

Improving the Second Year Students' Ability in Writing Narrative Paragraphs by Using Picture Series

Kalsum Mochtar

Abstract: This collaborative classroom action research was directed to obtain information about how the secondgrade students' ability in writing a narrative paragraph improved by using picture series. Specifically, it was intended to develop the strategy of using picture series to improve the student's ability in writing narrative paragraphs. The result shows that the appropriate model of using picture series in the teaching of writing narrative paragraphs contains some procedures and has some strengths in improving the students' ability in writing narrative paragraphs. The improvements resulted from the use of series of pictures in the form of cartoon and series of questions related to the pictures.

Keywords: picture series, writing ability, narrative paragraphs.

In the process of learning and teaching English, writing is placed at the last stage among the four skills (listening, speaking, reading and writing). As stated in the 2004 Competency Based Curriculum, the students are expected to be able to listen, speak, read and write. Like the other three language skills, writing also has an important role in the context of English teaching as a foreign language in Indonesia. English as a second or foreign language requires the students to be able to write in English fluently and correctly. Teaching writing may help students to express their thought on paper and help our students to learn.

Kalsum Mochtar is an English teacher at MTs. Alkhairaat Kalukubula Donggala Regency, Central Sulawesi.

According to Byrne (1988), writing involves the encoding of a message of some kind, that is, we translate our thoughts into language. He states that when we write, we use grammatical rules and the letters or combinations of the letters which relate to the sounds we make when we speak. We do not write just one sentence or even a number of unrelated sentences. We produce a sequence of sentences arranged in a particular order and linked together in certain ways. The sequence may be very short, which consists of two or three sentences, but because of the way they have been put in order and linked together, they form a coherent whole.

The teaching of writing at SLTP should be taught from the first to the third year. In the first year the students are asked to write simple and short sentences, messages, and short announcements. In the second and third year, they are expected to be able to write texts in the form of narrative, recount, and description and to write simple messages and personal letters. In relation to the statement above, the teaching of writing at SLTP is a simple one. However, writing as productive skills besides speaking, is considered a complicated skill for SLTP students to master. It is a complex activity requiring a variety of skills. Mukminatien (1997) reported that writing in English is not a simple matter because when one is to write, he demonstrates not only his competence in the grammar of English, but also his knowledge in the acceptable English rhetoric or the communicative aspects of writing in English. To help students to be able to write, a teacher should be more creative to find out the appropriate techniques in teaching writing. It is important that the teacher improve his or her techniques in teaching writing and offer guidance in helping students to engage in the thinking process of composing. Besides, some instructional media such as pictures should be developed.

Based on the researcher's experiences as an English teacher at *MTs. Alk-hairaat Kalukubula* and the result of a preliminary study conducted at that school, it was found that the teaching of writing was far from what the teachers expected. It was because most of the teachers thought that writing is more complicated than the other skills. According to Byrne (1988), writing is difficult for students because they are required to write on their own, without any interaction or feedback. He further states that in writing the students have to compose their writing by using their own choice of sentence structure and organize their own idea in such a way that they can be understood by the reader. Also, teachers do not try to search for the appropriate techniques in their teaching. In learning activities, the activities are mostly dominated by arranging jumbled words to be a sentence or jumbled sentences to be a paragraph

and completing a dialogue or passage. The students are also asked to write a simple paragraph by using their own words without their teacher's assistance. As a result, it is difficult for the students to express their ideas on paper. The students are not able to construct their words into a sentence and arrange the sentences to become a good paragraph. This condition influences the students' ability in writing a paragraph.

In *MTs. Alkhairaat Kalukubula*, the researcher found that the students had many problems in writing. The first problem was that the students' writing was not comprehensible because the content of the composition was not relevant to the topic, the ideas were not clearly stated, the ideas and sentences were not well organized. The second problem was that there were many errors in vocabulary, grammar, and spelling. The third problem was that the students had low motivation and were not interested in doing the tasks since the writing activities were monotonous and not interesting. The students were only asked to write sentences and paragraphs without being given some clues so that it was difficult for them to express their ideas onto paper.

