



## Improving Students Writing Skills by Using Picture Series on Descriptive Text

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### ABSTRACT

The purpose of the research is to provide students with a method to treat and facilitate the process of learning to write descriptive passages, thereby improving students' English writing skills using the Picture Series. Participants are 8th grade students of Pematangsiantar College 1 academic year 2022/2023 with 32 students. The study used CAR with two cycles to observe student activities and reactions in the classroom. The results of the study can be seen in the improvement of scores from pre-test to post-test 2 with a minimum score of 75 and a maximum score of 85 in post-test 2.

## **INTRODUCTION**

Language is one of the tools used by everyone in their daily life as a means to convey information and arguments to others. Without language, people cannot interact with other people. According to Herman (2020) Language is a complex system of communication that used human beings. By language we can talk with other people, can give information, can able to exchange knowledge, can express emotion, ideas, beliefs, feelings, opinions, wishes, thanks, and promises. From many of languages in the world, English is a global language that is used as a communication device between nations of different language. English plays an important role in process of communication and also English can accelerate science and technological development of a nation. English has four basic language skills, they are listening, writing, reading and speaking.

Sandiku (2005:29) defined the four skills as: Listening and Speaking, these two skills are highly interrelated and work simultaneously in real life situation. So, the integration of the two aims at fostering effective oral communication. Reading and Writing, they form a strong relationship with each other as a skill. They are tools for achieving effective written communication. The researcher can conclude that the four basics of English cannot be separated because they are related to another. Four of them have to be mastered by someone who learns English.

According to Brown and Lee (2015: 335) stated that writing is resulted from thinking, drafting, and revising procedures. It implies that a writer needs to think about the content of the writing first and then arrange the ideas using the appropriate language units. In writing, we should construct the idea perfectly to make it so understandable, that other people can catch the meaning or the purpose of the message (idea) in writing. Writing can help students to communicate to each other, as means of ideas and emotional expression creatively on paper. So, students can improve their thinking skills and thoughts through writing (A. D. Jayanti, 2019). Therefore, students need to stimulate their writing skills by getting sufficient writing practice. When the students have ideas or knowledge in their minds, they can use writing to express their ideas. Moreover, writing can be a complex activity because the students convey the ideas into written form and notice several aspects of writing in correct and accurate forms of language involves correct spelling, punctuation, diction, grammar, sentence, and paragraph formation.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

In Indonesia, writing skill is one of four skills that must be mastered by the students, it shows from the curriculum. From elementary school, junior high school until senior high school, there are chapters that explain about text, such as: narrative, descriptive, recount, report, expository, news item, procedure, etc. Especially in VIII grade, according to Kurikulum 2013 (K13) the students must be able to write and describe about people, animals and things. In the other words, the students must learn about descriptive text.

Suminar and Putri (2018) reveal that text descriptive is the text describing the person, animals, thing, and place with a clear explanation to give readers a piece of information and understanding about the object described. Descriptive

text has generic structure, they are identification and description. Descriptive text is all about describe something, someone, or other things that we know it so well, so we can portray it so well too. In the other hands, writing skill is the important thing and descriptive text is one of the materials that must be mastered by the students, especially in Junior High School.

In fact, many students do not master writing skill on descriptive text because of many problems. The problems can appear from students and teacher. The problems that appears from students are students do not give their full attention, busy in talking to their friends, do not try to ask the teacher about their difficulties in writing, some of the students do other activities, such as drawing, day dreaming and playing with their friends. The problem that appears from teacher are the teacher does not give a model to write a paragraph that makes the students know what to do for writing, 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.

Based on the researcher's experience in her teaching practice of eight grade at SMP Negeri 1 Pematangsiantar. The researcher found that the students writing skill on descriptive text was still low. By checking the mean score of the students writing skill on descriptive text was 60. According the data that researcher found while teaching practice in SMP Negeri 1 Pematangsiantar, this score was categories as poor level based on *The Dirjen Pendidikan Dasar dan Menengah classification* (2005: 25), the minimum completeness criteria for students is 70. It was found when the students studied descriptive text in the class, most of them did not competent to writing English text well. Many students difficult to write were related to the content, organization, mechanic, grammar, vocabulary.

The students found a difficulty to express their ideas when they were asked to write a text especially to think about what they should write as the first sentences in their paragraph. As the result, students writing was very short. Another difficulty was related with the organization. The students still made mistakes in sequencing in their ideas into a coherent paragraph. So, some of the students writings were not well sequenced and some of their also confused the readers. In this case, the students have to writing well and the teacher must select the suitable technique, media, strategies or approach to teach it.

