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Using Pictures to Enhance Descriptive Text Writing Skills for Ninth Grade Students at Smpk Muder Teresa Kupang in the School Year 2023/2024

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ABSTRACT

Background. Language is a symbol of sound that serves as a means of communication. Language is the primary means for humans to communicate and interact with one another. In other words, language is the symbolic system used to convey information. According to Richards & Schmidt

Purpose. This study aims to determine whether there is a significant effect of using pictures in teaching descriptive writing to ninth grade students at SMPK Muder Teresa Kupang in the 2023/2024 academic year. This pre-experimental study used a pre-test-treatment-post-test design. It used 2 cycles of pre-test-post-test and used tests as instruments.

Method. The research study was carried out during the 2023–2024 academic year's first semester. It was carried out from July to December 2023 at SMPK Muder Teresa Kupang. It began with preliminary observation and ended with the use of pictures to help the Grade IX students' writing abilities.

Results. This study involved five students who were in grade IX at SMPK Muder Teresa Kupang. The research data was collected by giving students a descriptive text written test before and after the test. According to the data analysis, this study found that there was a significant difference between the pre-test and post-test. This shows that the use of picture technique in teaching writing can help students better in writing, especially in writing descriptive text.

Conclusion. Based on those findings, it can be said that using a series of pictures is a useful strategy for helping junior high school students, particularly those in the ninth grade at SMPK Muder Teresa Kupang, improve their writing skills.

KEYWORDS

Descriptive Text, Giving Students, Writing Skills

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INTRODUCTION

Language is a symbol of sound that serves as a means of communication (Leonardi & Raggi, 2019). Language is the primary means for humans to communicate and interact with one another. In other words, language is the symbolic system used to convey information. According to Richards & Schmidt (De Fruyt dkk., 2020), “language is a communication system which In addition, Fromkin, Rodman, Hyams (2003: 8) states that as follows:

is consisted of structured arrangement of sound into larger unit, (e.g. Morphemes, words, Sentences, and Utterances)” (Gilmour dkk., 2019). “Being able to combine words to form phrases and phrases to form sentences is made possible by language proficiency (Celeste dkk., 2019). Since no dictionary can contain a list of every possible sentence, you cannot purchase a dictionary that contains every sentence in any language (Graham, 2019). Speaking and understanding new sentences that have never been heard or produced before are signs of language proficiency”.

Furthermore, Patel & Jain (2008: 6) said, “The term "international language" applied to English as a global language for dialect communication as well as the shift toward an international language standard” (Keramat Kar dkk., 2019). Thus, English is included as an important subject in every curriculum used in every country that speaks English as a foreign language, including Indonesia (Ezeamuzie & Leung, 2022). In today's world, English is the most commonly used formal language (Asad dkk., 2021). English played an important role in both our educational system and national life.

One way to convey and express ideas and emotions in English is through writing (Kuhn, 2019). According to Harmer (2004), writing is a form of communication that conveys thoughts and emotions. To enhance their written communication abilities, language learners ought to acquire writing skills.

The Indonesian school curriculum (Kurikulum 2013) covers various types of text, including descriptive, narrative, recount, report, and procedure writing (O’Loughlin & Griffith, 2020). Students are expected to write descriptive texts as part of their English language learning. A text conveys a writer's intended image to readers.

Descriptive text is defined by Mukarto (2012) as text that describes a person, object, or place. Identification and description are a descriptive text's two primary elements.

Descriptive texts follow a generic structure for identification. The first paragraph introduces what will be described (Zhao dkk., 2020). After identifying the object, descriptive text will display its description. Description paragraphs can include physical characteristics, values, usage, and functions (Alam dkk., 2020). Descriptive text writing serves various purposes, and using appropriate details can enhance the main idea (Abu Saa dkk., 2019). A successful description has a purpose, according to Dietsch (2003) (Andra dkk., 2023): providing details to support the thesis or point of the description so the reader will understand it.

Many students find it difficult to write better in English, especially when it comes to descriptive texts. Students frequently struggled with using present tense and distinguishing between generic structures in descriptive text (Cao dkk., 2020). Additionally, due to their limited vocabulary, they struggle to express themselves in writing. As a result, students often made mistakes when writing descriptive texts (Adekitan & Salau, 2019). To address current issues, researchers should use pictures as a means of encouraging students to improve their writing skills, particularly in descriptive text (Leithwood dkk., 2020). Using pictures improves student participation and interaction in learning activities. Using pictures as a medium in teaching helps students develop their imagination and enhances their learning experience.

It was said by Wright (2002: 2) that "many language teachers are as concerned with helping their students develop as individuals and in their ability to relate to others as they are with helping them develop the foreign language skills” (Agus Triansyah dkk., 2023). Then, Wright stated on the same page, "It is crucial to have a broad variety of resources available in the classroom to give the students a rich foundation and stimulation for this development. Pictures must also be included in the resources”.