As a teacher in the school, the researcher tries to find a kind of technique that can help students to write sentences or a simple paragraph and to motivate them to join the writing class. The researcher assumes that one of the good ways of teaching writing is by using instructional media. Instructional media are important in the teaching and learning process since they can enhance and promote learning and support the teacher's instruction. However, the use of media needs to be planned carefully. The teacher should follow some consideration in using instructional media in order to avoid difficulties and mistakes in their activities. Wright (1992) mentions that some considerations in selecting media are: (1) the media should be easy to prepare; (2) they should be easy to organize in the classroom; (3) they should be interesting to the students and the teachers; (4) the activity must give rise to a sufficient amount of language in order to justify its conclusion in the language lesson.

There are many kinds of instructional media that can be used in the teaching and learning process. One of them is picture. Pictures as the instructional media are very useful for teaching English. One of the roles of the media is to attract the students' attention and to deliver information (Suyanto, 1995). The use of pictures as a visual media in the teaching learning process is intended to make the process more effective and efficient so that the quality of learning outcomes can be improved.

In this study, the researcher tries to find out the best way of teaching writing especially narratives. A narrative tells a story- a series of connected events or an action-process of action. Although narration usually refers to the telling of the story, the term is used to describe the relating of an experience. That experience may happen in the past, or it may be a typical experience that is happening now (Depdiknas, 2002). To make a narrative paragraph, it would be better if the teachers use picture series to make the incident clear, and the students will arrange the sentences in a chronological order. The researcher believes that the use of picture series is beneficial for the students of MTs. Alkhairaat Kalukubula because it may guide, help and encourage students to express their ideas, opinions, and thoughts onto paper. There are many kinds of pictures that can be used in teaching writing, such as pictures from books, magazines, text-books or teacher-made pictures. Hopefully the students will be able to write a narrative paragraph by using picture series as the aid in the teaching and learning activity.

Based on the unsatisfactory condition of the teaching and learning of writing skill and the consideration that a picture can be one of the instructional media in the teaching and learning process, this research was conducted in order to find a good way to improve the students' writing skill. This research also focused on the teaching of narrative paragraph writing by using series of pictures as the instructional media.

METHOD

This study was a classroom action research. According to Ur (1996) action research is carried out by teachers on phenomena in their own classroom. Action research is meant primarily to improve the teacher-researcher's own teaching. Based on the characteristics of the action research, the researcher applied the cycle process in her study. This study was done in two cycles. In the first cycle the strategy of using series of pictures could be implemented well, but it still had some weaknesses. The researcher revised the strategy of the action in cycle 1 to improve the outcome quality in cycle 2. Because the target was achieved, the cycle was stopped in cycle 2. This study was categorized as a collaborative classroom action research since the researcher worked together with one of the classroom teachers at the school where the study was conducted to plan the action, implement the action, observe the action, analyze and reflect the action.

The procedures showed that the plan was made based on the findings of the preliminary observation on the teaching and learning in the classroom. In the planning stage, the strategy of using picture series in writing narrative paragraphs to be developed in this study was defined. During the process of implementing the strategy, the collaborative teacher observed all the activities done in the classroom by using observation checklist and at the same time the researcher also noted the activities that were not included in the observation sheet by using field notes. After the data were collected, the researcher and the collaborative teacher analyzed the data to know how much the criteria proposed had been achieved.

This study was conducted at MTs Alkhairaat Kalukubula. The school was chosen as the subject of the study because the students of this school had difficulties in writing paragraphs and the teacher in that school had never applied the strategy of using pictures in writing activities. In addition, the classroom activities did not provide students with sufficient writing practice because the English class was mostly used for reading. The subjects of this study were the students of class II A of MTs. *Alkhairaat Kalukubula* in the 2003/2004 academic year, which consisted of 35 students. The picture series strategy was implemented for all students in class IIA. The researcher chose this class because the ability of the students in this class varied. Some students had high ability in English but some of them had fair and poor ability in English.

The researcher conducted a preliminary observation to identify the real condition of the student's problems and the teacher's problems in the teaching and learning process. The preliminary observation was needed to design the appropriate action plan to solve the problem in English class especially in developing writing skill.

