

INCREASING STUDENTS' WRITING THROUGH APPLYING PRESENT TENSE FORM BY USING PICTURE SERIES

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Abstract

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui pengaruh gambar seri terhadap kemampuan menulis siswa. Penelitian ini menggunakan *one group pretest posttest design*. Obyek dari penelitian ini adalah siswa kelas tujuh MTs dan sampel adalah kelas VIIA. Data diambil dari *pretest* dan *posttest*. Peneliti membandingkan nilai rata-rata *pretest* dan *posttest*. Data dianalisis dengan menggunakan *Repeated Measure t-Test*. Hasil menunjukkan bahwa nilai rata-rata menulis adalah 45.66 pada *pretest* dan 62.35 pada *posttest*. Peningkatan mencakup semua aspek menulis: konten 28%, tata bahasa 35%, organisasi 43%, kosakata 49% dan mekanikal 20%. Hasil perhitungan menunjukkan bahwa *t-value* lebih tinggi daripada *t-tabel* ($7.117 > 2,021$) dengan nilai signifikansi dari *two tailed* $< \alpha$ ($0.000 < 0,5$). Berarti bahwa H_a diterima dan H_0 ditolak. Ini membuktikan bahwa gambar seri memberikan pengaruh yang signifikan terhadap kemampuan menulis siswa.

This research is aimed to find out the influence of picture series on students' writing achievement. It used one group pretest posttest design. The population of this research was the seventh grade students of MTs and the sample was class VIIA. The data were taken from pretest and posttest. The researcher compared the mean score of pretest and posttest. The data were analyzed by using Repeated Measure t-Test. The results show that the mean score of pretest was 45.66 and the posttest was 62.35. The increase includes all aspects of writing: content 28%, grammar 35%, organization 43%, vocabulary 49%, and mechanics 20%. The result of the computation shows that *t-value* is higher than *t-table* ($7.117 > 2,021$) with the value of two tailed significance $< \alpha$ ($0.000 < 0.5$). It means that H_a is accepted and H_0 is rejected. It proves that picture series significantly influence students' writing achievement.

Keywords: present tense, picture series, writing ability

INTRODUCTION

English is one of the compulsory subjects in Indonesia, which is taught from elementary school to senior high school. In junior high school, students begin to study sentences for developing their writing skill. Widdowson (1978: 62) states that writing is the act of making up correct sentences and transmitting them through the visual medium as mark on paper. Writing is complex to study because this skill has some crucial aspects to consider, such as grammar, vocabulary, mechanics, organization, etc.

One of the aspects of grammar is tenses. Tense is a grammatical category, typically marked on the verb, that deictically refers to the time of the event or state denoted by the verb in relation to some other temporal reference point (Azhar, 2002). Tenses basically refers to present and past tense. Theoretically, present tense is a grammatical tense that tells a situation or event in present time. While past tense is a verb tense (the second principal part of a verb) indicating action that occurred in the past and which does not extend into the present.

This study focuses on the writing. This is taken into account because during observation it was found that students of junior high school were not able to construct sentence correctly. In addition, the study conducted by Susanti (2008), revealed that SMP students got difficulty to use tense. When the student want to make a sentence, they are still confused to arrange the words into sentence. In short, students' writing ability in constructing sentences, especially in the form of present tense is very low. Students usually make errors in their construction of

sentences. They have difficulty in choosing verb, what verb should be added with –s or –es and what verb without additional –s or –es.

To solve this problem, the teachers have to use technique or media which is appropriate to students. The researcher uses picture series as media in teaching present tense. With the picture series, students are expected to be more interested in learning. Students are expected to understand the materials faster and they are hoped to produce sentences in present tense. Stevick (1987) proved that the students who were taught by using picture as the media could retain the words longer than the students who were taught without media. He also explains that this kind of aid can raise the students' motivation to learning. In this context, he found that picture can help students in memorize vocabulary easily. Zainuddin (1975: 12) says picture as a visual aid has certain benefit for teaching learning process such as enabling the whole class to follow the lesson by looking at the attached materials to advocate students' attention and save the time. At the same time, pictures help the teacher to have a live class as the student associate real object with their English equivalent. In this way, they can exchange information with each other since they will be familiar with the topic and object under discussion. It can be said that the use of picture has an important role in teaching learning since picture is not only aid in teaching but also helpful media for the teacher to present the material.

