials that can be used to motivate students in learning language. Honeyfield (1981: 17) mentions that “using language and picture are two ways of communicating the teaching learning. When we bring them together in a certain way, we have some powerful ways to organize language learning”.

There are two kinds of pictures; they are single picture and picture series (picture sequences). In this research, the writer used picture series as a tool of teaching writing. Heaton (1975:9) believes that “in addition to developing the students powers of observation, picture composition encourages clear and precise thinking while helping the pupil to talk and write freely upon a definite subject”. He also says that “pictures are great help in the teaching of new vocabulary and structures, and provide the students with the basic material for his composition, thus enabling him to give his attention to the correct use of language”.

A teacher should not provide pictures that he/she likes, but she should select pictures that are interesting to her students and can motivate them to write. Wright (1986:27) emphasizes that “the teacher must present pictures in a way which is relevant to the interest and age of her students.

In conclusion, picture series encourage students to write, and they provide students the basic material for their composition. Selection of picture is important to keep students’ motivation. Pictures to be selected are not only relevant with the students’ interest and age, but they should also be fun, a truly –self motivating, and have much visual information.

The Implementation of Picture Series

In writing, picture series play an important role to guide writing process concerning giving ideas to be written down. Through pictures, learners can be shown people, places, and things from areas far outside their own experience. Pictures can also represent images from ancient times or portray the future.

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There are two kinds of pictures; they are single picture and picture series (picture sequences). Picture series may show either one main event or scenes with a considerable amount of details, and perhaps a number of events taking place. Byrne (1983:26) argue that “picture sequences tend to range from four to eight pictures”. They usually tell some short of “story” but they may also be used to depict process. He, further, says that “if some form of picture sequences is used, no doubt the learners generally respond favourably to tasks which relate to some kind of visual context”.

“Pairs of picture or picture in sequence provide for a variety of guided and free writing exercises” Raimes (1983:15). A picture sequence provides the subject matter for writing narrative and for speculating about the story beyond the pictures. A set of parallel pictures that show a similar scene or tell a similar story provides material that offers guidance on vocabulary, sentence structure, and organization yet lets the students write about new subject matter.
Heaton (1975:9) believes that “in addition to developing the students powers of observation, picture composition encourages clear and precise thinking while helping the pupil to talk and write freely upon a definite subject”. He also says that “pictures are great help in the teaching of new vocabulary and structures, and provide the students with the basic material for his composition, thus enabling him to give his attention to the correct use of language”. At the same time, his imagination powers are stimulated by means of the pictures. In another book (1975:5) he also states that “an excellent device for providing both a purpose and content for writing is the use of picture”. A picture or series of picture not only provides the tester with the basic material for his composition but stimulate his imaginative powers.

“There are some functions of pictures used for writing activities” (Wright, 1986:11) : to motivate the students, to create a context within with his written text will have meaning, to provide the students with information to refer to, including objects, actions, events, relationships, to provide non-verbal cues for manipulation practice, and to provide non-verbal forms to written composition.

A teacher should not provide pictures that he/she likes, but she should select pictures that are interesting to her students and can motivate them to write. Wright (1986:27) emphasizes that “the teacher must present pictures in a way which is relevant to the interest and age of her students. Similarly, Sutherland (1969:34) confirms that “the most important thing in providing pictures is the pictures are fun, a truly-self motivating visual aids capable of maintaining students’ interest and competition for their own sake”. From the pictures the teacher can build questioning stages to arise students’ interest and curiosity. Related to this, Gerlach and Ely (1980:16) say that “to creative writing or “decoding” visual information and have the students write or tell a story which describes the relationship of the people in the picture and the way the environment in the picture was created”.

In conclusion, picture series encourage students to write, and they provide students the basic material for their composition. Selection of picture is important to keep students’ motivation. Pictures to be selected are not only relevant with the students’ interest and age, but they should also be fun, a truly-self motivating, and have much visual information.