The researcher planned everything related to the action in the classroom such as steps in teaching writing, instructional materials and series of pictures as the media in teaching and learning activity. In implementing the plan, the researcher asked the collaborative teacher to collect data by observing the action. After the data were collected, the researcher and collaborator made an evaluation of the result of data collection. Data analysis was done in the reflection on the basis of the evaluation and the result of reflection determined whether the action was successful or not. The criteria of success of this study were as follows: (1) The students were able to write a short narrative paragraph related to the series of picture, (2) The students were active and motivated during the teaching and learning process. To analyze students' ability,

their composition was collected in each meeting, and then analyzed by using some indicators of quality. Those indicators showed the level of the students' writing ability. There are three level of the students' writing ability *Very Good*, *Good*, and *Poor*. The achievement of the criterion was based on the result of the analysis towards the students' composition. If 75 % the students' composition belonged to the level *Good*, it means that the first criterion is met (see Table 1).

Table 1 Indicator of Success of the Students' Writing

| Level | Indicator |
|-----------|---|
| Very good | The content is complete and relevant to the topic. Ideas are clearly stated. The sentences are well organized and completely sequenced. No mistakes in grammar and vocabulary |
| Good | The content is complete and relevant to the topic. Ideas are clearly stated. The sentences are well organized but incompletely sequenced. A few mistakes in grammar and vocabulary |
| Poor | The content is not complete and not relevant to the topic. Ideas are not clearly stated. The sentences are not well organized and incompletely sequenced. Many mistakes in grammar and vocabulary. |

The data on the students' active involvement and motivation were obtained from the observation checklists and field notes. The students were considered active and motivated if they were involved in the teaching and learning process by giving responses to the teacher's instruction such as giving comments and opinions to the topic given, responding to the teacher's explanation, examining the pictures shown by the teacher, gathering ideas related to the pictures, writing their paragraphs, and collecting their work.

RESULTS

The Teaching and Learning Process in Cycle 1

The preparation was made before the researcher started to do the research. The preparation of the first cycle was about preparing the lesson plan, materials, group arrangement, and the series of pictures to be used.

The lesson plan designed by the researcher consisted of the topics and sub topics, instructional objectives, instructional materials, and teaching and

learning activities. The main objective in each cycle was to develop the students' ability in writing narrative paragraphs by using picture series. The researcher showed the lesson plan to the collaborative teacher and discussed it.

The topics taught to the students in this cycle were *public service* and *animals*. The topic for the first meeting was *public service*. The researcher chose the topic because in the discussion with the classroom teacher, it was found that she had taught the topic *public service* with the sub topics *post office* and *restaurant*. Consequently, the researcher continued the topic, and the sub topic was *banking*. In the second and third meeting, the researcher chose the topic *animals* and the sub topics were *going to the zoo* and *pets*.

In the teaching and learning process, the students were arranged in groups. Each group consisted of four to five students. There were five groups of four students and three groups of five students. The total number of the students was thirty-five. The teacher divided the students based on the students' achievement in English. The members of the groups were heterogeneous in terms of achievement.

The series of pictures to be used in the teaching and learning process were chosen based on the topic and the sub topics. The series of pictures used in this cycle were taken from the text books. The pictures chosen by the researcher were the simple pictures so that the students could interpret the pictures easily. The researcher as the teacher also provided some explanations about how to develop the narrative paragraph.

The teaching and learning process of the first cycle was planned for three meetings. Those three meetings were planned to see the students' improvement in writing narrative paragraphs using picture series.

For the first, the second, and the third meetings of the first cycle, it was found that the strategy of using series of pictures could be implemented well although it still had some weaknesses.

First, the students were not given a model of how to write a narrative paragraph by using series of pictures so that the students could not write the paragraph as expected by the teacher. In the first cycle the teacher distributed series of pictures to each of the students and directly asks the students to examine the pictures. When the teacher asked them to make a draft of some sentences that describe the events of each picture most of the students did not know what to write. No model was given to them. After receiving the series of pictures, each group directly wrote a narrative paragraph. As a consequence, the students asked many questions to the teacher about how to construct their paragraph. The students had difficulty in arranging their sentences into a paragraph.