Yunus (1981:49) states that a picture series is a number of related composite pictures linked to form a series of sequences. Hence, its main function is to tell a story or sequence of events. Therefore, picture is one of the suitable media in teaching learning, especially in teaching writing. Picture can also enable to

memorize what teachers teach in their mind longer, either in form or in meaning. It can help teacher give the material to the students more effectively. The students also easily understand what teachers teach.

In reference to the explanation above, the researcher are interested in using picture series for teaching writing in Junior High School, especially constructing sentences in present tense. The students are supposed to construct sentences in simple present tense by looking picture series. The researcher also intend the student have good writing ability through constucting present tense after being taught by using picture series. In reference to the background, the formulation of the problem of this research is:

Is there any significant increase of the students' writing ability through the use of present tense form at the first year of Junior High School after being taught by using picture series?

METHODS

In this research, the writer used picture series as media to find out of the students' writing mastery. This research used one group pre-test post-test design. Since this research was supposed to prove whether picture series could be used to increase students' writing ability through constructing sentences in present tense, this research took only a class that is taught by using picture series. Therefore, the researcher arranged the research design as follow:

T₁ X T₂

(Setiyadi, 2006:132)

In collecting the data, the researcher conducted:

1. First, administering try-out. Try-out test was given to know the quality of the test that is used to take the data and to determine which items should be omitted for the pre/posttest.
2. Second, administering the pretest. Pretest was given before the first treatment in order to know the students' basic present tense.
3. Third, conducting the treatment. The treatment was given in three times. The treatment used the picture as media in deliver the materials in teaching writing through constructing present tense to students.
4. Fourth, administering the posttest. Post-test was given to the students in order to know the result in teaching learning process whether they have progress or not after being taught by using picture series.
5. The last, analyzing the test result. The researcher analyze the data in order to find out whether there was a significant increase of students' writing ability through present tense form after being taught by using picture series.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

This section points out the result of this research and the discussion of the research result. It involves the result of students' pretest and posttest, the effect of picture series in students' writing ability after the treatment, hypothesis testing, and the discussion of the result.

The researcher administered pretest in order to reveal the basic ability of the students in writing present tense sentences before the treatments conducted in class. The total score of pretest was 1214 ; the mean of the pre-test was 45.66; the highest score is 70; and the lowest score is 35.

In order to find out the effect of picture series, the researcher administered posttest. The total score of post test was 1621 ; the mean of the pre-test was 62.35; the highest score is 84; and the lowest score is 44. The comparison of the pre-test and post-test showed that the students' writing ability was improved after being taught by using picture series. It was supported by the result of the students' task that the students had better achievement after teaching learning process. It also can be seen that the students' posttest scores were higher than their pretest scores.

The result of pre-test showed that the gained score of content aspect from the pre-test and post-test was 4.04, from 14.29 to 18.33. The improvement of the students' writing achievement in content aspect was 28%. This indicates that after being conducted the treatment, the students could portray their ideas by enlarging their supporting sentence. The students were able to apply the main idea of the paragraph which its supporting sentences logically.

The gained score of grammar from the pre-test and post-test was 3.5, from 10.02 to 13.52. The improvement of this aspect was 35%. It could be reached because students made some improvement in writing their sentences. Almost students could write in correct grammatical form. They were able to construct sentences in accordance with the topics.

The gained score of organization from the pre-test and post-test was 4.01, from 9.41 to 13.42. The improvement of this aspect was 43%. It happened because the students built their text in chronological order. Therefore, they could reach that point. Most students linked their sentences with the connecting words; such as *and, then, next*, etc. Hence, their writing was in chronological order.