In order to solve the problem and to improve the students achievements in writing skill especially in descriptive text, the teacher should make the media to make learning process in the classroom become more interesting and even fun. One of them is using Picture Series. According to Alex in Muna (2016) "Picture Series is one of the media that is support the process of brainstorming during the process of writing as visual aids that stimulate to provide inspiration to express something". Picture series contains the series of pictures forming a story. Kreidler in Nurkamri (2014) states, "A series of pictures can be used as cues for the retelling of a story." Picture series guided them to write and compose each pharagraph. Wright (1988) states that pictures are very important in helping

students to retell experiences or understand something since they can represent place, object, people, etc. In addition, picture series also have many benefits such as to stimulate the ideas and to engage the students in learning. Furthermore, it is also easy to be prepared and relatively adjustable to be used for various ages of learners and purpose.

## **METHODOLOGY**

Writing is one of the key skills that language learners must acquire not only during their studies but also in later professional life. Writing can be defined in many ways. There are several definitions of handwriting provided by experts. Writing is not the same as speaking because when we speak, our communication happens naturally. We speak our words directly to the target, but when we use writing as a means of communication, we can see our language and verify it. As Meyers said, writing is a way of making language happen naturally when someone speaks. Mayers (2005:1) said writing is also a process of finding and organizing ideas, putting them on paper, reshaping and editing them.

### **Descriptive Text**

Descriptive texts are texts that are intended to explain, describe, tell or even describe something in detail and thoroughly. And what is described or described can be in any form, such as people, animals, objects, places, etc. And often, descriptive writing focuses on a specific audience. The item is then clarified or rewritten in the description text so that the reader or listener can know or understand the item being described. According to Mukarto (2007), descriptive writing is a type of writing that describes something. Descriptive writing means describing something, a place, or a person to make the reader feel like they are writing. According to Kane (2000:352), the description is defined in a broader sense as follows: The sensory experiences of the look, the sound, and the taste of something are what describe it. Although mainly focused on visual experience, description also deals with other forms of perception.

### **Picture Series**

Picture as visual aids will attract students attention and motivate them to learn. In addition, using series of picture means that the students try to connect the plot in the picture to be a link of story. Brown (2004) stated that picture can be used in many stages of the instructional process, to introduce and motivate study of new topics, to clarify misconceptions, to communicate basic information, and to evaluate students progress and achievement. And suggest some ways of using pictures for ensuring maximum students benefit from using them. Using pictures can be an effective technique for any proficiency level or language skill.

The advantages that will be get by using picture series in improving students' writing skill on descriptive text. They are :

- a. Picture create the enjoyment in the writing process.

The use of picture series is one successful way to motivate students in learning English writing. It is an interesting way for the students. Teaching writing by using picture series provides the motivation for students to

write. Picture series can be used as device to create students' enjoyable feeling in the writing process. When the students' environment is fun, they will be fear and more confident to share their feeling, ideas, and thoughts in writing. Then the result in writing their descriptive.

- b. Picture series develop students' creativity in writing "a picture is worth a thousand words". Students can develop their stories based on picture series they see freely. This activity leads them to think about what they have never thought before. Students have to create their own stories by using picture they have.
- c. Picture series can increase students vocabulary  
Picture series are suitable media to introduce new english vocabulary to the students. They are also the appropriate media for teaching and learning process, especially when these media are given in the right technique to make the learning activity runs well.

On the other hand, there are some disadvantages sides of using picture series to teach writing descriptive text to the students. They are:

- a. The students sometimes cannot connect one picture to another by their own words although there have been a series of pictures.
- b. Students are not able to use oral language skill effectively. In this case, students find difficulties in presenting their writing in front of the class. They cannot present their stories fluently and communicatively. Therefore, teachers need to give the chances for the students to practice dialog or monolog in the stories they made before.
- c. The teachers do not have enough time to teach and evaluate the writing process. In the writing process, students are given such picture series to be done into descriptive text. Students have to work by their own. Teachers only give them some important rules which are usually become unclear directions.

This research will explain how to improve students' writing skills in descriptive text using a series of images with the classroom action research (CAR) method. This research consists of four steps: planning, acting, observing and reflecting. According to (Kartika and Suhartono 2013), the main goal of action research in the classroom is to identify a problematic situation or problem in which the participants, which may include teachers, students, administrators, , administrators, or even parents, consider it worthy of a more thorough and systematic examination. This research is done by the teacher in the class to find out some problems. The research participants were 8th graders of Pematangsiantar Middle School in the academic year 2022/2023, including 32 students. To collect data, the researcher used pre-test, out-of-field test, and post-test. In the process of writing, students need to observe the five sides of the handwriting to write correctly and beautifully. Based on (Hidayatul 2019), the five aspects of writing are content, organization, grammar, style, and mechanism. Hypothetical testing involves collecting data from a relatively small number of respondents using the data collection procedures specified for the study. Prior

testing was performed at the first appointment prior to CAR treatment. A pre-test is administered to determine a student's score range in the writing section. To know the student's writing skill score before processing. Pre-testing was performed on Jan 11, 2023 in cycle 1 and Jan 26, 2023 in cycle 2. Pre-test was performed on 10 items in cycle 1 and cycle 2 event of each meeting. . Field notes are used to view the activities and reactions of students in class in more detail about the teaching activity. It includes student interaction and activity while teaching writing using a series of classroom pictures. The following test was given to measure the success of the students after the treatment. The research conducted a test after conducting research through series of images. It aims to assess their achievement in writing skills, especially in descriptive text. Post-audit was performed on February 1, 2023 of cycle 1 and February 8, 2023. Post-test was performed on 10 items of cycle 1 and cycle 2.