Next, the following five criteria, as stated by Wright (2002: 2-3), offer a means of determining whether or not to use an activity, regardless of whether it is a traditional drill or a picture-based game. Wright, 2002: 16 therefore, it can be said that images have a particularly significant impact on language learning's content and methodology (Zou & Xie, 2019). In the rest of the book, examples are given of what picture can contribute to the classroom and how they can be used. Several functions of pictures in writing and speaking, as stated by Wright (2002: 17), are listed below;

1. Students can be motivated by pictures, which will encourage them to pay attention and participate.
2. An image may help to clarify the language's context. The world (a street scene or a specific object, like a train) is brought into the classroom by them.

3. The images can be objectively described as "this is a train," subjectively taken as "this is probably a local train," or explained as "I like traveling by train."
4. Through deliberate practice, picture can cue answers to inquiries or cue substitutions.
5. Images can spark discussion and offer information that can be referred to in narratives and conversations..

Based on the definition above, the researcher can conclude that the picture had some benefits in order to increase the students motivation in how the students learn to write and speaking as what Wright stated above that the picture had many things that could be contribute to get the students attention on teaching and learning process as one of the pictures benefit above.

Therefore, as stated by Chairena (2007: 13-14) that "The goal of using pictures in writing instruction is to actually make it easier for students to learn and communicate their ideas" (Kineber dkk., 2020). According to the definition given above, for instance, if students are asked to write about a famous person or artist, or about a fascinating location like Sanur Beach, Kuta Beach, etc., they will become perplexed if some of them have never been (Zaccoletti dkk., 2020). They are unable to adequately convey its essence (Zhang dkk., 2020). Students will struggle to write sentences or paragraphs without pictures because it could take them a long time to convey an idea that is relevant to the subject (Behzadi & Gajdacs, 2021). For this reason, just by looking at the pictures, students can readily get ideas.

The process of teaching and learning is seen as an integrated one. It implies that the roles played by each participant in the teaching and learning process will determine the final product (Dębska dkk., 2019). Thus, Chairena (2007: 10) stated that To make teaching and learning easier, media or instructional aids are essential. In order to solve a range of issues and support the attainment of the educational goal, using instructional media calls for innovative thinking.

1. Attractive attention
2. Developing interest
3. Adjusting the learning climate
4. Increasing understanding
5. Promoting acceptance (of an idea)
6. Introducing hands on and interactive activities.

The researcher can determine that the image is one of the media that is used to support the teaching and learning process when teaching writing in the classroom based on the definition given above.

As stated by Ramadani (2013: 22) description is writing about the way persons, animals, or things appear (Hefferman and Lincoln, 1986:83). Consequently, a text that describes a person, location, or object is considered descriptive (Gour dkk., 2021). Try to be as detailed and accurate as you can when describing someone or something. The reader's senses can be drawn to a person, place, or object by carefully observing and documenting particular details about it.

"The two parts of a descriptive description are (1) identification, which identifies the phenomenon to be described, and (2) description, which describes its components, attributes, and features (Graham dkk., 2021). Then come the descriptive language characteristics, which include the following: (1) focusing on particular participants; (2) using identifying and attributive processes; and (3) using the simple present tense" According to Ramadani (2013: 22) (Bjerkvik & Hilli, 2019). Who stated that the traits of a descriptive essay are "elaborate use of sensory language, focus on specific participants, rich, vivid, and lively series of words, and use of simple present tense." Body paragraphs with topic sentences and other sentences that contain sufficient evidence, sensory details, and comparisons to support the dominant impression (Vaillancourt dkk., 2021). The final section of the description is the conclusion. An effective conclusion draws the essay together and strengthens the main idea.

According to Oshima and Hogue (2007: 61), By describing something's appearance, texture, taste, smell, or sound, a descriptive text stimulates the senses (Joubert dkk., 2019). Descriptive text is defined as "detailed information used to describe specific people, places, and objects (Toropova dkk., 2021). The reader must be able to picture the subject of the description in order for descriptive writing to be effective. The

claim made by Oshima and Hogue (2007: 61) that "a good description is a good picture; the reader can imagine the object, place, or person in his or her mind" is supported by this.

The following characteristics of descriptive text are present::

1. Giving specific details about particular individuals, locations, and objects is the aim of descriptive writing.
2. Descriptive texts follow a generic structure of identification and description. Identification is the introduction of sentences about the object to be described, whereas description is the brief detail information of the object's parts, qualities, and characteristics.

