

## IMPROVING STUDENTS' WRITING SKILL OF DESCRIPTIVE TEXT BY USING PICTURE

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**Abstract:** The purpose of the research is to investigate whether or not pictures can improve students' writing skill and class condition. The subject of this research is students of class VIII A in SMP N 5 Kebumen. The method of the research is a classroom action research. This research was conducted in two cycles. Each cycle consisted of four steps: planning, action, observation and reflection. To collect the qualitative data, the researcher used field notes, photograph and interview. To collect the quantitative data, the researcher conducted tests. The tests were pre-test and posttests. To analyze the qualitative data, the researcher used interactive model data analysis. For the quantitative data, the researcher analyzed the mean scores of the tests to compare differences between pre-test and post-test. The result of the research shows that teaching writing skill by using pictures could improve the students' writing skill and the class condition. The improvements of the mean scores showed that there was an improvement on the students' writing skill. The students' mean score of pre-test is 51.15, it improves up-to 57.79 in the post-test I and up to 60.82 in the post-test II. Therefore, it could be concluded that teaching writing skill by using picture could improve the students' writing skill.

**Keywords:** pictures, writing, descriptive.

Concerning with the English language teaching based on KTSP (Kurikulum Tingkat Satuan Pendidikan) syllabus in Junior High School (SMP), especially for the second year, writing is one of language skills presented in the teaching learning process of English. One of students' writing activities is writing some simple sentences into a simple paragraph. One of the writing forms that should be made by the students is a descriptive text.

Based on the pre-observation conducted, it was noticed that the problems faced by the students were related to writing skill. One of the most obvious problems is the students' low writing skill. The problems

were identified as follows: 1) students get difficulty in exploring ideas into words, 2) students often choose inappropriate words, 3) students can't make a good word order in simple paragraph, 4) students have low vocabulary mastery.

The causes of the problem above from students are: 1) some of the students do not give their full attention 2) some of them are busy in talking to their friends 3) they do not try to ask the teacher about their difficulties in writing 4) some of the students other activities, such as drawing, day dreaming and playing pencil. There are several possible causes from teacher: 1) the teacher does not give a model to write a

paragraph that makes the students know what to do for writing; 2) no media is used by teacher to support or guide and motivate the students in writing. To conclude, the problems may be caused by the fact that there is no model, and no media used in the teaching and learning process, so the students has difficulties in findings ideas in writing, 3) the time for practicing writing is limited.

In this research, the problem focused on how to improve the eighth grade students' writing skill through the use of pictures. The problems can be formulated as follows: (1) Can the use of pictures improve the students' writing skill? (2) Is there any changing of the class situation when pictures are implemented in the writing class? The objectives of the study are intended: (1) To identify whether or not pictures can improve students' writing skill. (2) To describe the situation when pictures are implemented in the writing class.

The grade of writing skill is taken from criteria of writing test. According to Ganesse and Upshur (1996: 207) there are five general categories, which are often used for the evaluation of students writing, namely content, organization, language use or grammar, vocabulary, and mechanics.

From the definitions above, I concludes that writing is the act of forming graphic symbols into the words forming sentences in a paragraph that require a complex cognitive activity involving control of a number variables and communication between writer and reader.

While Wright (1989:17) states that the benefits of using pictures in writing are as follow: (a) Pictures can motivate the student and make him or her want to pay attention and want to take part. (b) Pictures contribute to the context in which the

language is being used. They bring the world into the classroom. (c) The pictures can be described in an objective way or interpreted or responded to subjectively. (d) Pictures can cue responses to questions or cue substitutions through controlled practice.

From the explanation above the researcher conclude that pictures clearly has great potential as an aid to developing writing skills and can provide both contexts and stimulation for a variety of activity.

