

# Improving students' writing achievement in Descriptive text using picture series through *WhatsApp Messenger* at SMPN 34 Bandar Lampung

Cintia Chandra Mahesa<sup>1</sup>, Hery Yufrizal<sup>2</sup>, Buhanuddin<sup>3</sup>

Universitas Lampung, Jl. Prof. Dr. Soemantri Brojonegoro No.1 Bandarlampung, Indonesia<sup>1,2,3</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Correspondence: [cintiamahesa@yahoo.co.id](mailto:cintiamahesa@yahoo.co.id)

## ABSTRACT

This quantitative research was conducted to investigate the use of picture series through *WhatsApp* could give positive impact on the students' writing in descriptive text. The samples of this research were the second-grade students of SMPN 34 Bandar Lampung. The researcher used experimental group design which applied pretest and posttest as the instruments. Besides, there were two meetings as the treatment. The data were analyzed by using Repeated measure T-Test. The result showed that there was significant improvement on students' writing after the implementation of picture series. The mean of the pretest was increased from 61.13 in the first test to 70.73 in the second test. Moreover, the gain of the test was quite high by having the number of 9.6. Then, the statistical calculation of the students' score also showed that the t-table was higher than the t-table ( $10.298 > 2.052$ ). The highest aspect that improved the most was organization. The mean for this aspect was increased from 14.12 (pretest) to 17.50 (posttest) with the score of the gain was 0.5762. Briefly, it could be concluded that the  $H_1$  is accepted and the  $H_0$  is rejected.

**Keywords:** Picture Series, Writing, *WhatsApp*, Descriptive text

## I. INTRODUCTION

Writing is an essential skill that should be mastered by students in learning language. Writers can convey their ideas and opinions by arranging words. Therefore, they can communicate with other people by reading the written text. Moreover, Jaramillo and Medina (2011) stated that writing is an important form of showing expression which is used to convince other people as well as to show ideas or feelings. As one of the skills that have to be mastered, writing plays one of the important tools by which students actively change the passive knowledge and information in their minds into their language in written form (Hasan, 2016). In other words, writing is an activity that helps students practice and work with the language they have been studying in order to interact with other people. They can practice their language to communicate through writing as the form of written language.

However, Richard and Renandya (2002) state that writing is regarded as the most difficult skill for EFL students to master as it has complexities by brainstorming the ideas and organizing them into a readable text. It is considered as a complex skill since the students are required to understand language components such as grammar, ideas, mechanics, vocabulary, etc. Besides, the students

mostly encounter some issues in writing because they find it difficult to express their ideas through writing. This is probably caused by several factors such as students' low motivations in writing which is usually caused by the English teachers who do not give constructive motivations for them to write. Besides, most of students lack of vocabulary, added by the fact that they also have insufficient knowledge of grammar. Those problems are proved by the researcher during pre-observation in the school where the researcher conducted field practice program at SMPN 34 N Bandar Lampung, as well as the researcher's experiences during studying in junior high school. It was revealed that some students were confused about how to begin writing. They also got difficulties in expressing and organizing their ideas in writing. The other students had gotten the ideas but they were still confused about how to arrange them to be a good paragraph. Hence, based on the problem above, the researcher decided to use media namely pictures series to help the students resolve their difficulty of writing, especially in a descriptive text.

According to Brown et al (1980), picture series is a two-dimensional visual representative of persons and things which consists of more than one images that are connected to each other. The aim of using picture series as media is to give instruction which can help students bringing out their ideas in the beginning process of writing. Hence, the teacher may use any kind of picture series to be showed to the students. The picture series is used as a clue which its function is the same as brainstorming. By seeing the picture series, the students will get an image or schemata to create some sentences to then be a whole paragraph. By seeing picture and arranging it first, the students are able to write sentences one by one by considering the information from the picture that has been seen. After writing one by one, the students can create a whole paragraph by mixing the sentences that are made from each picture given.