Second, the picture series that were used in the first cycle still needed the improvement. When the teacher and collaborative teacher monitored and guided the students, it was found that the students had difficulties arranging their sentences chronologically and in a complete sequence. The researcher and the collaborative teacher made an agreement to give series of picture equipped with the series of questions in the next cycle so that the students could arrange their sentences chronologically and in a complete sequence.

Third, the students often asked for clarification when they were asked to construct their paragraph. The instruction was not clear and was hard to understand. To overcome that problem the teacher provided the instructions written in English and *Bahasa Indonesia* in the next cycle.

In this cycle, when the teacher started the lesson, some students did not pay attention to the teacher's instruction. They talked about something irrelevant to the lesson. That was caused by the lack of activity that interested the students in English. The teacher directly asked the students some questions related to the topic without any discussion and explanation about what the teacher expected from the students. As the result, they did not know what to do and too often asked the teacher for clarification. And when the teacher asked them to give their opinion or comments toward the topic given, they were just silent. When the teacher asked them to answer the questions about the topic, many of the students tried to give their answers.

In addition, in the implementation of the strategy, there was no arrangement of time allocation for each activity. The teacher spent a lot of time in the first and second tasks during whilst writing because there was no decision about how much time the teacher would use in one task. So for the main task, the students only had limited time to do it. The students also had difficulty developing some sentences because they did not have enough vocabulary. This became worse since most of them did not have dictionaries. In the postwriting activity, the students were asked to read their paragraph in front of the class. For the first time, none of the student wanted to come in front of the class. They were afraid because their friends might laugh at them. So, the teacher called them one by one. Three students were asked to read their paragraph to their friends. When asked to collect their task, most of them did it.

The Analysis of the Students' Writing in Cycle 1

The researcher collected and analyzed the students' writing from the first cycle on the basis of indicators of students' writing that had been pro-

vided. Based on the analysis of students' writing, it was found that the ability of all students in the three meetings gained only little improvement. In the first meeting there was a series of eight pictures that should be transferred into a paragraph, while in the second meeting and the third meetings, four pictures for each series were provided. The ability of the students in the second meeting and the third meeting was not too different from their ability in the first meeting. The content was complete and relevant to the topic, but the ideas were not easy to understand. The sentences were not well organized and in an incomplete sequence. There were also many mistakes in grammar and vocabulary. In developing a paragraph, the students faced difficulties because they only had limited vocabulary related to the topic. The students' word choice was also far from being perfect. The sentences made by the students were influenced by *Bahasa Indonesia*. Based on the indicators of students' writing, the data show that only 12 (42 %) of the students' writing were categorized as *good*. The students' writing was still in the poor level because although the content was complete and relevant to the topic, the ideas were not easy to understand, the sentences were not well organized and the sequence was incomplete. There were also many mistakes in grammar and vocabulary.

To minimize the number of the students' mistakes in their writing the teacher collected the students' writing, gave corrections, and returned the papers to them. From the corrections of their mistakes the students were supposed to learn more to improve their writing.

From the analysis of the teaching and learning process and the students' writing in the first cycle, the implementation of strategy of using of series pictures to improve the students' ability in writing did not yet give satisfactory results. Therefore, the strategy of the action plan still needed to be improved so that it could achieve the criteria of success of this research. Some aspects of the teaching and learning strategies employed still needed to be revised and improved and therefore, this action research was continued to the second cycle. The revision was done on the activities and the strategy to be implemented, the form of pictures series and the time management.

The Teaching and Learning Process in Cycle 2

In the second cycle, the preparation was done on the activities and the strategy to be implemented, the model of picture series and time management. The activity in applying the strategy of using series of pictures was added with modeling. As stated in the previous cycle, the students had diffi-

culty writing their paragraphs since there was no modeling given to them. With modeling, they would have an example of how to construct their paragraph.