There are the steps of teaching writing using pictures; (a) Students are asked to watch the picture which is on their hand. Using a picture, students are hoped get idea easily in writing. So they can write as fast as they can based on the picture without imaging and dreaming what they will write. (b) Then they are asked to explore and write the characteristics of it. Here students can learn about parts of speech. (c) They have to make a simple sentence. Based on this sentence they can make some sentences with other words. Teacher describes about simple sentences (grammar). (d) Then they are asked to make a paragraph with those sentences. Students learn about how to make a good paragraph especially a descriptive text.

## RESEARCH METHODS

In this research, the writer uses action research method. The action research consists of several stages, planning, pre-research, the research and post research. In this classroom action research, each procedure takes six steps that form a cycle, they are as follows:

First, Identifying the problems. The problems were identified first before planning the action. The problems referred to the factors making the low writing improvement of the students. The problems

were identified by using three techniques as follows: (a) Using test. The pre-test was given to know the students' competence in writing skills. (b) Interviewing the teacher. The interview was held in order to know the problems faced by the teacher during teaching-learning process. (c) Observation. The observation was held in order to know the students behaviour during the teaching-learning process to know the model of class management and students writing skills. Second, Planning the action. General plan is made before implementing the action. The teacher and the researcher prepared everything related to the action as follows: (a) Making the lesson plan and designing the steps in doing the action. (b) Preparing materials, preparing sheets for classroom observation (to know the situation of teaching-learning process when the technique is applied). (c) Preparing teaching aids (pictures). (d) Preparing post-test (to know whether students' writing skill improve or not). Third, Implementing the action. The researcher implements the action. Researcher uses pictures in conducting writing activity. Fourth, Observing/ monitoring the action. The teacher observed and wrote all activities during the teaching learning process in a field note. Fifth, reflecting the result of the observation. The teacher and the writer make an evaluation on the observation result to find out the positive results and weaknesses during the action. Sixth, revising the plan. Based on the weaknesses which are found in reflecting process, the teacher and the researcher revise the action plan for the next cycle.

This action research which concerns on using picture in teaching writing needs some data to be analyzed. The data were collected through observation,

interviews, field notes, and also the result of the tests.

The data of the research were conducted by using some techniques of qualitative data collection include: interview, observation, diary, and document analysis. The implementation of the research was also in photographs to provide more accurate data.

Besides the non-test techniques above, researcher also uses test techniques. A test has the purpose of measuring, as stated by Brown(1994:252), test is a method of measuring a person's ability or knowledge in a given area. The test techniques are conducted by giving pretest before the action begins and posttest in the end of the action. The researcher gives writing test to know the students' ability in writing descriptive.

## **RESEARCH FINDING AND DISCUSSION**

This research is undertaken to find the goals of that namely factors causing low writing skill of students, identifying the improvement of the students' writing skill and certain pictures that activate students' motivation in writing class. The findings are described in this chapter which covers three sections, research process, research findings and research discussion. First, the research process. The research was conducted on eighth grade of SMP Negeri 5 Kebumen for about 2 weeks. It consists of two cycles; there are three meetings for each cycle. The procedure of action research consists of pre-research, research implementation, and the research discussion as a reflection. The pre-research was held before conducting the research. It was held in order to identify the problems occurred during the teaching and learning process in relation with students'

writing skill improvement before using the different technique; to identify the teacher's technique in teaching writing; and also to identify the students' learning activity during TL process. Pre-research here include: interviewing the teacher, observing the TL process, and giving pre-test to the students.

Researcher implemented the action plan. In this step, the researcher implemented the teaching learning of the writing skills using Pictures. The first cycle was conducted in three meetings. In teaching writing skills the researcher used four stages namely building knowledge of the field, modelling of the text, joint construction of the text and independent construction of the text.

