

Utilizing Picture Series to Boost Writing Ability of Upper-Secondary Students

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to determine the effect of picture series on students' writing abilities and to determine their responses to the use of picture series in improving the ability to write recount texts in class X SMA Daarul Muttaqien 2 in the academic year 2022/2023. This study used quantitative methods with pre-experimental design. The samples used in this study were 48 students in the experimental class. Data were collected by using the test (pre-test and post-test) and questionnaire. Data analysis done by using Shapiro-Wilk showed the value of Asymp.Sig (2-tailed) was 0.000, less than 0.05. Therefore, it can be concluded that the working hypothesis (Ha) is accepted, while the null hypothesis (Ho) is rejected. This means that the use of picture series had a significant effect on improving students' writing ability. The findings indicated that using the pictures series helped students improve writing ability, especially to decrease error rates of word placement. It made students more confident and enjoyed English writing texts due to the use of picture series as an effective medium in learning. As a result, it is advised for English teachers to choose relevant picture series to meet the objectives to improve students' writing abilities.



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Introduction

In a daily learning activity, a language is a connecting tool as a means of conveying messages in expressing their opinions and feelings towards others, which is the basis of the education system in most countries including Indonesia. The current education system is learning foreign languages or international languages such as English, to make communication easier at the world level. In other word, English is also a communication tool that allows people to engage with people from other countries more easily (Asih, 2019). One of the important aspects of learning English as the role of activities that must be mastered by students is writing. Currently, English learners are required to know the correct writing, because the pronunciation and writing of words in English are very different. Those are all the main things that must be considered that can sustain the effectiveness of learning English or a foreign language. In other words, writing is an ability to provide insight and our thoughts straightforwardly and adequately. In other words, structured texts can influence understanding in the mental building process into an idea (Apsari, 2017). The aspects that contribute to improving students' writing skills, i.e. increasing students' self-confidence, increasing vocabulary, and presenting motivation in students (Aini, 2021).

In addition, structured literature can also aid in the development of mental processes. The textual functions or the structure of thinking, it is impossible to isolate from the genre or type of text because different texts serve different societal purposes and have different organizational techniques for information (Palar, 2020).

Widyawati (2018), stated that there are two types of genre: story genre, which includes non-factual texts like narratives, news stories, recounts, spoofs, and anecdotes. The factual genre includes factual texts (such as procedure, explanation, report, exposition, and discussion). Meanwhile, in the tenth-grade syllabus, there are various kinds of text material such as descriptive text, narrative text, and recount text. So, the researcher chose one of the texts in this research, namely recount text.

Recount text is material that entertains or reflects the reader in retelling historical events (Aslimah, 2020). Recount text can take many forms, including 1) Personal Calculation, 2) Factual Calculation, and 3) hypothetical occurrence.

As for the generic structure in recount text, which is a framework or sequence in a text. The overall scheme in the generic structure of a recount text is as follows: 1) Orientation, 2) Events, and 3) Re-orientation (Husna, 2019). The linguistic feature is the use of terminology in the compilation of text to structure it. The recount text uses the following linguistic features: 1) Focus on a specific person, 2) The use of material processes, 3) Make use of dates and locations, 4) Adjectives, (5) The use of the past tense, and (6) the use of temporal sequences.

To help students in practicing their thinking and build ideas in writing recount texts by using media. Meanwhile, when choosing the media that will be used in the classroom, the teacher must make the right choice between the type of media that is preferred and the most effective for students (Faridatul, 2020). Text and images must be flexible by appearing together. As emphasized by Deviga (2020), picture series can help students generate ideas to improve their English writing abilities.

It can be concluded that the use of picture series becomes an alternative visual media that helps stimulate and guide students in the teaching and learning process more effectively and efficiently. In the overall understanding above, it can be said that picture series has an important role in improving students writing ability on the recount text.

Method

The researcher conducted this research in the academic year 2022/2023 at SMA Daarul Mutaqien 2 Tangerang-Banten. The researcher conducted the research for six months and started from December 2021 to June 2022.

This research emphasized the use of picture series in improving students' writing ability. The researcher used a quantitative method with the pre-experimental design using one group pretest and posttest. The pre-experimental design included a constant independent variable or a non-randomly selected experiment class (Apuke, 2017). The independent variable (X) was picture series and a dependent variable (Y) was writing ability.

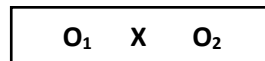


Figure 1 <Research Design>

O_1 = Pretest Score (before being treated).

O_2 = Post-test Score (after being treated).