Furthermore, several studies regarding picture series have been conducted before. The first is a classroom action research (CAR) research entitled "Improving the Writing Skills of Recount Texts by Using Picture Series for the Eighth Grade Students of SMP Muhammadiyah 2 Kalasan in 22 the Academic Year of 2013/2014" written by Saputri (2013). The aim of her study is to investigate the students' improvement in writing recount text using picture series technique. The writer used three instruments to gain the data; observation, interview, and test. Then in the result, she proved that picture series could improve the students' writing skill in recount text. The second is the research written by Yusnita et al (2012) entitled "Improving Students' Recount Text Writing by Using Picture Series a Classroom Action Research to the Tenth Grade Students of SMK Panca Bhakti Kubu Raya in Academic Year 2011/2012". The objective of their study is to improve students' recount text writing using picture series. The research applied classroom action research (CAR) which consisted of two cycles. The result indicated that the students had progress writing in each cycle. The result of the first cycle was 61.5 (less than 65, not achieved) while the second cycle was 66.0 (achieved) which was higher than KKM score.

Additionally, it is also important to utilize an online platform in conducting the learning process as today's classes are mostly conducted online which has an advantage of decreasing the limitation of time and place. One of the effective platforms that can be used is *WhatsApp*. Barhoumi (2015)

observed that *WhatsApp* facilitates knowledge sharing among peers, improves learners' manipulative skills, facilitates the learning process, and fosters the evaluation process. This application is specially designed for educational activities that enhance communication, creativity, critical thinking, and problem-solving skills among learners. The impact of *WhatsApp* mobile social learning on the achievement and attitudes of female students compared with face-to-face learning in the classroom also has been conducted by Army in Mwakapinaet. al (2016). The result showed that there were real differences in the achievements and attitudes of the experimental group compared with the control group. Fattah (2015) also has conducted research about the effectiveness of using *WhatsApp Messenger* as one of the mobile learning techniques to develop students' writing skills. It was found that the use of *WhatsApp* had the students improve their writing. Therefore, the researcher will try to find out the improvement of student's writing ability by using picture series through *WhatsApp* Messenger in teaching descriptive text.

## II. METHODS

In this study, the researcher applied quantitative approach by using one-group pretest-posttest design. Hence, there was only one class used as experimental class that received treatment using picture series through *WhatsApp*. The sample of this research was a class of first-year students at SMPN 34 Bandar Lampung which was taken randomly among the population. Then, to gain the data, the researcher administered two writings tests. There were four meetings used to conduct the research. The first test was conducted in the first meeting before receiving the treatment while the second writing was given after having the treatment in the last meeting. The data from both test were analyzed by using *Statistical Package of Social Science* ver.25.

## III. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

### Result

#### The Result of Students' Writing Pretest and Posttest

After conducting the research, the researcher got the data of students' scores in both pretest and posttest. These scores were analyzed in order to know the improvement of students' writing after the implementation of picture series through *WhatsApp*. Therefore, the result of students' scores are presented in the following table:

**Table 3.1 Frequency Distribution of Students' Writing Score in Pretest and Posttest**

No.	Score	Fi-Pretest	Percentage	Fi-Posttest	Percentage
1	51-55	3	10.0	0	0
2	56-60	9	30.0	0	0
3	61-65	14	46.7	1	3.3
4	66-70	3	10.0	11	36.7
5	71-75	1	3.3	16	53.3
6	76-80	0	0	2	6.7
	Total	30	100	30	100

Table 3.1 presents the distribution of students' scores in both writing tests. However, there are several differences in the score's frequency. First, it is clearly seen that there are three students who got the score ranging in 51-50 (10%) in the pretest while in the posttest, none of the students got 51-50 (0%). A similar case happened to the second range of score, there are 9 students who got 56-60 (30%) in the pretest while there, is no students who got the score in this range (0%) in the posttest. After that, there are 14 students who got the score of 61-65 (46.7%) which comes as the highest percentage of score in the pretest. In contrast, only one student who got the score in the range of 61-65 (3.3%) in the posttest. Moreover, there are three students who got the score around 66-70 (10%) after taking the pretest, which then increased to be 11 students who got 66-70 (36.7%) in the posttest. Then, there are only one student who got 71-75 in pretest while in posttest, this range of score have its higher percentage by having 16 students (53.3%). Last, there is no students who got the score below 75 in the pretest while in the posttest, there are two students who got 76-80 (6.7%).

Furthermore, it can be concluded that the lowest score in the pretest is 51-55 and 61-65 in the posttest. On the other hand, the highest score in the pretest is 71-75 while in the posttest is 76-80.