When the technique of the teaching writing using pictures was being carried out, Teacher observed all activities and wrote the result of the observation in field notes. Generally, the teaching learning process using this technique ran well. During the implementation teacher observed the action of the researcher. The first meeting researcher interactively communicated with the students about the topic to discuss. Researcher explained about descriptive text. Then, researcher gives model how to make descriptive text through pictures. Researcher grouping the students into two students per group than gave each groups a picture to make descriptive text. Then, researcher discussing the result of the students works. The next meeting, teacher started the lesson. After greeting the students, teacher reviewed the given material to check students understanding. Then, explaining the language feature of descriptive text by interactively asks and answers with the students. Researcher gave other topic of pictures to explore how to make a

descriptive text. Then, giving model how to make descriptive text especially how to described person. The last meeting, researcher gave individual exercise as post test. Meanwhile, the student's action looked enthusiastic that they would study writing by using pictures. But, some of the students pay less attention. Some of them were busy in talking to their friends. When researcher asked students to make a paragraph based on the pictures, they found the difficulty for some vocabularies such as "*kriting*", "*jenong*", "*monyong*", so some of them answered it in Indonesia. Then, some students were very careless about grammar and organized the paragraph. Students were still confused to make paragraph descriptive and students also found difficulty on developing the paragraph. It could be seen that students too long to make just one sentence.

After observing and analyzing the result of observation, the writer and the English teacher found several strengths and some weaknesses in this research. They were as follows:

The strengths of this research implementation based on the observation results which were gathered in the field notes, researcher and teacher A reflected the result of the second cycle were reflected as follow: 1) most of the students are able to use grammar correctly and make paragraph descriptive correctly; 2) the students are more enthusiastic and full attention in joining the lesson with various pictures. Researcher and Teacher A concluded that teaching writing using pictures could attract the students. Pictures stimulated the students to make descriptive paragraph to be easy. They became more motivated and enthusiastic in learning English. The test in cycle 2 showed the improvement result. The

mean score of pre-test was 51.15, while the mean score of post-test cycle 1 was 63.36 and the score of cycle 2 was 79.68. The score of pre-test, post-test and mean score could be seen in the appendix. This action gave change to students writing skill. It could stimulate the students to make descriptive paragraph to be easy. They became more

motivated and enthusiastic in learning English.

The weakness of this action research is some of little students have still confused to develop their sentences to be a paragraph. So their content and organization of their paragraph fair to poor even tough very poor. Just little students who don't pay attention in teaching learning process.

## RESEARCH FINDING

<b>A. Students skill in writing descriptive paragraph</b>	
Before action research	After action research
1. The students get difficulty in exploring their ideas into words.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The students can more explore their ideas for being stimulated with pictures.</li> </ul>
2. In writing simple paragraph students often choose inappropriate words.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Some students do not know what word should be used.</li> <li>• Some find difficulty in translating words.</li> <li>• Through more practices (with pictures) the students can choose the appropriate words in certain context.</li> </ul>
3. The students can't make a good word order in simple sentences yet.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students can create better word order in simple sentences</li> <li>• There are able to make simple sentences in good word order.</li> <li>• Students are able to make good word order not only in simple sentences but also in a paragraph.</li> </ul>
4. The students have low vocabulary mastery.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The students' vocabulary mastery improves well through pictures with different topics.</li> <li>• They can choose the right words in certain context.</li> </ul>
<b>B. Class situation</b>	
Before action research	After action research
1. Some of the students do not give their full attention.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The students are more enthusiastic in join lesson</li> <li>• The students focus on the teaching learning process for they are interested with the pictures.</li> </ul>
2. Some of them are busy in talking to their friends	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There is interaction between students and teacher.</li> <li>• Students do their individual task.</li> </ul>
3. They do not try to ask the teacher about their difficulties in writing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students are shy to ask their difficulty to the teacher</li> <li>• They ask to their friends</li> <li>• They could not find the right answer</li> <li>• Students want to ask to their teacher about their difficulties.</li> </ul>

4. Some of the students do other activities, such as drawing, day dreaming and playing pencil.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Some students haven't been interested with the pictures</li> <li>• Some are busy with themselves.</li> <li>• Through interesting pictures the students want to pay attention to the lesson.</li> <li>• They want to do the given task.</li> <li>• More enthusiastic in joining the lesson.</li> </ul>
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From the pre research done, I can get some findings in the English class related with students writing skill specifically in descriptive text: 1) students get difficulty in exploring ideas into words, 2) students often choose inappropriate words, 3) students can't make a good word order in simple paragraph, 4) students have low vocabulary mastery.

