

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF WORDED PICTURES IN TEACHING DESCRIPTIVE WRITING TO EIGHTH-GRADERS OF SMPN 2 AMARASI SELATAN SATAP

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Abstract. The objective of the research is to know whether using worded pictures is effective in teaching descriptive writing to eighth-grade students of SMPN 2 Amarasi Selatan SATAP. The research was carried out at SMPN 2 Amarasi Selatan SATAP. The participants of this study were eighth-grade students in the school year 2013/2014. It applied a quasi-experimental design using a single-group approach, involving one class consisting of 39 students. The students were taught by using worded pictures for four meetings. Following the intervention, data were collected through a test and subsequently analyzed using a t-test. Based on the result of data analysis, the findings indicated that the use of worded pictures is effective in enhancing descriptive writing skills among the eighth-grade students of SMPN 2 Amarasi Selatan SATAP in the school year 2013/2014. The mean score on the pre-test was 1.87, which falls within the 'very poor' category. In contrast, the post test mean score increased to 3.33, classified as 'average.' This improvement indicates a substantial gain in students' writing performance, with a percentage increase of 78.07%. Furthermore, the t-test analysis revealed that the obtained t-value (-21.43) exceeds the critical t-value (2.024). Therefore, the alternative hypothesis - stating that teaching descriptive writing using worded pictures is effective - was accepted. These findings suggest that teachers should consider incorporating worded pictures as a pedagogical strategy for teaching descriptive writing, as such visual aids can assist students in organizing and expressing their ideas.

Keywords: *effectiveness, worded pictures, descriptive text.*

INTRODUCTION

Writing skill is the skill that is considered difficult to master by students compared to the other language skills. There are many reasons why they consider it difficult. A study conducted by Haryani in Ariningsih (2010) showed that the students' writing ability was still low. They were mostly classified as poor and fair and their main problems are concerned with arranging sentences into logical order, constructing effective paragraphs, expressing direct opinions and ideas, and elaborating facts.

Writing, like the other language skills, can be mastered through practice. Writing can be obtained by way of continuous practice as well as high discipline. However, the strong will to practice writing is not the only way to improve writing skills. The students need to be equipped with knowledge about concepts, principles, and procedures of writing itself. In writing, every individual has to express his or her ideas in acceptable written English for particular purposes, such as explaining events or phenomena, telling a story, describing an object, or even persuading people. In producing a piece of writing, an individual is required to use his or her knowledge dealing with content, organization, vocabulary, language use or grammar, and mechanisms of their linguistic and communicative competences. The individual has to explore thoughts and ideas and make them visible and concrete. The individual

has to try to communicate his/her ideas in the form of a written text from which the reader will eventually understand the ideas and their meaning (Ghaith & Awada, 2022).

School-Based Curriculum or Kurikulum Tingkat Satuan Pendidikan (KTSP) 2006 introduces genre basic learning which is different from the previous curriculum. In this curriculum, genre basic text consists of transactional conversations, interpersonal conversations, short functional texts, monologues, and certain genre essays. Kinds of genres are: *procedure, descriptive, report, recount, narrative, news item, discussion, explanation, exposition, and review* (Puspitasari et al., 2012).

Writing descriptive text is one of the important skills which are needed by students of Junior High School in their process of learning English language. Descriptive is giving a picture in words (Oxford Dictionary: 1995). Although it seems easy and simple, experience revealed that many students have difficulties in writing descriptive texts. The competence in writing a text needs comprehensive knowledge about the text characteristics in order to produce a better writing result which can be accepted.

The researcher was interested in this problem due to the fact that the students always have low scores in writing. To solve this problem, the researcher tried to increase the students' writing skill by using pictures as explained by Wright in Kusuma (1989) that pictures could stimulate students' interest and motivation, sense of language in context, and motivation in expressing their ideas. The students' interest and motivation to express and write their ideas and thoughts in a written form are things that need to be put more concern and become priority to increase the students' ability in writing therefore writing by using worded picture will make it easier for the students to express their idea and thoughts, even though the result is far from a perfection in writing. The focus of this study was on how worded pictures are used to increase students' skills in writing a descriptive text. Choosing worded pictures in this study must follow certain criteria, such as being easy to prepare, easy to present, varied, interesting, and fun. Based on the phenomena above, the researcher wanted to conduct a study on how effectively worded pictures are to increase students' ability in writing.