Descriptive text should allow readers to visualise the location being described. When describing a location, one must first describe another aspect of the location (Harrop dkk., 2021). Descriptive writing appeals to the senses, so it describes how something appears, feels, smells, tastes, or sounds. A word picture is an effective way to describe something (Matsumoto, 2021). The reader can mentally visualise the object, location, or person. Descriptive writing is used to enhance a writer's work, such as creating a mood or atmosphere, or describing a location to help readers visualise characters, objects, and so on (Lazarides & Buchholz, 2019). Here are the characteristics of descriptive writing, which can be useful for engaging readers, creating characters, setting moods, and bringing writing to life.

METHOD

The research study was carried out during the 2023–2024 academic year's first semester. It was carried out from July to December 2023 at SMPK Muder Teresa Kupang. It began with preliminary observation and ended with the use of pictures to help the Grade IX students' writing abilities.

Classroom action research was used in this study. Classroom action research, as defined by Ary et al. (2010: 512), consists of both action research and research based on action. The purpose of this study was to address issues with the teaching and learning of writing and to enhance the writing abilities of five ninth-grade students at SMPK Muder Teresa Kupang (Kruse, 2019). The researcher actively participated in the study. Six meetings were needed to complete the treatment. Writing tests is the tool used to gather data. Each student was required to compose a descriptive text on their own. The qualitative data were the main focus of this study. Planning, acting, observing, and reflecting are all steps in the action research process. In analyzing the numerical data, the writer used descriptive analysis technique. First the writer tried to get the average of student's writing ability per action within one cycle. It was used to know how well student's score as a whole on writing. Then, the researcher analyzed the qualitative data by assembled, coded, compared and reported the outcomes.

FINDING AND DISCUSSION

The researcher conducted six meetings, two for the pretest and post-test and four for the treatment, to assess the impact of using pictures on students' writing abilities. Students were required to write a descriptive text during the pre-test and post-test. The results showed that their writing ability remained low. Only a few students performed well on the pretest. During the pre-test, some students copied their classmates' work. Furthermore, some of the students were reluctant to write because they were insecure and worried about making mistakes. Their vocabulary was quite small. Furthermore, the majority of their writings were grammatically incorrect, with many of the words spelt incorrectly.

Five students in grade IX took the test. The table below shows a detailed breakdown of the students' Pre-test scores.

The Students Score of Pre-test

No	The Code of Students	Scores
1	ETH	50
2	YFN	40
3	YBN	50
4	MR	60
5	MTR	60
Σ		260

$$\text{Mean: } \bar{X} = \frac{\Sigma x}{n}$$

$$\bar{X} = \frac{260}{5} = 52$$

In order to make it more about the explanation of the students' score of Pre-test above, the researcher interpreted the categorize of the students' ability level. The interpretation of the students ability level could be seen in the table as presented bellow.

Interpretation of the Students Score of Pre-test Result

	F	%	Cumulative Percent
Valid Fair	2	40	40.0
Poor	2	40	60.0
very poor	1	20	100.0
Total	5	100.0	

Based on the table above the researcher can conclude that there were 2 (40%) out of 5 students were classified into fair category of their ability level, while 2 (40%) out of 5 students were classified into poor ability level and there was only one (20%) out of 5 students classified into very poor level ability.

In short, the researcher described the results of the pre-test and post-test to determine whether teaching descriptive text using pictures was successful and whether the score was significantly increased for ninth grade students at SMPK Muder Teresa Kupang. The researcher described the students' pre-test, post-test 1, and post-test 2 scores in table below:

The Interpretation of the Students Score of Pre-test, Post-test 1 and the Post-test 2 result

No	Students	Pre-test	Post-test1	Post-test 2	Mean
1	ETH	50	70	80	66.67
	YFN	40	65	75	60
3	YBN	50	70	75	65
4	MR	60	75	85	73.33
5	MTR	60	70	90	73.33
	$\bar{X} = \frac{\Sigma X}{n}$	$\bar{X} = \frac{260}{5}$ = 52	$\bar{X} = \frac{350}{5}$ = 70	$\bar{X} = \frac{405}{5}$ = 81	

With the successful completion of the complementary actions and the application of pictures, the research goal was met.

CONCLUSION

Based on those findings, it can be said that using a series of pictures is a useful strategy for helping junior high school students, particularly those in the ninth grade at SMPK Muder Teresa Kupang, improve their writing skills. The use of picture can improve the students' writing ability of descriptive text for the ninth grade students at SMPK Muder Teresa Kupang in the school year 2023/2024. This could be proven by the students' achievement increased from the score of pre-test 50 raised to 70 for the post-test I in the cycle 1 and 81 for the score of post-test II in the cycle II. Besides the increasing of the students' score in writing ability that was higher than KKM from the school at SMPK Muder Teresa Kupang, the use of picture also can motivate the students to build a corporation among the students to study or learn English as the foreign language.

AUTHORS' CONTRIBUTION

Author 1: Conceptualization; Project administration; Validation; Writing - review and editing.

Author 2: Conceptualization; Data curation; In-vestigation.

Author 3: Data curation; Investigation.

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