The gained score of vocabulary from the pre-test and post-test was 4.65, from 9.54 to 14.19. The improvement of this aspect was 49%. It could be reached because the students made some improvement in choosing the words. The students used many new words in their writing. They could attach the word in appropriate place.

The gained score of mechanics from the pre-test and post-test was 0.48, from 2.41 to 2.89. The improvement of this aspect was 20%. It might be caused by the fact that although some students still made mistakes, they gave more attention with the spelling of the word they wrote. Most students also capitalize their first letter after *full stop*.

Based on the statements above, it can be seen that there is an increase of students' score of five components of writing from the pretest to the posttest. The vocabulary aspect dominated the increase. It happened because the students made some improvement in choosing the words. The four other aspects also increased significantly. It proved that picture series could improve their writing.

In testing the hypothesis, *Repeated Measure t-test* was used and was also statistically tested by using statistical computerization (SPSS 16), in which the significance was determined by $p < 0.05$. The t-test revealed that the result was

significant ($p=0.00$). Thus, there was a significant improvement of the students' writing achievement through applying present tense form by using picture series. In other word, H_0 was rejected and H_a was accepted.

There were seven meetings in this research. At the beginning of the research, the researcher carried out pre observation to the sample class that has been chosen. The researcher came in the class, introduced to the class and explained the purpose with the activity that students should do next. On the second meeting, the pretest was administered to see the students' basic ability in writing or constructing sentences before being given treatments. Moreover, most students were found to have significant errors in five writing aspects because they had not been able in constructing good sentences in present tense. For example, *I playing football in the field*, *My hobby playing football*. The sentences were not grammatically correct because they did not add verb after subject and should be written *I am playing football in the field*, or *I play football in the field every Sunday*, *My hobby is playing football*.

The students also wrote the sentences using wrong vocabulary. For example, *Roni eat night with family*, *My hobby is gardener in the garden*. The vocabulary in the sentences may be correct if we checked it word by word, but the sentences were not correct if we checked based on English sentence construction. And the sentences should be written as *Roni is having dinner with his family*, *My hobby is gardening in the garden*. From the pretest results, it can be found that almost half of class did not know the formula to construct the sentence especially in present tense. They usually constructed incomplete sentence, like did not add verb in the sentences.

Apparently, the students did not understand about how to use constructing tense structure. Students could not identify the use of simple present tense is for daily life. For example, the student wrote *I am always ... am*, the sentence was incorrect because add to be. As we know that the word 'always' is used in simple present tense, and simple present tense sentence does not use to be. The sentence should be written as in subject with verb I and complement or object. The students also got difficult in choosing vocabulary. The students did not conduct the term for having meal in the afternoon which called lunch, also term *dinner* for *meal time* in the night. The students still use *eat afternoon* and *eat night* for the terms. These were in the use of Bahasa Indonesia, but in English there were no word like that. And the words should actually be as *having lunch and having dinner*.

The students were careless and they ignore using mechanics, for example, the students capitalize letter in the middle of sentences and did not capitalize the letter after full stop. The students also did not capitalize the letter in the name of person. For example, *roni eat night together family*. It should be written as *Roni eat night together family*.

Referring to the result of pretest, the researcher began the third meeting with teaching the formula of present tense. The researcher considered that would be effective if the students have known the formula before they tried to construct the sentences. As Azhar (2002: 2) points out that the present tense is a grammatical tense that locates a situation or event in present time, so the researcher taught the formula of present tense by giving them several sentence. Then the students were

asked about the sentences, such as: *what is the subject of the sentence?, what is the verb?, what verb they must use in the sentence?*.

After giving response to the question, they were explained about the formula of present tense and how to construct the sentences based on the formula. The researcher gave the example sentence from their daily life to make the students easier in memorize and construct the sentences. For example, *I wake up at 5o'clock every morning, my hobby is playing football*. But several students were still confused about add -s or -es in the verb if the subject were He, She, and It. For example, *He go to school by bus, He play football in the afternoon*. The sentences should actually be *He goes to school by bus, He plays football in the afternoon*.

