

**USING COMIC STRIPS TO IMPROVE THE ABILITY OF THE SECOND
YEAR STUDENTS OF SMA NEGERI 5 PEKANBARU IN WRITING
NARRATIVE TEXTS**

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Abstract

This paper was aimed at finding out to what extent comic strips can improve the ability of the second year students of SMA Negeri 5 Pekanbaru in writing narrative texts. The participants of this research were 36 students of the second year students of SMA Negeri 5 Pekanbaru. This research was conducted in 2 cycles. The data collection technique were obtained through (1) observation sheet which was applied to know the students' activities during teaching and learning process, (2) test was done to measure students' achievement, and (3) field note was done to obtain information about teacher, the students' activities and performance during the implementation of comic strips. The research findings can be briefly explained as follows; firstly, the students' ability in writing narrative texts could be improved by using comic strips. Before the research was done, the mean score of students' pre-test was 60.4. After the research has done for cycle 1, the mean score of students' writing was 68.1. In post test 2 mean score of students' writing increased up to 78.4. Secondly, the students' activeness increased from cycle 1 to cycle 2. Finally, the students enjoyed to write narrative text and develop their writing.

Keyword : *Comic Strips, Writing, Narrative Text*

Abstrak

Penelitian ini ditujukan untuk mencari tahu seberapa jauh comic strips dapat meningkatkan kemampuan murid kelas 2 SMA Negeri 5 Pekanbaru dalam mengarang teks narrative. Peserta dalam penelitian ini yaitu 36 murid kelas dua SMA Negeri 5 Pekanbaru. Penelitian ini dilakukan dalam 2 siklus. Teknik pengumpulan data diperoleh melalui (1) lembar observasi yang diterapkan untuk mengetahui kegiatan murid selama proses belajar mengajar, (2) tes mengarang yang dilakukan untuk mengukur pencapaian murid, dan (3) field note yang dilakukan untuk memperoleh informasi mengenai kegiatan dan keterampilan guru dan murid selama penerapan comic strips. Hasil penelitian ini secara singkat dapat dijelaskan sebagai berikut. Pertama, kemampuan murid dalam mengarang teks narrative dapat ditingkatkan dengan menggunakan teknik clustering. Sebelum penelitian dilakukan, nilai rata-rata murid yaitu 60.4. setelah siklus pertama dilakukan, nilai rata-rata murid menjadi 68.1. Pada post-test, nilai rata-rata tersebut meningkat hingga 78.4. Kedua, keaktifan murid meningkat dari siklus pertama ke siklus kedua. Ketiga, murid menikmati dalam mengarang narrative text dan mengembangkan karangan mereka.

Kata Kunci: *Comic Strips, Menulis, Teks Narrative.*

INTRODUCTION

Writing is one of the basic skills that has important role for students to master language. Rabideu (1993) states that writing is a communicative act with a purpose that allows learning opportunities to experiment with the language. Unlike reading, listening and speaking, writing are more complicated because it is more than arranging words into sentences but connecting them into meaningful and coherent sentences. In writing, writers should be able to connect ideas and language into paragraphs which can be interpreted by readers.

In this research, the writer focused on improving students' ability in writing narrative texts. Landan (1990) states that narrative text is a semiotic representation of series of an event connected in a temporal and causal way. Films, plays, comics, strips, novels, chronicles, and treatises of a geological history are all narratives in this widest sense. Narrative can be constructed using a wide variety of semiotic media: written or spoken language, images, gestures and acting.

The main purpose of narrative text is to tell a story. Narrative text has beginning, middle and end, characters, plot or conflict, and setting. Usually, narrative texts are written from the author's imagination. A narrative is a story containing the setting, the characters, the problems, and solutions. The generic structures of narrative are:

Derewianka (1990) states that the generic structures of narrative are

1) Orientation

This is beginning of the story in which the writer tells the audience about who the characters in the story are, where the story is taking place and when the action happens.

2) Complication

The story is pushed along by a series of event, during which we usually expect some sort of complication or problem to arise. It just would not be so interesting if something unexpected did not happen.

This complication will involve the main characters. Narrative mirror the complication we face in life and tend to reassure us that they are resolvable.

3) Resolution

In a satisfying narrative, a resolution of complication is brought about. The complication may be resolved for better or for worse, but it is rarely left completely unresolved (although this of course possible in certain types of narrative, which leave us wondering how the end is).

The writer implemented comic strips in order to solve the students' problems in writing narrative texts. Comic strip is one of visual aids that can be used as media in language learning and language teaching. González-Espada (2003) defines comic strip as the sequence of panels where the story is presented, usually by dialogue, narration, or purely visual symbols. According to The American Heritage Dictionary (2000, cited in González-Espada, 2003), comic strip is "a usually humorous narrative sequence of cartoon panels". Usually, comic strips contain, almost, all the elements of narrative: characters, plot, dialogues, conflict, and climax (Wright, 1989). Comic strips provide a good way of communication because it consists of story that has a beginning, middle, and end.

Comic strip is one of media that can be used in teaching and learning process, including language learning. Davis (1997) has previously stated that comic strips can be used to teach wide variety of skills:

1. to practice describing characters using adjectives.
2. to reinforce the use of time-sequence transition words to maintain the unity of paragraph or story.
3. to practice telling story of sequentially-ordered comic strip that has been scrambled up.
4. To tell readers through your text.

According to Lavery (2001) the popularity of comic strips make them friendly for most learning levels for a variety of language and discussion activity as they can:

1. tell the readers through text.
2. provide comment and provoke thoughts on events and issues in the news.
3. stimulate dialogues to inject humor into class session.
4. show culture and values in action with the ways that men or women are behaving and are expected to behave.