In the prewriting activity, discussions and explanation about what the teacher expected from the students were added to make the students more active and motivated in joining the teaching and learning process. The teacher did not only ask some questions related to the topic but also provided some pictures and encouraged the students to brainstorm their ideas related to the pictures and the topic.

In the main task, the students were given a series of pictures and equipped with a series of questions to make them easier to arrange their sentences and ideas chronologically. The answers of the questions functioned as the guide for them to arrange their ideas. In addition to the activities in the main tasks, the instructions are written in English and *Bahasa Indonesia* to make the students understand what they had to do without taking too much time to clarify the instructions.

To attract the students' attention and to make them more motivated in doing their task, the researcher selected interesting pictures. The series of pictures used was taken from children's magazines in the form of cartoon. The characters of the story in the pictures were kinds of animals which were called Ber-Ber and Giga. In addition, the researcher also prepared some dictionaries to help the students minimize their problems in vocabulary.

In the teaching and learning process, the students were arranged in groups. The arrangement of groups in this cycle was not different from the first cycle. Each group consisted of four to five students. There were five groups of four students and three groups of five students. The total number of the students was thirty-five. The purpose of this arrangement was to encourage the members of the groups to help each other, share ideas, and work more optimally. In the third meeting the students did the task individually because the teacher wanted to know the students' ability and improvement in the writing activity.

The lesson plans were prepared for the next three meetings. In each stage of the activities such as pre-writing, whilst-writing, and post-writing the time to be spent was decided by the teacher. This was aimed at preventing the teacher from spending too much time on one particular activity. For the first meeting, the topic of the student's writing was still about *animals* and for the second and the third meetings the topic was about *geography*. Generally, the teaching and learning process of the second cycle was the same as that in the

first cycle which was planned for three meetings with different instructional objectives, materials and activities from one meeting to another.

In all activities from the first meeting to the third meeting of the second cycle, the students were actively involved in the activities. They did the tasks quickly and discussed it with their friends. Since the students were divided into groups of four to five students, they discussed all the questions together, answered them correctly and worked cooperatively. The students who had low achievement could do the tasks better since they worked cooperatively. Each member of the group was given a chance to develop sentences and arrange the sentences into a paragraph. During the teaching and learning process, no more students made disruptive behaviors or talked irrelevant matter since the teacher monitored them. In the main tasks, the students were given a series of pictures and equipped with a series of questions to make them easier to arrange their sentences and their ideas chronologically. In doing their tasks the students had a high motivation to do the task because of some reasons. Firstly, with modeling given by the teacher in the form of narrative paragraphs, the students arranged their sentences and ideas into paragraphs. Secondly, they were highly motivated because the pictures looked funny to them. The pictures that contained cartoon drawing attracted their attention to interpret them. They were active and motivated in doing the main tasks because they could express their ideas related to the pictures. They also used the answers of the questions as a guide to arrange their sentences. Each member of the groups contributed their ideas to develop a good paragraph. Most of them had their own ideas for each picture.

In each task given to the students, the instruction was written in English and *Bahasa Indonesia* to help the students understand what they had to do without taking too much time to clarify the instructions. The time allotment that had been set for each activity also helped the teacher to manage her time in implementing the strategy. She could apply each activity in line with the time allotment.

From the above explanation, the researcher and collaborator agreed that the second criterion of success was achieved.

The Analysis of the Students' Writing in Cycle 2

In terms of the product of the students' writing work, the researcher collected and analyzed the students' writing in the second cycle on the basis of indicators of students' writing that had been provided. Based on the analysis towards the students' writing, it was found that the ability of all students in

