

## **THE ADVANTAGES OF USING PICTURES IN TEACHING WRITING**

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### **Abstract**

*Writing skill is used as an alternative skill to develop students' ideas. Teaching writing by using pictures has many advantages such as (1) the students became more motivated to learn (2) the students could get better ideas to write (3) the students could be better to understand several basic techniques of writing and (4) the teachers became more motivated to make innovations in teaching writing and (5) the teaching – learning became more effective.*

**Keywords:** *Advantages, Pictures, Writing skill.*

### **INTRODUCTION**

English as an international language is used in many countries as a means of communication. It is taught in Indonesia as a foreign language from elementary up to university level. It plays an important role in the world of politics, business and trade. A great deal of works of science, economy and technology are written in English. There are four important skills in English. They are listening, speaking, reading and writing. Writing is one of the language skills which is very important for the students to learn since it is one of productive skills that is frequently used to convey ideas (to communicate with the other) besides speaking. Writing is not a simple process, it is not the act of picking up a pencil and forming letters.

Writing skill is regarded as the most difficult and complex language skill because it requires extent of perception and involves thinking process extensively. In teaching and learning process of writing, there are some kinds of media: visual media, audio media and audiovisual media used to improve the students' writing skill. Media is kind of tools used to deliver information from sender to receivers which can attract their mind, feeling, attention and interest of the students.

Since writing sometimes looks very difficult, it makes the students lazy in developing writing activities. When teachers taught English they found many problems. First, the student's hadlack of vocabulary and lack of understanding of English grammar. Second, the students did not know what

they are going to write. Third, when the students of that school were asked to do writing assignment, they felt reluctant to do that. Four, low motivation in learning English is one of the factors that cause the lack of students' writing skill.

## **DISCUSSION**

### **Definition of Writing**

There are some definition of writing that are taken from resources, According to Harmer (2004: 40), writing is frequently useful as preparation for some other activity, in particular when students write sentences as a preamble to discussion activities. Richard (2003: 9) states that writing is a way of sharing personal meanings and writing course emphasize the power of the individual to construct his or her own views on a topic. Vicky (2005: 6) writing is a complex process and most of the research literature recognizes the difficulty it process for students. It seems reasonable to expect, then, that the teaching of writing is complex as well. Writing can be concluded as a skill to express ideas, thoughts and memories into written form; either from sentence, paragraph or composition which need some practice done step by step.

### **Problems in Teaching Writing**

Richard (2002: 303) states that writing is the most difficult skill for second language learners to master. The difficulty lies not only in generating and organizing ideas, but also in translating these ideas into readable text. Brown (2001: 341) mentions that the thorniest problems in writing are how specific words, phrases, sentences, and paragraphs will be interpreted.

Byrne (1993: 4-5) points out that students' problems in writing are divided into three problems: psychological problems, linguistic problems, and cognitive problems. The first one is psychological problem. Psychological problems refer to the writing as a single activity without the possibility of interaction or benefit feedback for interlocutor. The second is linguistic problem. Linguistic problems relate to the problem in the coherency and the choice of sentence structure in order the text that is produced can be interpreted by the readers. The third is cognitive problem. Cognitive problems refer to the assumption that writing is learnt through a process of instruction. Writing is unlike speaking which does not need much conscious effort or thought. Speaking is spontaneous but writing is a hard work. Therefore, students sometimes lose their ideas in the process of writing.

### **Stages in Writing**

According to Vicky (2005: 12), there are five stages in writing, they are:

#### **Planning or Prewriting**

Planning or prewriting is an activity of writing that aimed to encourage and stimulate the students to write. Since its function is to stimulate students'

ideas to write, the writing activities must be prepared to provide them learning experiences of writing.

### **Drafting**

At this stage, the students will focus on the fluency of writing and write without having much attention to the accuracy of their works. During the process of writing, the students must also focus on the content and the meaning of the writing.

### **Revising**

The students review and reexamine the text to see how effectively they have communicated their ideas to the reader. Revising is not a simply activity of checking language errors but it is done to improve global content and organization of the ideas so the writer's intention is clearer for the reader.

### **Editing**

At this stage, the students are focused on tidying up their works as they prepare the final draft to be evaluated by the teacher. The main activity done by the students at this stage is editing their mistakes on grammar, spelling, punctuation, sentences, diction and etc.

### **The Tasks of the Teacher in Writing**

According to Harmer (2004: 41 - 42), when helping students to become better writers, teachers have a number of crucial tasks to perform. This is especially true when students are doing writing for writing activities, where they may be reluctant to express themselves or have difficulty finding ways and means of expressing themselves to their satisfaction. Among the tasks which teacher have to perform before, during and after students' writing are following:

#### 1. Demonstrating

It is a need for the students to be able to understand writing conventions and genre constraints of particular types of writing. As a result, the teacher has to be able to draw the two features to their attentions.

#### 2. Motivation and Provoking

It is difficult for some of the students to write in English. Besides, they sometimes have no idea of the words used to write their messages. This is the situation where teachers can help them by provoking them to get the ideas and then persuading them to work on their writing.