METHOD

This study involved eighth-grade students of SMPN 2 Amarasi Selatan Satu Atap in Kupang Regency during the 2013/2014 academic year. The participants consisted of a single class comprising 39 students. Due to the relatively small and homogenous nature of the group, the entire class was selected as a research sample. The study employed a quasi-experimental design aimed at examining the effectiveness of using worded pictures in teaching descriptive writing. The researcher applied a one-group design only in which she gave the group a pre-test, then the researcher continued with treatments using worded pictures for some period of time. After the treatment, the researcher administered a post-test and measured the score to see whether the treatments made a difference.

The instrument used in this research is a test. The writer gave writing test consisting of a picture of people with some additional information and then asked students to write a description based on the picture. The pre-test and post-test scores were then analyzed by using a t-test to determine the effectiveness of the treatment.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Results

The writer analyzed the data to see the effectiveness of worded pictures. To analyze the data, the writer used a t-test to see the effectiveness of worded pictures. The writer also presents a table showing the results of the pretest and the posttest.

Table 1
Result Score of Pretest and Posttest

NO	N	PRETEST	POSTTEST	D1	D2
		X	Y		
1	AT	1,4	3	1,6	2,6
2	AL	1,8	3,2	1,4	2,0
3	AP	2,6	3,8	1,2	1,4
4	AF	2,4	3,2	0,8	0,6
5	AN	2,2	3,8	1,6	2,6
6	DS	1,2	3,2	2	4,0
7	DT	2,6	3,8	1,2	1,4
8	EN	1	2,8	1,8	3,2
9	FYT	2	2,8	0,8	0,6
10	FT	2	3,4	1,4	2,0
11	FE	2,2	3,4	1,2	1,4
12	HM	1,8	3,6	1,8	3,2
13	IS	3,4	4	0,6	0,4
14	IR	3,2	4	0,8	0,6
15	JN	1,2	3,6	2,4	5,8
16	LR	3,2	4	0,8	0,6
17	MN	3	4	1	1,0
18	MRA	1,6	3,8	2,2	4,8
19	MR	3,2	4	0,8	0,6
20	AT	3,4	4	0,6	0,4
21	NT	1,8	2,4	0,6	0,4
22	OT	2,4	4	1,6	2,6
23	NT	2	3,4	1,4	2,0
24	SS	3,4	3,8	0,4	0,2
25	SA	1,6	3,4	1,8	3,2
26	TT	2	3,6	1,6	2,6
27	WK	1,6	3,2	1,6	2,6
28	TYP	1,2	3,2	2	4,0
29	YT	2,2	3,2	1	1,0
30	YN	2,4	3,6	1,2	1,4
31	NB	1	2,6	1,6	2,6
32	PR	1,6	2,8	1,2	1,4
33	TS	1	2,6	1,6	2,6
34	AYT	1,6	2,6	1	1,0
35	ALN	1,4	2,6	1,2	1,4
36	AN	1,4	2,6	1,2	1,4
37	YA	1,8	3	1,2	1,4
38	KPN	2,6	3,6	1	1,0

39	AMST	1,2	2,6	1,4	2,0
	TOTAL	66	105,2	39,2	59,2
	AVERAGE	2,20	3,51	1,31	1,97

From the data, it can be calculated as follows:

$$\begin{aligned}
 S^2_D &= [\sum D^2 - ((\sum D)^2/n)] / [n-1] \\
 &= [90.6 - ((57.2)^2/39)] / [39-1] \\
 &= (90.6 - 83.89) / 38 \\
 &= 0.18 \\
 S &= \sqrt{S^2_D/n} \\
 &= \sqrt{0.18/39} \\
 &= \sqrt{0.005} = 0.07 \\
 t\text{-value} &= (\bar{X} - Y) / S \\
 &= (1.87 - 3.33) / 0.07 \\
 &= 1.5 / 0.07 \\
 &= -21.43
 \end{aligned}$$

By looking at the calculation above, the result of t-value was -21.43. This was greater than t-table = 2.024, in the level of significance 5% (0.025 two tailed-test), with the degree of freedom (df): n-1 (39-1=38). If the t-value is greater than the t-table, like the result of this study, the null hypothesis is rejected. In this case, the t-value (-21.43) was bigger than the t-table (2.024). In other words, the alternative hypothesis, which said "teaching descriptive writing using worded picture is effective in teaching descriptive writing to the eighth-grade students of SMPN 2 Amarasi Selatan SATAP" is accepted.

Discussion

The aim of this study was to find out the effectiveness of worded pictures in teaching descriptive writing to the eighth-grade students of SMPN 2 Amarasi Selatan SATAP. The result of the analysis confirmed that this instructional approach was effective in enhancing students' writing performance.