the three meetings gained better improvement. In the first, the second, and the third meetings there were series of four pictures provided. The ability of the students in all meetings in the second cycle had a good result. The content was complete and relevant to the topic and the ideas were easy to understand. The sentences were well organized and in a complete sequence. However, there were few mistakes in grammar and vocabulary. In developing the paragraph, the students were helped by the answers of the questions that they used as their sentences in their paragraph. Their limited vocabularies were reduced by using dictionaries. Some dictionaries were provided for the students to minimize their problems in vocabulary. Based on the indicator of the students' writing, the finding showed that the students' writing was in the *good* level because the content was complete and relevant to the topic, the ideas were easy to understand, the sentences were well organized and in accordance with the sequence of events in the pictures even though there were still some mistakes made by the students in terms of grammar and vocabulary. There were some mistakes that the students made in terms of word choice, the absence of articles, and the lack of concord. Based on the students' writing that had been analyzed by using some indicators of the students' writing, it can be concluded that the implementation of the strategy of using series pictures in writing narrative paragraphs has achieved the criteria of success in which 28 students (80%) were able to write a short narrative paragraph that consisted of five or more sentences fluently related to the series of pictures in each meeting. From the statement above, it can be concluded that the strategy of using series of pictures in teaching writing has met the criteria. Therefore, the implementation of the strategy was stopped.

DISCUSSION

Based on the findings of this research, it is found that the appropriate model of strategy of using pictures series requires the teacher to follow particular procedures. First, the teacher shows the pictures and asks some questions related to the topic to the students. The teacher also encourages students to brainstorm their ideas related to the pictures and the topic. It aimed to dig the students' prior knowledge and their ideas about the topic. This activity is called brainstorming in which a topic is introduced by the teacher and the students call out ideas associated with the topic while the teacher writes the ideas on the board. Brainstorming can be used prior to the introduction of a new material to enhance discovery and curiosity. The students will feel confident

to answer the questions because there is no wrong or right answer in this activity. The teacher accepts all the students' answers and writes it on the board. Then the teacher explains what she wants the students to do.

Second, the teacher asks the students to sit in groups. The students are provided with the model of writing products. The models are a short paragraph with series of pictures being described. Model is the example or demonstration of how to do or how to make something. According to Suyanto (2002) modeling gives the knowledge and skills through a model that could be seen or could be done. The teacher explains the model of writing well so that the students understand it.

Third, the teacher equips the instruction of the tasks in Bahasa Indonesia and also clarifies it especially when the students still do not get the ideas. When teachers give instructions, it is important for them to check that the students have understood what they are being asked to do (Harmer, 1988). Fourth, before the main task, the teacher provides some tasks that the students should do before the main task. The purpose of those tasks is to provide the students with vocabularies related to the topic and to train the students with another skill such as listening, reading, or speaking since the activities are done integrated in each meeting. Fifth, the teacher distributes the pictures and a series of questions to the students. The questions are related to the pictures and aimed to help the students in constructing their sentences into a paragraph. According to Wright (1989) it is called question stories. He states that in question stories, a sequence of questions are asked about a picture or a series of pictures. The students' answers to the questions guide them when writing a story or description. The students are asked to investigate events in the pictures and answer the questions related to the pictures. During the process, the students are encouraged to share ideas and make discussion. The teacher helps the students to read a series of questions given to lead their understanding on questions and pictures so that they are able to arrange their sentences into a good paragraph. In addition to the series of pictures used in the activity, the researcher chose the cartoon form because it can attract students' attention. According to Soesinto (1989), it is convenient to use cartoon drawings as media for classroom interaction; it proves useful not only because it is entertaining but also helping students to formulate ideas to communicate.

Sixth, the teacher asks and guides the students to develop their draft into a short paragraph. In this stage, the teacher walks around to guide the students and helps the students in making some corrections to the students' writing.

Finally, the teacher gives the opportunity to publish their writing by reading it in front of the class before their works are submitted to the teacher.

During the teaching and learning process, the students are grouped to work together. In the group arrangement, the members are made heterogeneous in terms of achievement. The students are grouped in learning because the students will help each other and it is easier for the teacher to manage and control them. Harmer (1988) indicates that group work is a cooperative activity. In groups, students tend to participate more equally, and are also more able to experiment and use the language than they are in a whole class arrangement. Working in groups, the students are always controlled and guided by the teacher. In the third meeting of each cycle, the students did their writing individually because the researcher wanted to see and evaluate their progress and improvement in writing activity.

