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THE USE OF DIGITAL PICTURE SERIES AS MEDIA OF IMPROVING WRITING SKILL THROUGH RECOUNT TEXT PARAGRAPH IN ENGLISH WRITING CLASS

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Abstract

The ability of the second Semester students in writing paragraphs was still unsatisfactory. The students were unable to express their ideas in a good paragraph. They made a number of mistakes in their writing in terms of content, language use, and mechanism. To overcome this problem, the researcher proposed one of the appropriate strategies in the teaching of English recount writing using picture series.

The research, which aimed at improving the ability of the second semester students in writing recount paragraphs using picture series, employed Collaborative Classroom Action Research. Both the researcher and his collaborator worked together in planning, implementing, observing the action, and reflecting on the data collected from the teaching and learning process and the students' writing products. The subjects of this research were 35 students of Second semester in English Teaching Department. The study was conducted in two cycles, and each cycle was carried out in four meetings.

The findings indicate that using picture series had improved students' ability in writing recount paragraph. After the researcher conducted the first and second cycle, it was shown that the result of the second cycle improved. Only 6 of 35 students (17,15%) still received scores under the target score 60. The steps were: (1) the teacher gave the picture series to groups of four students, (2) the teacher explained Simple Past Tenses, vocabulary of irregular verbs, and plural nouns to the students to help them solve their problems in recount writing, and (3) the teacher provided the vocabulary of irregular verbs and plural nouns on sheets of paper that made their writing better.

Keywords: Picture Series, Writing Skill, Recount Text

1. INTRODUCTION

1.19 Background of Study

Writing is not an ability the students acquire naturally; even in their first language, it has to be taught. This means that if the English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners are not taught how to write in the new language, their writing skills will be left behind (Morley, 2005). However, teaching writing is not considered only teaching grammar, spelling, or the mechanics of the alphabet, but the learners should also see the new concepts of the use of the conventions of the genre in the new language.

In the teaching of writing, usually, the teacher encourages the students to transfer what they think or imagine into text types. The teacher can elaborate the strategy of teaching writing due to the situation the students face, and then the students use the strategy to improve their ability in writing. This activity forces both the teacher and the students to develop ideas into paragraphs.

Pictures as the instructional media are very useful for teaching English. One of the roles of media is to attract the students' attention and to deliver information (Kasbollah, 1995). The use of pictures as a visual media in the teaching learning process is intended to make the teaching learning more effective and efficient so that the quality of learning outcomes can be improved. So, in teaching writing, the teacher can use picture series to motivate the students to write and to give information for students in controlled work, to help, to stimulate and to guide students to write a paragraph.

Research studies that involve the use of pictures in teaching and learning writing have been conducted by some researchers. Lenjanu (2005), for example, conducted the development of picture series for the teaching of writing at junior high school. She concluded that after applying the picture series she had made, her students' progress in writing increased. In line with Lenjanu, Azhari (2004) applied many models of pictures in descriptive writing. Picture series of his research on the teaching of descriptive writing showed that the students' achievement in writing increased. The present research is similar to Azhari's research, that is, it relates to picture series to be applied in the teaching of recount writing.

b. Research problem

The research problem in this research can be formulated in a question form as follows: "How can the second semester students be improved in writing skill of recount text paragraph by using picture series?"

c. Reserch objective

According to the problem above this research is intended to improve writing skill of the second semester students' in writing recount paragraphs by using picture series

d. Research Significance

The research is expected to be useful for the students, teachers, the headmaster, and also for future researchers. For the students, the findings help them to improve their writing ability. For teachers, the findings enrich their teaching techniques to be applied. For the headmaster, the findings can be the bases to make a policy to other teachers to conduct classroom action researches on their own subjects.

2. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

a. Theory of Pictute Series

Pictures are familiar visual aids which have been used for ages by teachers in their teaching and learning processes. There are number of advantages the teachers can take from the use of pictures.

According to Latuheru (1988: 41) pictures have several functions in the teaching and learning processes. First, pictures can translate abstract ideas into more realistic forms. Second, pictures are easily obtained, for examples, from schoolbooks, newspapers, and magazines. Third, pictures are usable in different kinds of academic levels. Fourth, pictures can save the teacher's time and energy.

In supporting the above statement, Wright (1992) states that pictures are very important in helping students to retell experiences or understand something since they can represent place, object, people, etc. Pictures help students to understand a more general context, which may be made of pictures, the teachers' actions, the students' actions, sound effect and words. This overall context of new language will have meaning to the students.

b. Theory of Writing Skill

Writing as a skill, needs much practice. It is an activity of producing a coherent, fluent, and extended piece of writing. It is the most difficult to do in language. Brown (2001) describes that writing is a process of putting ideas down on paper to transform thoughts into words to sharpen main ideas and to give them structure and coherent organization.

O'Malley and Pierce (1996) describe that there are at least three purposes in writing; informative writing, expressive/narrative writing, and persuasive writing. Informative writing is used to share knowledge and give information, directions, or ideas. The writers can use this type of writing to write a biography about well-known person or someone from the writers' life. Writers use expressive narrative writing as a personal or imaginative expression in which the writers produce stories or essays. This kind of writing is often used for entertainment, pleasure, and diversity or, simply, as fun writing and can include poems and short plays. In persuasive writing, writers try to influence people and introduce action or change. This type of writing can include evaluation, a book, a movie, a consumer product, or a controversial issue or problem.

c. Theory of Recount Text

A recount is a piece of text that retells past events, usually in the order in which they happened (Anderson and Anderson, 1997:48). So, the recount writing gives the audience a description of what occurred and when it occurred. Recount text usually has three main sections. The first paragraph gives background information about who, what, where, and when, which is called *orientation*. Then it is followed by a series of paragraphs that retells the events in the order (chronological way) in which they happened. Some recounts have a concluding paragraph. However, this is not always necessary.