After teaching the formula of present tense, the researcher conducted the first treatment. In this treatment, the students were explained about what they should do after they saw the pictures on the slide. Then the students have known if they give the pictures and then they should write what the activity in the picture. In this section, the students really showed their enthusiasm with what they saw in the slide because they have never seen like it before. After they finished their work, the student should collect their work. Then the researcher spread over their worksheet randomly to the class. The researcher gives the explanation about the construction of the sentences based on the formula. The students give the response about the researcher's explanation. The researcher was asked about the students' works. Then the researcher gives description about the students' answer what did the correct answer.

In this phase, it was found the mistakes from the sentences made by students. It caused by the new material they studied. They did not study to construct sentences in the elementary school. They faced so difficult to comprehend the material. They usually also translate word by word to construct the sentences. The students were still confused about the use of "to be". For example, they wrote *My hobby writing*. The sentence does not add to be after the subject of sentence, and the sentence should be written as *My hobby is writing*. This sentence was done perhaps they translated word by word according to Bahasa Indonesia. Some tenses used 'to be' in the sentences. Then the students asked to see their classmates' work to know what were their friends' in order to compare with him or hers, and what did the correct answer. The students usually were confused about the construction of sentences. They still confused about the subject, what they should wrote after subject, what verb they used, and so on.

In second treatment, the researcher gave the students the explanation about how to add the sentence became a paragraph. In this case, the researcher gave the genre of descriptive paragraph. It caused by descriptive paragraph used present tense sentences in the construction. The researcher reviewed the activity they have done in the previous meeting and giving explanation about the problems they mainly faced in their writing with solution of those problems. The researchers reminded them to consider the five aspect of writing as well. In this meeting, they were given new topic. They are asked to works in group in two. Then each group should construct a descriptive paragraph that consists of 8 sentences in which 3 sentences in *identification* and 5 sentences in *description*. The students became enthusiastic with this activity because they could share their idea with their group.

The students that confuse and difficult to construct the sentences before this activity gave the help by their group mate.

The study went on to the third treatment. In this treatment, the students were asked to construct the paragraph. But in this meeting, they did not work with their group. They work individually to construct the paragraph. The students' ability was increase in constructing the sentences to be paragraph. It faced by the students' mistakes in their work. Their mistakes were fewer than before they work in group. They have been more confident to share their idea in constructing sentences. In this last treatment, the students were more determined to study and their writing fairly improved prior the last treatment planned.

After having three treatments, the students were given posttest to know the effect of the treatments to their sentence writing, especially in present tense. The maximum score in this posttest was 84 and the minimum score was 44 with the average of students' score was 62.

From the data above, it can be seen if the students' writing achievement improved after being taught by using picture series. They could write the sentences correctly based on the formula and five aspects of writing. The students could write correct in grammatical form and minimized their mistakes. For example, the students were not able to write complete sentences, and the case of using to be and constructing present continuous form. *My hobby writing, He playing football in the afternoon.* Then, after the treatment, the wrote *My hobby is writing, He plays football in the afternoon.* Thus, the researcher could say if the students writing achievement was significantly improved after being taught by using picture series.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

Based on the result and the discussion of the findings, the writer draws the conclusions as follows:

1. Picture series has positive effects on students' writing achievement. It can be applied to increase students' writing achievement. It can be seen from the increase of students' average score in pretest to posttest. Picture series can help them to memorize the materials.
2. Picture series can increase students' writing achievement in terms of five aspects of writing.

Based on the conclusions of the research stated before, the suggestions are elaborated as follows:

1. Suggestions to Teachers
 - a. The teacher are suggested alternatively use picture series as the alternative way to improve the students' writing achievement because it proved that picture series can helps the students memorize the vocabulary easier and enlarge their ideas about writing.
 - b. Teachers are recommended to give great concern on the mechanics aspect. This research has found that the lowest improvement in students writing is mechanics.
2. Suggestions to Other Researcher

This research is only focused in seeing the effect of picture series on students' writing achievement. Therefore, the other researcher can apply this media for teach other language skill.

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