The treatment was done in four weeks. Before the treatment, the teacher gave the students a pretest in which they were given a picture of a female actress without additional information and asked them to write a description of the actress. The topic of the picture was describing people. The result of the pre-test showed that most of the students had problems with the content, vocabulary, and grammar aspects.

Seeing the problems from the pre-test, the teacher gave the students treatments to help overcome the problems. In the first treatment, the teacher gave the students an exercise focusing on content and vocabulary aspects and asked the students to write a description based on a picture with additional information (worded picture). The students' worksheets were then collected and scored. The result of the first treatment showed that the content and vocabulary aspects were improved a little. However, the grammar aspect was not improved. The mean score of the first treatment was 2.38 and was categorized as poor. Therefore, the result showed that the students still needed another treatment.

In the second treatment, the teacher provided exercises that specifically emphasized the grammatical aspect. Then, students were instructed to compose a

descriptive paragraph based on a worded picture depicting a female teacher and actress. The students' written outputs were then collected and scored. Analysis of the results from the second week revealed an improvement in the mean scores for content, vocabulary, and grammar. However, the organization and mechanism aspects remained unchanged. Despite some progress, the overall quality of the students' writing remained at a low level, indicating the need for additional instructional interventions.

In the third treatment session, the teacher gave the students an exercise focusing on paraphrasing the main ideas. Subsequently, they were tasked with writing a descriptive paragraph based on a worded picture featuring a female student and an adult male. The students' written responses were collected and evaluated. The results indicated improvements in the mean scores for content, vocabulary, grammar, and organization. During the fourth treatment, the students were given an exercise which focused on grammar and paraphrasing. At the end of the session, they were asked to write a description based on worded picture of a male teacher. The analysis of their writing demonstrated further improvement, with overall performance increasing from the 'poor' to the 'average' level.

Following the instructional treatments, the teacher gave the students a posttest in which the picture used was the same as the picture in the pretest. However, the image was given some additional information of the name of the actress, age, appearance, clothes worn, hobbies, favorite food and the city where she lives. The students' written responses were collected and scored. The results indicated a consistent improvement in students' scores across all sessions. It is assumed that the increase of the scores is due to the repetition of practice throughout the four class meetings.

In terms of content, the students found worded pictures very helpful in composing a descriptive text more clearly and accurately according to what actually appears in the picture. In terms of the organization, the students' descriptive writings were more organized and coherent with the help of the information given. For the vocabulary aspect, the students did not have a problem with the choice of words since the words were already presented in the pictures. As for the mechanism, the students' writing had fewer spelling and punctuation errors. However, grammatical issues persisted in the students' writing, as illustrated in Chart 3. The most common grammatical errors involved incorrect verb forms in the simple present tense, improper use of pronouns, and misuse of the auxiliary verb *to be*.

The students' writing scores for the whole class increased. The mean score for content increased from 1.77 to 3.33, organization from 2.10 to 3.64, vocabulary from 1.82 to 3.23, grammar from 1.67 to 2.92, and mechanics from 1.95 to 3.54. The pre-test results indicated that students initially struggled with content development, vocabulary usage, and grammatical accuracy. By giving the treatments with worded picture and the exercises focusing on the problems, the students could state the main ideas clearly, they did not have problems with the choice of words, and they could reduce the errors in writing, although grammar still had the lowest mean score of the fifth aspect because of additional information given.

In summary, the writer found that worded pictures were effective in teaching descriptive writing to eighth-grade students of SMPN 2 Amarasi Selatan SATAP at the level of significance: -21.43. The effectiveness of worded pictures was determined primarily by the accompanying words in each picture used as teaching media when teaching descriptive writing.

CONCLUSION

Based on the finding of teaching descriptive writing using worded picture, the researcher concluded that the use of worded pictures could improve the students' ability in writing descriptive text. Not only worded pictures can motivate the students to write since it attracts their interest and help them understand ideas and acquire information and overcome the limitation of time, size and space, and it will be easier for the teacher in explaining the material as the picture helps her to integrate the materials and make the students understand but also the worded pictures helped the students in stated the main ideas of the topic and arranging the ideas dealing with the parts of the descriptive text. Besides that, the students were helped by the choice of appropriate words from the additional information presented in the pictures, and they were able to perform minimal grammatical errors, especially in the use of the simple present tense and forms of *to be*. Additionally, they could avoid mechanical mistakes in their composition.

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