The population of this study was all students in the tenth grade of SMA Daarul Muttaqien 2 in the academic year 2022/2023. In the tenth grade, there were 212 students. Meanwhile, the sample was the students of XA SMA Daarul Muttaqien 2, Tangerang. The class consisted of 48 female students. The researcher chose the sample based on the previous information, their proficiency, and their relevance to the study's purpose. The researcher assessed the sample of this study and selected the involved samples based on the researcher's logical determination that they reflected the characteristics of the research as Purposive Sampling (Lenaini, 2021).

Furthermore, the data of the research was scores of students' tasks from pre-test and post-test collected by using writing test instruments. The writing test was used after the validity and readability were being tested. In addition, a questionnaire was used to collect the data of students respond.

After the writing scores of students had been collected, the researcher analyzed the data using one paired t-test to see the comparison between pre-test and post-test mean scores and to ascertain the effect of picture series on the writing ability of the tenth-grade of SMA Daarul Muttaqien 2 in the academic year 2022/2023. Meanwhile, the data of questionnaire was analyzed by using descriptive statistic.

Results and Discussions

The research was done by carrying out pre-test, treatment, and post-test. In obtaining the data, the pre-test was given before the treatment, while the post-test was given after the treatment was finished. After doing the pre-test and post-test in the experimental class, the researchers analyze the results to get students'

scores in writing ability. Then the data was analyzed by using SPSS 22. The presentation of students' writing ability data can be seen in the statistical descriptive table below:

Table 1 <Descriptive Statistics>

	N	Range	Min	Max	Sum	Mean	Std. Error	Std. Deviation	Variance
Pre-Test	48	27	47	74	3054	63.62	.797	5.518	30.452
Post-test	48	31	57	88	3427	71.40	1.057	7.322	53.606
Valid N (listwise)	48								

Source: Statistical Result SPSS 22

The writing ability scores for the experimental class were derived from a written test. The pre-test results showed a mean score of 63.62, with individual scores ranging from a minimum of 47 to a maximum of 74. The standard deviation for the pre-test was 5.518. Following the intervention, the post-test results indicated a clear improvement: the mean score rose to 71.40, the minimum score increased to 57, and the maximum score reached 88. The standard deviation for the post-test was 7.322. Further analysis was then conducted to test the effectiveness of the picture series on writing skill. To test the hypothesis, the data normality should be analyzed first to determine the appropriate formula to use.

To test the normality of the data, the researcher used the Shapiro-Wilk because the sample used was under 50 students. The data is said to be normal if there is a significant value more than 0.05, if the value is smaller than 0.05 then the data is said to be not normally distributed, the complete results of testing normal data can be seen in the table below:

Table 2 <Test of Normality (Saphiro-Wilk)>

	Stati stic	Df	Sig.
Pre-Test	.956	48	.073
Post-Test	.973	48	.330

Source: Statistical Result SPSS 22

The normality testing for both the pre-test and post-test data indicates a normal distribution. Specifically, the pre-test data yielded a significance value of 0.073, which is greater than the significant value of 0.05. Similarly, the post-test data resulted in a significance value of 0.330, also exceeding the critical value of 0.05. Based on these results, it is concluded that the writing ability scores for both the pre-test and post-test phases are normally distributed.

Therefore, the paired-samples t-test can be appropriately employed to test the research hypothesis. The primary goal of the t-test is to statistically compare the students' writing abilities before and after receiving the treatment using the picture series, thereby determining the effect and effectiveness of the intervention provided by the researcher.

The result of the paired samples t-test analysis yielded a significance value (Sig. 2-tailed) of 0.000. Since this value is less than the predetermined significance level 0.05, the decision criterion requires that the Null Hypothesis (H_0) is rejected, and the Alternative Hypothesis (H_a) is accepted. Statistically, the rejection of H_0 and the acceptance of H_a confirm that there is a significant difference in the students' writing ability scores before (pre-test) and after (post-test) the treatment. This indicates a significant positive effect from the use of picture series on improving the writing ability of students in Class XA at SMA Daarul Muttaqien 2 Tangerang. The statistical result can be seen in the table below.

Table 3 <Test of Hypothesis>

	Paired Differences					t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% confidence Interval of the				
				Diference				
				Lower	Upper			
Pretest – Posttest	-7.771	5.532	.799	-9.377	-6.164	-9.732	47	.000

Source: Statistical Result SPSS 22

Next, the final component of this study involved administering questionnaires to gauge the students' perceptions and attitudes regarding the use of the picture series strategy. The researcher utilized the Likert scale (Witte, 2016) to calculate the score for each response. The questionnaire was specifically distributed to the experimental class, which received instruction involving the picture series intervention aimed at improving writing abilities. The findings are summarized below, categorized by their corresponding percentage criteria.