#### **The Gain of Students' Pretest and Posttest**

Furthermore, the researcher calculated the mean of students' scores in pretest and posttest to know the gain of the test. The result of the calculation is served in Table 4.2 below.

**Table 3.2 The Gain of Students Writing Score**

Mean score of pretest	Mean score of posttest	Gain
61.13	70.73	9.6

From the table above, it can be seen that the mean of pretest score is 61.13 and the mean of posttest score is 70.73. Besides, it is also revealed that the gain of the test is 9.6. It can be concluded that the students' scores were increased from pretest to posttest. In other words, students' writing skill was improved after they were being taught by using picture series through *WhatsApp*.

#### **Hypothesis Testing**

To know whether the hypothesis proposed by the researcher was accepted or not, it is a must to run a hypothesis testing. In this researcher, the researcher used Paired Sample T-test to analyze the result of the test. Furthermore, the result of the calculation is showed in the following table:

**Table 3.3 Paired Sample T-test**

		Paired Differences					t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
					Lower	Upper			
Pair 1	Posttest - Pretest	9.667	5.142	.939	7.747	11.587	10.298	29	.000

H1 is accepted if the t-value > t-table with the level of significance at < 0.05 which means that under that situation, the H0 is rejected. Then, the table above shows that the result of the computation of the two-tailed significance value is 0.00. Hence, it can be said that H1 proposed by the researcher is accepted since 0.00 is lower than 0.05. Besides, if the t-value and the t-table are compared, it can be seen that 10.298 (t-value) is higher than 2.052 (t-table). Thus, it can be concluded that students got significant improvement on their writing after the implementation of picture series through *WhatsApp*.

### Result of Students' Writing in Each Aspect

In order to answer the second research question, which writing aspect improves the most after the implementation of picture series through *WhatsApp*, the researcher calculated the score from the first and the second rater to get the mean of each aspect in both tests. Moreover, the N-gain score of each aspect was also compared by the researcher to know the improvement of students' score. Below is the complete result of the statistical analysis of students' results in each aspect of writing.

**Table 3.4 Students' Writing Improvement in Each Aspect of Writing**

Writing Aspects	Mean		Gain	T-Value	Sig.
	Pretest	Posttest			
Content	16.47	17.98	0.1111	3.538	.000
Organization	14.12	17.50	0.5762	7.397	.000
Vocabulary	13.73	15.63	0.3015	3.678	.000
Language use	14.17	16.25	0.1944	4.596	.000
Mechanic	2.63	3.18	0.2555	4.080	.000

From the table 3.4, it can be seen that all of the writing aspects were statistically improved including content, organization, vocabulary, language use, and mechanic as t-value of each aspect are 3.538 (content), 7.397 (organization), 3.678 (vocabulary), 4.596 (language use), and 4.080 (mechanic) which were lower than the t-table (2.052). Besides, the significant level of the aspects was less than 0.05 (0.000 < 0.05). However, the highest increase was in organization with the gain of 0.5762 which was followed by vocabulary with the score of 0.3015. After that, there was

mechanic with the number of 0.2555, language use with the score of 0.1944, and the last content by having 0.1111 as its gain score.

Furthermore, regarding content, some of them still get lack of giving detailed information about the animal that they described. Then, this problem could be handled by the students in the posttest as they were able to elaborate their ideas by analyzing the pictures. Besides, organization showed the highest improvement as in the pretest, the students were failed in arranging their ideas into a well-organized sentences. They just wrote whatever they want to write without considering the organization. Nevertheless, by having picture series, the students were able to put the information from the pictures in good order. Their ideas were clearly stated by following the sequence of the pictures which helped them to make a coherent paragraph. Then, concerning vocabulary, it was found that most students got lack of vocabulary knowledge. They still got difficulty in using content and function words by seeing the word choice in their pretest writing. Nonetheless, in the posttest, the students used the vocabulary properly by considering the context. The information from the pictures helped the students to identify proper words for their writings. Discussing the result of the students' writing related to language use, it was found that in the pretest most of students showed many grammatical errors, especially tenses. They still got difficulties in constructing sentence structure. While in the posttest, the students' got better understanding of the use of tenses and language features. Last, there was mechanic. In the pretest, most students did several errors in spelling, capitalization, and punctuation. They tended to forget to comma and full stop. However, those errors were decreased in the posttest as the students have used proper punctuation and capitalization in their writing.