#### 3. Supporting

In the process of writing, teachers become the main supporters for the students when they are writing in classroom, especially when the students face difficulties. They must be available and well prepared to help them solve the difficulties. Thus, the students will be motivated in doing their writing.

#### 4.

#### 5. Responding

Responding refers to how the teachers react to the students' writing works. Content and construction are the focus of this task. After looking at the writing works produced by the students, the teachers can give feedbacks or suggestions for the students' improvement in writing.

#### 6. Evaluating

This task refers to how the teachers will evaluate the students' writing works and then grade them. This is done by the teachers to see the students' progress in writing.

### **Definitions of Pictures**

Pictures in the classroom can represent situation which would be impossible to create in any other ways. According to Harmer (2001: 134), picture is one of the varieties of teaching aids which is used to explain language meaning and construction, engage students in a topic or as the basis of a whole activity. Brown (2001: 143) states that picture is an excellent device for providing both a purpose and content for writing. It is not only provides the taste with the basic materials for this composition but stimulate the imaginative power. He stated that pictures are old fashioned but those are very helpful as media in an instruction.

Pictures have been used for centuries to help students understand various aspect of foreign languages. The pictures have motivated the students in ways that the subjects they are dealing with become more easily understood. The pictures can illustrate the general idea and forms of an object or action which are particular to a culture.

### **Pictures as Teaching Media**

Media is kind of substances that is used by a teacher during teaching and learning process to support the presentation of the lesson. Media has important roles in teaching and learning process. Students' motivation can be increased by using media especially in teaching English writing. Media which is used should be easy to be understood and known by the students in order to help them mastering the material or competence which is being taught.

One of media which is widely used in teaching is pictures. Pictures is one of the teaching media that can make the students enjoy the lesson. For example, the students are given pictures during the lesson in order to make the learning environment more comfortable and enjoyable. It is very simple visual aids that can be picked up from the magazine, newspaper, book, calendar, etc.

### **Definition of Descriptive Text**

The definition of Descriptive text including its generic structure will be discussed as follow: Haines (2007:42) states that description is an account that creates a vivid mental image. The key to writing a good description is to use details that help the reader imagine the person the students are describing. According to Anderson (1997: 56), descriptive text is different from

information reports because they described a specific subject rather than general group. Hammoud (2010:121) states that descriptive text is a text to describe and reveal a particular person, place or thing. Descriptive text stretch out many information about certain place, things and place clearly and detail.

### **Structure of Descriptive Text**

Anderson (1997: 9) states that features of a factual description have regarded as following generic structure of descriptive text.

#### **Identification**

Identification (introduction) is a general opening statement in the first paragraph or the first sentence that introduces the subject of the description to the audience. Besides, it can give the audience brief details about the when, where, who, or what of the subject described.

#### **Description**

Description is a series of paragraphs about the subject where each paragraph usually begins with a topic sentence. The topic sentence previews the detail that will be contained in the remainder of the paragraph. Moreover, each paragraph should describe one feature of the subject and all paragraphs build the description of the subject. The description can be physical appearance of the subject, the qualities of the subject like degree of beauty, excellence or value, and other characteristics of the subject which is like the unique of the special aspects.

#### **Conclusion**

A conclusion is not absolutely necessary however, it is often very helpful to the reader because it usually concludes signals the end of the text. In addition, it reminds the reader of the important point or in other word it is to emphasize the reader to imagine the subject.

#### **Tools**

To get the data in this study were used observation to observe the teaching learning conducted by English teacher in the classroom including English teacher's activity, the students' activities, interaction in the classroom while the teaching learning process and students' responses during the teaching learning process. The questionnaire was purposed for the students, it was aimed to find out the students' personal opinion or self-expression. In the preliminary observation, questionnaire was used to know the students prior competence and their problems faced in writing. It included the problem faced by the English teacher in planning the material design and implementing the teaching learning process. Interview conducted and given to English teachers to know how the teachers teach, what media or technique used in teaching writing descriptive text and what the advantages of using pictures in seventh grade students of junior high school by some questions that had been designed to get the information needed.

### ***Procedure***

The steps that are used in this study as follows: The first step was inquiry. In this stage, the research began with formulating study questions. Based on the study questions, the flow of the study was analyzed in a setting. In the second step, the various kinds of information were figured out and the data were collected through observation, interview and questionnaire. Moreover, the condition in school was explored by questionnaire to have a clear situation in the class and interviewing the English teacher to explore more information. The third step was data analysis in which the data were analyzed based on relevant theories. In addition, the claim of finding or conclusion was gained as the result of the study.

### **Teaching Implementation of Using Pictures in Teaching Writing Descriptive Text**

Sometimes, students found it hard to understand the materials were given by the teacher since the teacher usually used the conventional technique which bored the students. Hence, the teacher needed to use and applied some techniques that would motivate the students during teaching learning process. Here were some of the techniques used by teachers to teach descriptive text in the classroom.