The causes of the problem above from students are: 1) some of the students do not give their full attention 2) some of them are busy in talking to their friends 3) they do not try to ask the teacher about their difficulties in writing 4) some of the students other activities, such as drawing, day dreaming and playing pencil. The result of the pre test given to the students in the pre research shows that the mean score is 51.15. It means that the mean score is still low.

Knowing the problems faced by the students, Teacher A and researcher prepare some plans to cover them. The implementation of the plan is done in two cycles. The procedures of the first cycle are planning the action, implementing the action, observing or monitoring the action, reflecting the result of the observation, revising the plan for the following step. These procedures are done in three meetings. In the last meeting in cycle 1 teacher and researcher give post test to the students. The result shows that the mean score is 63.36. Compared with the mean score in the pre-

test, the result of the first cycle shows a significant improvement.

After doing the first cycle teacher and researcher do the second cycle. The procedures are same with the first cycle. It is so, because teacher and researcher think it is sufficient to cover the problems. In the last meeting Teacher and researcher give the students the second post-test. The mean score is 79.68. It is a satisfying result for there is a good improvement from the first cycle.

In this research, the researcher uses pictures to improve students writing skill. A Picture is categorized as one of aids in language teaching. Visual aids are a situation where the learner can see what is named by the word to be learned (Allen, 1983: 33). Picture can contribute to interest and motivation, a sense of a context of the language, and a specific reference points or stimulus (Wright, 1989: 2). It means pictures can attract, motivate and stimulate the students in learning a language.

The class situations before the action research are described as some of the students do not pay full attention; some of them are busy in talking to their friends; they do not try to ask the teacher about their difficulties in writing; some of the students other activities, such as drawing, day dreaming and playing pencil. The improvement of the class situation during and after the action research are the students more enthusiastic in joining the lesson; the

students focus on the teaching learning process for they are interested with the pictures; Through interesting pictures with some topics the students want to pay attention to the lesson and more enthusiastic in joining the lesson.

Based on the roles of the pictures in the language teaching, using pictures, students can be motivated in learning language, become more active and participate in learning process. Pictures help the students in giving responses such as comments, questions, or description of an object in the pictures.

### CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

Based on the discussion on the previous chapter, the writer draws a conclusion, they are;

The improvement of Students skill in writing descriptive paragraph covers: (a) The students can explorer their ideas through the stimulation of the pictures. (b) Through more practices (with pictures) the students can choose the appropriate words in certain context. (c) Students are able to make good word order not only in simple sentences but also in a paragraph. (d) The students' vocabulary mastery improves well through pictures with different topics. They can choose the right words in certain context. (e) The more opportunity given to the students make them have more time to practice writing and create a good descriptive text. (f) The result of students' scores show good improvements which were showed in the mean score results of pre-test, post-test 1 and post-test 2.

The improvement of Class Situation covers: (a) The students focus on the teaching learning processes which are influenced by the pictures. (b) There is interaction between students and teacher. (c)

Students want to ask to their teacher about their difficulties. (d) Through interesting pictures the students want to pay attention to the lesson. (e) The students are more enthusiastic in joining the lesson.

Based on the findings of the research, the researcher concludes that the use of pictures is able to improve the students' writing skill and the class situation during teaching learning process.

The researcher suggests first, to the English teacher: (a) The teacher uses pictures in teaching English to motivate the students in joining the lesson. (b) It is urgent to the teacher to create a communicative situation of teaching learning process to make the students eager in improving their English. Second, to the institution of Education, The institution of Education can give the attractive technique in learning process in order the language skill students improve. Third, to other researchers. This study is one of the ways in improving students' writing skill. It is expected that the findings will be used as the research of the future research on the similar problem. There are many techniques of teaching writing that can be taken as the objects of the research.

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