In implementing the strategy, in the first cycle, some of the students paid attention to all instruction given but some of them did not give a quick response and only kept silent without doing anything. That was caused by the lack of activity that could interest the students in English. The teacher directly asked the students some questions related to the topic without any discussion and explanation about what the teacher expected from the students. In the second cycle, the participation of the students was categorized as *good*, because the students were active in following the activities instructed by the teacher in the teaching of writing. That was caused by the activity in pre writing which was completed with brainstorming and the choice of the form of pictures series given to the students. Since the series of pictures in the form of cartoon, the students enthusiastically looked at the series of pictures given. In the main activities, they were active in accomplishing the tasks given.

In the process of writing paragraphs, the students were active in examining the pictures, answering the questions, arranging the answers into sentences, and arranging their sentences into a paragraph. In all activities the students were active to share ideas and discuss with each other in their groups. In examining the pictures, the students gathered their ideas that they got from the series of pictures given. The teacher asked them to list their ideas to become their sentences in their paragraphs.

Although the instructional strategy has been applied appropriately, the students' writing is not satisfactory yet and still contains few mistakes. This problem is due to the students' lack of experience and exposure in English writing skills. The students are not equipped with enough vocabulary and understanding on English grammar. Based on the analysis of the students' writ-

ing, it is found that the major problem in writing for the students of MTs. *Alk-hairaat Kalukubula* is in the area of grammar and vocabulary. There are many mistakes in students' writing in the area of grammar such as the word order of noun phrase, concord, and the use of articles, even though they have been given series of pictures to tell in their writing. To cope with the students' problem on English grammar, the teacher gives explanation by practicing simple sentences with the focus on the sentence pattern of "*Subject + Verb + Object + Adverb*." In the mean time, when the students are required to combine sentences to form a paragraph, they are taught and asked to practice the use of conjunctions such as '*and*', '*but*', '*or*', '*because*', '*when*', '*after*', and '*before*'.

The students also make mistakes in word choice caused by the lack of vocabulary. In the teaching and learning activities, when the students are asked to write, most of them asked questions about vocabulary to the teacher. The teacher asks them to explore English words in the dictionaries and share with their friends. In this case, the teacher promotes the writing by responding to the content of the text and the fluency more than the form. Ur (1996) states that the teaching of pronunciation, vocabulary and grammar will tend to be accuracy-oriented while fluency emphasizes producing appropriate language in context. According to Wright (1989) the students should be given the time and encouragement to write extensively without too much control and without too much stress on accuracy. The skill of writing fluently and extensively can only be built up by giving confidence, a sense of purpose and an emphasis on meaning rather than on formal accuracy.

The use of picture series in teaching and learning writing can improve the students' writing skill. The improvement can be seen from the result of the students' writing based on the writing tasks given in each meeting. Based on the preliminary study before the strategy is implemented, the students face many difficulties in English writing. In their piece of writing, it contains errors in content, grammar, and vocabulary. The students' writing is in the poor level in which the content of their writing is not relevant to the topic. The ideas also are not clearly stated and the sentences are not well organized. The sequence of sentences made by the students is also not complete as the events in the sequence of pictures. There are also still many mistakes in grammar and vocabulary and, therefore, their writing not can be understood well.

In the first cycle of the implementation of the strategy, the ability of the students is low. They only make some simple sentences based on the series of pictures given. The content of the paragraph is relevant to the topic but the sentences are not well organized and the sequence of sentences made by the

students is not complete as the event in the sequence of pictures. The ideas of their paragraphs also are not easy to understand and the paragraphs still contain some mistakes in grammar and vocabulary. To minimize the numbers of errors and mistakes the students make in their writing, the teacher gives corrections to the students' writing after they collect their work and returns it to them. The teacher signs the error and mistakes so that the students can learn more to improve their writing. The students learn from correction given by the teacher.

In the second cycle, the ability of the students is good. They can make some sentences based on the series of pictures given and are guided with the answers of the series of questions. The paragraphs made by the students are easy to understand because the content of their writing is complete and relevant to the topic. The ideas are also clearly stated and the sentences are organized well. The students are able to minimize their mistakes in grammar and vocabulary. Their paragraphs contain only few mistakes.