Table 4 <The Result of Questionnaire>

Statement	Percentage of Students' Response (%)
1. The picture series helped me easily generate ideas (find topics and concepts) for my writing.	97.1
2. The visual images in the series made the writing process more interesting and less boring.	98.8
3. Using picture series helped me organize my ideas and structure my paragraphs logically.	99.2
4. I found it easier to develop detailed descriptions (vocabulary) by looking at the pictures.	99.6
5. The sequence of the pictures clearly guided me in writing a coherent story or recount text.	100
6. The picture series increased my confidence in my ability to write longer essays or narratives.	99.2
7. I prefer learning writing using picture series compared to traditional text-based lessons.	98.8
8. The picture series helped me remember key elements (plot/setting) that I needed to include in my writing.	98.3
9. I believe my writing quality improved significantly after using the picture series method.	98.3
10. I would recommend the use of picture series for future writing classes.	98.8

Source: Statistical Result SPSS 22

The table 4 shows students' perceptions regarding the effectiveness of the picture series. The scoring was calculated using a Likert scale system, with the following categorical criteria applied to the percentage results:

Table 5 <Categorical Criteria to Percentage Data>

Category	Percentages
Stongly Disagree	1%-20%
Disagree	21%-40%
Neutral	41%-60%
Agree	61%-80%
Stongly Agree	81%-100%

Based on the calculation of student responses, the overall feedback fit the criteria of Strongly Agree (81%–100%). This finding strongly indicates that the students perceived the use of picture series as highly beneficial and effective for improving their writing abilities. The high percentage score suggests a strong consensus among the experimental class that the strategy is a valuable tool for developing writing skills.

To effectively develop writing ability, the application of creative instructional techniques is paramount. The empirical results of this study align with this principle, supporting findings that strategies like using picture series help students achieve significant progress, particularly in writing skills such as recount paragraphs (Rohaniyah, 2022).

The effectiveness of the intervention was empirically validated using the Paired Samples T-Test computed via SPSS 22. The comparison of the mean scores revealed a notable increase, moving from 63.62 in the pre-test to 71.40 in the post-test.

Crucially, the hypothesis test yielded a significance value of 0.000, which is smaller than the established critical alpha level of 0.05. This result mandates the rejection of the Null Hypothesis (H_0) and the acceptance of the Alternative Hypothesis (H_a). Therefore, the study concludes that the use of picture series is statistically effective for improving the writing ability of students in Class XA SMA Daarul Muttaqien 2 Tangerang. It can be inferred that utilizing picture series constitutes an effective method for enhancing students' writing proficiency.

The current findings demonstrate strong relevance and consistency with prior academic research. Several previous studies have also highlighted the efficacy of this medium, specifically for recount text writing. Darma (2019) focused on the utility of picture series to improve students' participation in learning to write recount text. Yustika (2021) specifically affirmed that picture series are effective for improving students' writing skills in recount text. Mutmainnah (2018) emphasized the positive outcomes resulting from the straightforward use of picture series for teaching recount text writing. These congruent findings solidify the conclusion that picture series is a widely recognized and effective pedagogical tool in writing instruction.

Further support for the strategy's effectiveness comes from the student perception data collected via the questionnaire. The responses overwhelmingly fit the criteria for Strongly Agree (81%–100%), indicating that students perceived the picture series to be highly beneficial for developing their writing abilities. This positive perception aligns with observations about the inherent benefits of visual aids. Mufliah (2018) noted that picture series are easy for teachers to deploy and aid student focus during material delivery, which improves comprehension. Faya (2020) suggested that the use of picture series can significantly raise students' interest in learning. Ultimately, by capturing student interest and helping them focus, the visual structure provided by the picture series assists students in logically organizing their thoughts, leading directly to the creation of a stronger, more cohesive paragraph structure.

Conclusions

Based on the synthesis of the data including the descriptive statistics, hypothesis testing, and the student feedback, it is concluded that the use of picture series is an effective and viable strategy for enhancing students' writing ability (specifically for recount text).

1. Significant Improvement: The intervention led to a clear increase in achievement, evidenced by the post-test mean score of 71.40 being significantly higher than the pre-test mean score of 63.62.
2. Statistical Efficacy: The paired-samples t-test confirmed the treatment's impact, yielding a significance value of 0.000 (less than 0.05), which necessitates the rejection of the null hypothesis and the acceptance of the alternative hypothesis. This establishes a statistically significant effect.
3. Positive Student Perception: The high level of student engagement and satisfaction was confirmed by the questionnaire results, with responses fitting the "Strongly Agree" (81%–100%) criterion, suggesting students found the picture series highly beneficial for generating ideas and structuring their writing.

In conclusion, the integration of picture series not only statistically improves students' writing scores but is also strongly endorsed by the students themselves as a motivating and helpful method for overcoming common writing difficulties.

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