#### **Clustering Technique**

According to Hogue (1996: 91-92) clustering is one of the technique to generate the ideas like brainstorming technique. This technique is by writing down the ideas that relate to the topic. In brainstorming technique, write down the ideas in a list, but in clustering technique, write down the ideas in circles around the topic. Then, generate the ideas and write down in smaller circles. By using clustering technique, it can be seen which one the ideas that can be used. The clusters that have little circles or branches can be deleted, and use the clusters that have many circles in order to the ideas can be improved.

#### **Guided Questions**

Guided questions are techniques which for teaching English in which the teacher gave some questions to the students applied to a topic in teaching writing. Guided questions can help the students to explore their idea in learning writing skill. The teacher generate ideas and details by asking question about the subject. Such questions include why, when, where, who, and how.

#### **Group Discussion**

Teachers can use a single picture as a media for the students in explaining something. From the picture, the students will get the ideas in writing their composition and whiteboard in front of the class and then ask the students to describe the picture or ask the students to make a simple

composition based on the picture. Besides that, the teacher can also give some pictures to some groups of the students.

In each group, the students were asked to make a simple paragraph or a simple composition related to the picture given. The student might cooperate with other students from the same group in making their assignment. After that the teacher discussed the result of all the groups' works. Here, the teacher made some corrections to the students' mistakes, if any.

### **Advantages of Using Pictures in Teaching Writing Descriptive Text**

The use of picture can help the teaching and learning process run well. The used of pictures in the teaching and learning process is very important. The students can understand easily what is happening in the pictures as they provide material that offer guidance on vocabulary, sentence structure, and organization yet lets the students write about new subject matter. The more distinct advantages of using pictures in teaching writing has been explained below.

#### **The improvement of Students' Ability in Writing Descriptive Text**

Most students felt that they had more understand about descriptive text. The students could develop the content and organize the ideas into a good text based on the pictures. The students also made some progress in their vocabulary.

#### **The improvement of Teaching Learning Situation**

The implementation of pictures can improve the teaching learning situation effectively. On the other hand, the teacher focuses on process writing in the teaching learning process. The students felt happy when pictures implemented in teaching writing descriptive text because they got another one enjoyable technique in writing descriptive text although some of them still made crowded when the teacher explained the lesson. Dealing with the process writing itself, the teacher led the students to follow the stages on the writing process started from prewriting, writing, revising, and editing. During the process, the teacher gave clear instructions. The teacher followed the stages of the writing process.

#### **The improvement of Students' Personal Competence**

The implementation of pictures can improve the students' personal competence. In this research personal competence refers to some indicators such as students' interest, self-confidence and self-motivation. First, students' interest has been increased by the teacher through giving them understanding and new thing or media especially on writing lesson. They felt happy and easy to understand to write descriptive text by implementing the pictures.

Second, self-confidence is a strong sense of one's self worth and capabilities. In this research, the students felt more confidence with their writing although their writing was still imperfect. They felt satisfied because they could create their own descriptive text based on the picture. Third,

motivation is that it is a description of a person's motivate to action. Motivation of students is very important in teaching learning process. The student's motivation on follow the lesson is very basic aspect of student's success on their study, the student's motivation derived from students itself, motivation from teacher or friends. Motivation could be seen that the students felt motivated in joining the teaching learning process. They felt very happy especially with the activity that they never did before. They were actively involved in the teaching learning process. In the teaching learning process, the teacher could bring the situation of learning become alive.

### **The Improvement of Supporting Teacher Students Interaction**

The activeness of students can be built by increasing the student's confidence with all components in the classroom such as student's interaction with the teacher to make the students active and attractive. The presence of the pictures as interesting pictures, in this research also facilitated the interaction between the students and the teacher. Most of them (approximately more than half the class) were actively involved in the learning process, making comments or asking questions about the instruction as well as about the pictures, whether to the teacher or to their classmates.

### **The Influences of Using Pictures in Teaching Writing Descriptive Text**

The study discovered that the used of pictures combined by other teaching techniques showed a remarkable improvement in students' writing ability. The result of students' writing showed many improvements by the new teaching techniques applied by the teacher. Pictures used in teaching leaning process had successfully reduced student's anxiety and increase their confident to write. There were some improvements on students learning behavior. The improvement showed the students' enthusiast and students' creativity. Students tended to hesitate to do writing task because writing was considered the most difficult step in language acquisition. The early observation of the students showed that they had no motivation in writing English passage, however, after the teacher introduced media, they had shown a remarkable advancement in their writing skill.

## **CONCLUSION**

Writing is one of the most important skills in learning language besides speaking, listening and reading. In the teaching and learning of writing skill, there are constraints faced by both teachers and students. As for example, the students face difficulties in expressing ideas because of their less writing practice. On the other hand, media provided by teachers are monotonous and of a limited range. As a result, the students cannot develop their writing skill optimally.

Pictures had many benefits for the students. First, pictures are used in teaching writing as a way to overcome student's boredom and increasing



student's comprehensive knowledge of English writing skill. Second, the use of pictures in teaching writing makes the teaching learning become more effective, more flexible and more interesting. Third, Pictures can be used to improve the students' mastery on grammar, vocabulary and ideas to write or develop in writing.

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