The students' improvement in writing skill is caused by the increase of their vocabulary mastery and their ability to form some simple sentences. The students' vocabulary mastery increases because they have been equipped with dictionaries and they are trained to use. They are also guided to construct and to develop some sentences to produce a paragraph.

The result of the data analysis towards students' ability in joining writing class shows that the strategy of using pictures series in teaching narrative paragraphs is applicable for the second year students of *MTs. Alkhairaat Kalukubula* since the strategy may help the students to solve their problems in writing paragraphs, encourage the students to be more active and motivate the students in joining the writing class.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

Conclusion

After the picture series strategy is implemented and developed through two cycles, it is concluded that the appropriate model of strategy using series of pictures in teaching writing contains some procedures: (1) introducing to students a topic by using pictures, (2) giving some questions related to the pictures orally and brainstorming their ideas related to the pictures and the topic, (3) asking students to do some tasks that are related to the topic, (4) giving students a model of good paragraphs, (5) distributing a series of pictures and series of questions to each student, (6) asking students to examine

the pictures and answer the questions in their own sentences, (7) asking students to arrange their sentences into a paragraph, (8) monitoring and guiding the students' activities, (9) asking the students to read their own paragraphs, and (10) collecting students' compositions.

The strategy of using picture series has some strengths. First, it can improve or develop the writing ability of the second year students of *MTs. Alk-hairaat Kalukubula Donggala Regency, Central Sulawesi*. The development and the improvement of the students' ability in writing narrative paragraphs from Cycle I to Cycle II gain good progress compared to their ability before the strategy of using series of pictures is implemented.

In the first cycle of the implementation of the strategy, the ability of the students is low. They only make some simple sentences based on the series of pictures given. The content of the paragraph is relevant to the topic but the sentences are not well organized and the sequence of sentences made by the students is not complete as the event in the sequence of pictures. The ideas of their paragraphs are also not easy to understand and still contain some mistakes in grammar and vocabulary. In the second cycle, the students already make improvement in writing paragraphs. They can make some sentences based on the series of pictures given and help with the series of questions. The paragraphs made by the students are easy to understand because the content of their writing is complete and relevant to the topic. The ideas are also clearly stated and the sentences are organized well. The students are able to minimize their mistakes in grammar and vocabulary. Their paragraphs contain only few mistakes. Second, the use of series of pictures in the form of cartoon drawing, equipped with series of questions, can help the students state their ideas and arrange their sentences in a good organization. Third, the students are also more active and motivated since there is a brainstorming activity in pre writing that can be used prior to the introduction of new materials to enhance discovery and curiosity. In brainstorming, the students call out ideas related to the pictures and the topic. Fourth, in writing activity, the students are grouped because in groups they can discuss all the questions together, answer them correctly and all the members of the groups work cooperatively. It is also easier for the teacher to monitor and guide the students in groups.

Suggestions

In relation to the implementation of the strategy, some suggestions are proposed. The suggestions are addressed to the teachers and the principals of the Junior High School, and future researchers.

First, it is suggested that teachers who have the same problems as the teachers in *MTs. Alkhairaat Kalukubula* use series of pictures in the form of cartoon to make the students feel happy and enthusiastic to follow the lesson because cartoons are genuinely presented to entertain. Second, provide the students with series of questions related to the pictures to make the students able to construct their paragraph easily. Third, to make the instructional process more efficient, the teacher should set the time limit in each stage of activities in the lesson plan. Fourth, the teacher should use *Bahasa Indonesia* in the teaching and learning process to clarify the instructions of the task because the English language is quite difficult to understand by the students and it can make them misunderstand the instructions. Fifth, it is better to group the students in writing activities so that the students can help each other and share ideas to improve their writing.

For the principals of the Junior High School, it is suggested that they give opportunities to teachers to conduct classroom action research by using series of pictures in the teaching of writing paragraphs if their class has the same problem as the second year students of *MTs. Alkhairaat Kalukubula, Donggala Regency, Central Sulawesi*.

For future researchers, it is suggested that they continue the classroom action research by using series of pictures in the teaching of writing descriptive or procedural paragraphs used to explain a process.

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