On the other hand, it is true that “picture series do not provide students directly with the spellings, sentence structures, and can not provide students with abstract nouns, but they are still better in some respects as picture (i.e. picture series) provides language forms to use in the classroom, c) variety of tasks, and d) a focus of interest for students”. They are powerful ways to organize language learning.

**RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

The research design was classroom action research. This research conducted into two cycles, each cycle consist of planning, implementation, observation and reflection. Refers to Kemmis (1992: 1-2) states that action as any systematic inquiry conducted by teacher as a researcher to gather information about the ways that particular school operates, how the teachers teach, and how well their students learn. The information is gathered with the goals of gaining insight, developing reflective practice, effecting positive changes in the school environment and on educational practice in general, and improving students’ outcomes. The researcher collaborated with one of the English teacher who teaches at English language at SMA YLPI Marpoyan.
Pekanbaru. The first instrument of the research was test. It was intended to measure the students’ ability writing. The second instrument of this research was observation. It was conducted by researcher and one of the English teacher during action research. The result of observation used to know the implementation of picture series on students’ writing ability. The fourth instrument was interview. It was used to find out information from the students relate to the students’ ability writing before and after the implementation of the picture series. The last instrument was field note. The function of field note was as a cross check data. Field note considered of important data from the observation. Some aspect of teaching and learning that recorded such as class situation, class mastery, interaction between teacher and students, all research activities, comment and suggest from the observer.

FINDING AND DISCUSSION

After calculating base score test, cycle I test and cycle II test. It can be seen that the students’ writing ability improved by using picture series. The improvement of the students’ score can be seen in the following table:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicator of Writing</th>
<th>Base Score</th>
<th>Cycle I</th>
<th>Cycle II</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Content</td>
<td>53.88</td>
<td>67.27</td>
<td>79.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organiz...</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Grammar</td>
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<tr>
<td>Vocabul...</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mechanic</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

From the data above, it can be seen the improvement or each test. Students’ test on base core was 53.88, students’ score on cycle I was 67.27, and students’ test on cycle II was 79.12.
Table 2. The Improvement of Students’ Ability for EachIndicator of Writing

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicators of Writing</th>
<th>Base Score</th>
<th>Cycle I</th>
<th>Cycle II</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Content</td>
<td>2.44</td>
<td>3.09</td>
<td>3.31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organization</td>
<td>2.01</td>
<td>2.77</td>
<td>3.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grammar</td>
<td>1.38</td>
<td>2.06</td>
<td>2.93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vocabulary</td>
<td>1.82</td>
<td>2.65</td>
<td>3.24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mechanic</td>
<td>1.71</td>
<td>2.65</td>
<td>3.19</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Based on Table 2 above, it can be seen that the students’ writing ability improved for each test. Students’ writing ability on content indicated that base score was 2.44 (poor), cycle I was 3.09 (good), and cycle II was 3.31 (very good). Students’ writing ability on organization indicated that base score was 2.01 (poor), cycle I was 2.77 (fair), and on cycle II was 3.14 (good). Students’ writing ability in grammar indicated that base score was 1.38 (fair), cycle I was 2.06 (fair), and cycle II was 2.93 (fair). Students’ writing ability in vocabulary indicated that base score was 1.82 (poor), cycle I was 2.65 (fair), and cycle II was 3.24 (very good). The last indicator writing was mechanic, it indicated that the base score was 1.71 (poor), cycle I was 2.65 (fair) and cycle II was 3.19 (fair).

CONCLUSIONS

Based on the data analysis of the tests (base score, cycle I, and cycle II), it can be concluded that:
1. Picture series can improve students’ writing ability for each indicator of writing.
2. Picture series as media can be used in teaching learning process especially in writing subject.
3. Students become more active in teaching and learning process.
4. The factors that influenced students’ writing ability are the selection of variety of pictures for each cycle, the motivation of students during teaching and learning process, and a good atmosphere (classroom management) during teaching learning process.

SUGGESTIONS

Based on the conclusion above, it is suggested to use picture series in teaching writing and select the pictures for each cycle before teaching students.

REFERENCES