### **Discussion of Findings**

The research has been conducted in four meetings. The first meeting was used to give the pretest in order to know students' initial ability in writing descriptive text. After that, in the second and third meetings, the students attended class in *WhatsApp* group. The students were learned about descriptive text by using picture series as the media. The researcher sends the example of picture series and asked the students to identify the information in each picture. Last, the posttest was administered to know students' improvement after getting the treatment in *WhatsApp* group. Moreover, the result showed that students' writings were enhanced as the mean of the posttest (70.73) was higher than the mean of pretest (61.13) with the increase of 9.6. Besides, the hypothesis was accepted since the two-tailed significance of the Paired Sample T-test was lower than 0.05 while t-value was higher than t-table ( $10.298 > 2.052$ ).

Those evidences above provoke the conclusion that picture series improves students' writing skill in descriptive text. It is because the use of picture series can gain students' motivation and interest, especially to write a text. This finding is in line with the argument from Weninget. Al (2017) that the series of the pictures make the students pay attention to the learning process, stimulating the students to take part in the class activity. The students are eager to actively respond to the instructions from the teacher. Then, added by Apsari (2017) that the students have new media and new concept on learning. They are more interested in learning writing because the materials given

are in form of visual aid which is interesting and meaningful. After writing by using picture series regularly, the students were motivated to write better. As the result, it gives positive effect on their writing ability. Additionally, the students are able to develop their ideas clearly by using picture series in constructing writing. As stated by Yuliarsih (2016) that picture series helps the students to develop ideas to write a paragraph. It is a tool primarily used for stimulating thought. When seeing the pictures, the students think about the information of the thing they are going to describe. Moreover, it is also confirmed by Akim (2017) that students can express their ideas in writing form by translating their imagination of the pictures. The students can elaborate the content of their writing by considering the information that they got from the pictures and transfer the ideas into sentences.

Furthermore, regarding the utilization of *WhatsApp*, it was found that students were excited to learn writing in *WhatsApp* group chat. They got a lot of opportunities to share their ideas and opinions in the group without being intimidated by other people which is very good that influences the students to share the information that they got from the picture series. This is similar to the statement from Linda and Ri'aeni (2018) that students like to participate in the *WhatsApp Messenger* because they can have some opportunities to study in pairs or individually. Besides, this intervention may help teachers to guide students to write simple sentences outside of the typical classroom setting and at the same time obtain more engagement with students (Kamal et. al, 2020). Therefore, it can be said that *WhatsApp* give good impact on the students' learning process.

Likewise, the researcher also analyzed the students' scores in each aspect of writing. Then, it was revealed that all of the writing aspects were improved after the implementation of picture series in *WhatsApp*. After comparing the mean of pretest and posttest, the gain score of each aspect was calculated, coming with the result of content (0.1111), organization (0.5762), vocabulary (0.3015), language use (0.1944), and mechanic (0.2555). By seeing the increase, it is clearly seen that the most improved aspect is organization. This is happened because in the pretest the students did not know how to put their ideas in a logical sequence. They tended to write sentences based on the information appeared on their mind which was quite confusing. Hence, their description of the object is difficult to be understood and became a little bit choppy. However, students performed better in the posttest after learning descriptive text using picture series. The students constructing their writing better because they can follow the order of the pictures. Nirmala (2013) shares similar findings by having the fact that picture series provide information of which event comes first and which one comes next. Weninget. Al (2017) also agree with this by saying that picture series showed some actions or events in chronological order. By knowing the sequence of events, the students could generate their ideas better than without using picture series. Therefore, it can be concluded that Picture Series can help students to organize the information that they put in their writing.

Moreover, this researcher came with several differences from the previous study. First, the previous researches were focused on the use of picture series in offline class. Nevertheless, picture series was adapted to be the media in teaching and learning descriptive text in *WhatsApp*. The researcher sent

the picture series to the group chat and discuss it with the students. Secondly, the previous researchers did two-cycled treatment in their researcher process. They run the treatment for a quite long time which was divided into two phases. While in this research, the researcher conducted the treatment for only two meetings because of the limitation of the time during the pandemic condition.