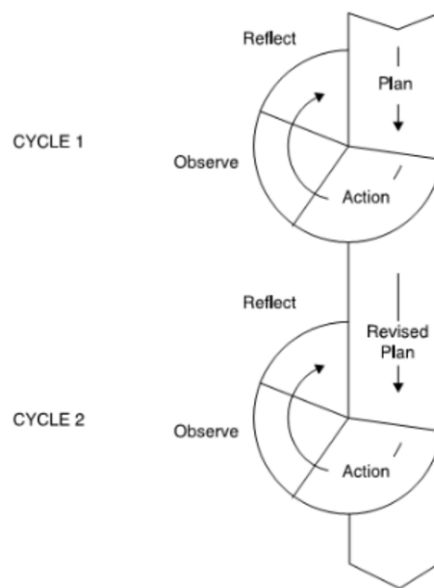


Figure 1. Cycling Process of Classroom Action Research based on Kemmis and Mc Taggart 1998

## RESEARCH RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Table 1. Cycle 1

<b>Planning</b>	The researchers went to the school to ask permission to research and discuss the schedule with teachers. Then, the researcher and the teacher discuss the program and the lesson plan.
<b>Acting</b>	The researchers entered the classroom and presented the series of images to the class. The researchers explain the series of images and how to use them in descriptive text. The researchers asked students to write a descriptive passage as a test to gauge the students' writing ability by looking at a picture of a famous character.

<b>Observing</b>	The researcher used field notes to observe student activities and observe students' reactions to teaching by writing descriptive text use series of photos.
<b>Reflecting</b>	The researcher make analysis and conclusion from observed the students. Researchers evaluate the implementation Picture Series in the writing descriptive text in first cycle.

Table 2.Cycle 2

<b>Planning</b>	Researchers prepare lesson plan and the tests instrument for teaching material.
<b>Acting</b>	Researchers enter the classroom. Researchers teaching and explain the material with Picture Series again. Researchers share a worksheet for students. Researchers arrange the students to made paragraph of descriptive text from the picture of public figure who have shown some adjectives from the picture in the worksheet as a test to assess the student skills.
<b>Observing</b>	Researcher used field notes to observed students activity and observed respond of students in the class.
<b>Reflecting</b>	Researcher discuss with the teacher that the study had been completed. Researcher was made the result from observation of improvement students in the writing descriptive text using Picture Series.

Table 3. Improvement on the Student Score of the Test

	<b>Pre-test</b>	<b>Post-Test 1</b>	<b>Post-Test 2</b>
<b>Minimum Score</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>75</b>
<b>Maximum Score</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>85</b>
<b>Mean Score</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>80</b>

The data in the table above explains why students still have difficulty writing tests. In the mock test, students can only write one to three descriptive sentences. It is because students lack knowledge about adjectives and how to organize sentences. After the writer corrected the students with a series of pictures and gave them more knowledge about adjectives, some students began to understand and were able to organize sentences into paragraphs, however some students still having difficulty. From the data of test 1, we can see that the minimum score for the student's writing ability in the class is 60 and the maximum score is 80. Then the writer tried to process more and the student's descriptive writing ability can be improved with a minimum score of 75 and a maximum score of 85 on post-test 2. This may be possible explains that series of pictures can improve students' ability to write descriptive text.

## **CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

The researchers began this research by preparing textbooks and instructional materials such as syllabuses, lesson plans, test materials, and class schedules. And after entering the classroom, the researchers performed an activity from before activity to after activity. In the pre-operational phase, researchers prepare teaching strategies and prepare students for classroom participation. Next, the researcher applies a series of images to teach how to write descriptive paragraphs. For the task, the researcher concludes with the students about the material and the effect of a series of pictures on improving students' writing skills. The skills in writing descriptive text of students could be improved by using Picture Series. This could be proven from the study conducted by the researcher used Classroom Action Research (CAR) in two cycles. Researcher can prove improvement the ability of students from the results of pre-test, post-test 1, and post-test 2 which shows the improvement in students ability. And by teaching used Picture Series students are also interested in learning writing descriptive text.

## **ADVANCED RESEARCH**

In writing this article the researcher realizes that there are still many shortcomings in terms of language, writing, and form of presentation considering the limited knowledge and abilities of the researchers themselves. Therefore, for the perfection of the article, the researcher expects constructive criticism and suggestions from various parties.

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