3. RESEARCH METHOD

The researcher conducted a study called a Collaborative Classroom Action Research (CAR). The research used two cycles. Each cycle consisted of four meetings. The researcher worked together in the classroom. The researcher implemented the CAR proposed by Kemmis and Mac Taggart (1998) which consists of four steps (1) planning an action, (2) implementing an action, (3) observing and (4) reflecting, while the collaborative teacher observed and recorded all the data that were found during the implementation. The collaborative teacher also did the implementation for two meetings. The teacher wanted to have an experience in implementing the strategy, so that in other times he can implement the action in his own classrooms.

There are six kinds of data collected in this study and most of them were in the form of qualitative data. They were collected from document collection, field notes, interviews, teacher's observations, students' observations, and questionnaires.

4. FINDING AND DISCUSSION

The teaching of English recount writing using picture series strategy could improve the students' ability in

writing recount. The students were guided to follow several steps in order that they knew what they had to do for their writing. First, they were asked to gather words as many as possible based on the picture series applied in the action. Second, they were trained to find ideas of their writing preparation before they knew how to write a recount paragraph.

Third, the teacher also gave a model of writing recount paragraph which was written in the form of simple past. Forth, the use of chronological order extremely helped the students to write their recount paragraph much better than before the strategy of using picture series in writing recount was applied for them.

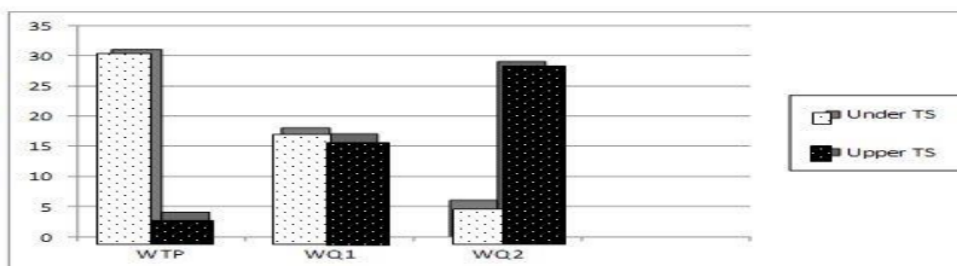
Before the strategy of using pictures series were applied, the students made many mistakes in terms of content, language use, and mechanics. They did not know yet what they had to do at the beginning of their activity for writing a paragraph. There was no introduction for beginning their paragraph. They wrote their paragraph without understanding what and where they had to start their paragraph. Their paragraphs were not organized well and the ideas were difficult to understand.

The strategy of using picture series in writing recount paragraph seemed able to overcome the students' problems in writing recount. They had understood how to write a recount paragraph using the introduction for entering to the main problem of what they wanted to write for their recount paragraph based on the picture series about a chronology of events.

Based on the chronology of the events, the students knew what they had to write for their recount paragraph. They began to write their recount paragraph by using simple chronological order such as first, second, third, and finally, for each event of the recount story showed through the picture series. The students showed much progress based on the use of the picture series strategy. They received an appropriate guidance or way for writing a recount paragraph. The picture series provided opportunity for the students to share ideas in improving their individual ability in writing recounts.

Referring to the findings, the researcher considers that the use of the picture series strategy in writing recount had made the students much progress. This could be seen from the finding of the analysis of the students' commenting, responding, questioning, and the students' writing products show significant improvement. The improvement of the students' progress can be seen from the score of the students' achievement. They achieved the higher score from each cycle of the action.

After the actions of the first cycle conducted in the first up to the fourth meeting, it was found that from the first cycle, there were 18 students achieved the target score. It means that only 51.6% out of 35 students had reached the target score 60 as decided in the criteria of success. So, it can be concluded that the criteria of success is not achieved yet. In the second cycle, the improvement reached the target score as stated in the criteria of success. The improvement increased because there were 29 students got the score of 60 to 83. It means that 82.8% out of 35 students had reached the target score 60. The improvement of the students writing recount paragraph can be seen in Figure below. Thus, it was decided that the students achieved the criteria of success.



Note: WTP : Writing Test on Preliminary
 WQ1 : Writing Quiz of Cycle I
 WQ2 : Writing Quiz of Cycle II
 Under TS: Under Target Score (Lower than 6.0)
 Upper TS: Upper Target Score (equals or above 6.0)

5. CONCLUSION

Using picture series strategy had made the students' recount writing improved. In order to be successful, several procedures in teaching and learning activities should be followed. First, the teacher gives a pictures series to each group of four to five of the students to be observed more clearly. Second, the teacher teaches grammar to the students about the simple past tense, and plural nouns by asking the students to make some sentences orally on the bases of picture series. Third, the teacher asks the students to find ideas of the picture series.

The teaching recount writing using picture series has some strengths. First, the picture series provides the opportunity for the students to share ideas in improving their writing ability and to show their individual ability. Second, the picture series help the students improve their ability in writing recounts. Third, picture series can encourage the students to be actively involved in writing recount. Fourth, the pictures also suit to the students' real lives and their interests.

The use of picture series strategy help the students make much progress. The findings indicate that the students' results in writing recount paragraphs showed significant improvement. The students achieved the higher score from the first cycle to the second cycle.

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