Finally, it can be concluded that the utilization of picture series as media to teach descriptive writing in *WhatsApp* can help students to improve their writing ability. All of the aspects of writing were enhanced after learning descriptive text using picture series. Students were actively engaged with the class activity as they were interested with the pictures. As the results, the use of picture series can give good result to the students' writing.

#### **IV. CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION**

The use of picture series through *WhatsApp* can give positive impact on the students' writing in descriptive text. Picture series can guide the students in constructing descriptive text and can gain students' motivation and interest to follow the learning process. It was also found out that all of the writing aspects were improved after the students learned descriptive text using picture series in *WhatsApp* group. The highest aspect that improved the most was organization. It was because students are able to arrange the information in their descriptive text by following the sequence of the pictures. As the result, they can organize their ideas clearly to be a good paragraph. Moreover, some suggestions refers to English teacher and further researcher regarding the conclusion. First, English teachers are suggested to apply picture series as an alternative media in teaching writing to make the students actively engage in the class as the use of this media can help teachers to take students' attention and interest. For other researcher, it is suggested that the treatment should be applied in more than two meetings in order to get more accurate result of data. Besides, the other researchers can also use other online platforms to conduct similar study.

#### **REFERENCES**

- Akim, H., Rufinus, A., &Rezeki, Y. S. Using pictures to improve writing a descriptive text. *JurnalPendidikandanPembelajaranKhatulistiwa*, 6(12).
- Apsari, Y. (2017). The use of picture series in teaching writing recount text. *EltinJournal, Journal of English Language Teaching In Indonesia*, 5(2), 51-56.
- Barhoumi, C. (2015). The effectiveness of *WhatsApp* mobile learning activities guided by activity theory on students' knowledge management. *Contemporary educational technology*, 6(3), 221-238.



Brown, H. (1980). *Principles of language learning and teaching*. New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc.

Fattah, S. F. E. S. A. (2015). The effectiveness of using *WhatsApp* messenger as one of mobile learning techniques to develop students' writing skills. *Journal of Education and practice*, 6(32), 115-127.

Hasan, Basturi. (2016). *Refining sentences writing skill for professional and academic purposes; a practical application of modern rhetoric*. Yogyakarta: Graha Ilmu.

Jaramillo, U & Medina, G. (2011). *Adolescent awareness of environmental care: experiences when writing short descriptive texts in English*. Colegiodistritalaquileoparra. Colombia.

Kamal, S. S. M., Bakar, N. I. A., Sarangapani, S., & Yunus, M. M. (2020). What's the story?: using *WhatsApp* story to enhance writing skills. *Changing Lives in Brilliant Ways*, 19.

Linda, L., & Ri'aeni, I. (2018). *WhatsApp* messenger as a mobile media to learn writing for EFL students. *Jurnal Ilmu Komunikasi Efek*, 1(2), 156-165.

Mwakapina, J. W., Mhandeni, A. S., & Nyinondi, O. S. (2016). *WhatsApp* mobile tool in second language learning: Opportunities, potentials and challenges in higher education settings in Tanzania.

Nirmala, Y. Teaching writing using picture stories as tools at the high school level: The movement from other regulation to self-regulation. *Dissertation. Hyderabad: The English and Foreign Languages University*. 2013.

Richard, J. C, and Renandya, W. A. (2002). *Methodology in language teaching*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Saputri, I. W. (2014). Improving the writing skills of recount texts by using picture series for the eighth

grade students of SMP Muhammadiyah 2 Kalasan in the academic year of 2013/2014.

*Unpublished Thesis*. Yogyakarta State University.

Wening, R. H., Cahyono, B. Y., &Iragiliati, E. (2017). Effect of using picture series on mnmthe Indonesian EFL students' writing ability across learning styles. *International Journal on Studies in English Language and Literature (IJSELL)*, 5(5).

Yuliarsih, Y. (2016). The effectiveness of using picture series to teach writing in SMPN 1 WaruPamekasan. *KABILAH: Journal of Social Community*, 1(1), 39-52.

Yusnita, E., Sada, C., &Novita, D. (2012). Improving students' recount text writing by using picture series. *JurnalPendidikandanPembelajaranKhatulistiwa*, 2(4).