The procedures of applying comic strips in teaching writing of narrative texts:

1. Teacher divides the students into several groups.
2. Teacher cuts apart the individual panels of a comic strip and puts them in an envelope.
3. Teacher asks the students to predict what the title of story based on the pictures.
4. The teacher explains the characteristics of narrative text to provide students with more information about the text they will write.
5. The teacher introduces the idea that the comic strip is an outline for the text.
6. The teacher shows one frame of a comic strip, and then explains that students will be changing the comic strip into text.
7. The teacher asks the students to write a narrative text based on the comic that they already arranged.
8. The teacher and the students discuss the comic strips and the students' handwriting.

METHODOLOGY

Participants

The participants of this research were 36 students of the second year students of SMA Negeri 5 Pekanbaru.

The Data Collection Instruments and Analysis

The students did writing test individually both before and after the writer implemented comic strips in the class.

The data collection instruments in this research were writing test, observation sheets and field notes. This research consisted of two cycles. There were three meetings in each cycle. The writer administered pre-test to find out the students' basic score in writing narrative texts. After it had been accomplished, the writer gave treatment.

The writer implemented comic strips in the class, then observed the students' progress by giving post-test 1 to the students. The result of post-test 1 was analyzed by three raters and the writer found that the result showed an unsatisfying result, because the students' score did not achieve the standard minimum (KKM); which was 78. The writer found that there were many weaknesses in cycle I. Then the writer decided to continue the research to cycle II. There were three meetings in cycle II. The writer corrected the lesson plan, and made some changing in the way he taught. The writer tried to focus on the teaching of narrative text to the students; such as the generic structure and language features of narrative text. After the cycle II had been done well, the writer gave post test 2 to know the improvement of students' writing ability. The writer asked three English teachers of SMA Negeri 5 as the raters to grade the result of each student's writing test.

To analyze the data and to find out the students progress in writing narrative texts by using comic strips, the writer used the scoring by Harris (1968) as follows:

No	The aspect of writing to be evaluated	The score range
1	The accuracy in grammar	6 : 5 : 4 : 3 : 2 : 1
2	Vocabulary	6 : 5 : 4 : 3 : 2 : 1
3	Mechanics	6 : 5 : 4 : 3 : 2 : 1
4	Form/ Organization	6 : 5 : 4 : 3 : 2 : 1
5	Fluency	6 : 5 : 4 : 3 : 2 : 1

FINDINGS

After analyzing the result of students' pre-test, it could be concluded that the students' ability in writing narrative text was still far from good. Their mean score in pre-test was lower than the KKM, namely 78, while their mean score was 60.4, and the students' writing ability was in "Mediocre" level. In addition to this, the students' ability needed to be improvement by applying comic strips to the students. The writer believed that the use of comic strip is an effective way to solve the students' problems in writing narrative texts. Together with the collaborator, the writer prepared the lesson plans for one cycle of treatment, topics that would fit to the school curriculum, and also a set of observation sheets and field notes to note specific things, weakness, strengths or suggestions related to teaching and learning process. The writer used the students' pre-test score as a guidance to conduct this research.

The writer applied comic strips as an effective way to solve the students' problem in writing narrative text. The writer conducted this research in cycle I for three meetings as treatment. The procedures of applying comic strips can be summarized as this followings

- a) Teacher divides the students into several groups.
- b) Teacher cuts apart the individual panels of a comic strip and puts them in an envelope.
- c) Teacher asks the students to predict what the title of story based on the pictures.
- d) The teacher explains the characteristics of narrative text to provide students with more information about the text they will write.
- e) The teacher introduces the idea that the comic strip is an outline for the text.
- f) The teacher shows one frame of a comic strip, and then explains that students will be changing the comic strip into text.
- g) The teacher asks the students to write a narrative text based on the comic that they already arranged.
- h) The teacher and the students discuss the comic strips and the students' handwriting.

After the implementation of comic strips as the treatment for three meetings in cycle I was given, the writer administered test at the end of cycle I to the students in order to know whether there was an improvement of the students' writing ability after the implementation of comic strips was given. The writer decided to continue to the cycle 2 if the result of the quantitative and qualitative data in the cycle 1 did not show a significant improvement yet. In cycle 2, the writer still comic strips with any other additional strategy based on the result of reflection in the post-test 1 to improve the students' writing skill. The writer also administered post-test at the end of cycle II.

In addition to this, the quantitative data of this study was collected writing test (Pre-Test, post-test 1, and post test 2), and the qualitative data was collected by the recording of activity during the treatment by using the observation sheets and field notes.

DISCUSSIONS ON THE FINDINGS

Pre-Test was administered by the writer before any treatment was given. The purpose of administering pre-test was to know the students' basic score in writing narrative text. The result of pre-test showed that there was no student reached level of "Excellent", and most of them were in "moderate" level. It indicated that the students' ability still needs improvement by using comic strips.

The quantitative data in cycle 1 was collected by looking at the progress that students' got through in two meetings for treatment. At the end of cycle I, the test was administered as the evaluation. After conducting cycle I, the writer found that there was a significant improvement of the students' score from pre-test and that of cycle 1 test. Based on the result of cycle 1 test, the students' ability in writing narrative texts improved to be at the "Good" level. However, the significant improvement did not make the writer satisfied yet. The average score of the students' score in cycle I test was lower than the minimum passing score (KKM); which was 78, while the mean score of students' post-test was 69.4.

The result of observation also was not satisfied the writer yet. There were some students who did not follow the procedures of comic strips implementation. Therefore, the writer decided to conduct cycle II to improve the students' writing ability. The writer rearranged the planning of the implementation of comic strips for the next cycle.

In conducting this research in cycle II, the writer did some corrections in the cycle II, they are:

1. The writer still used comic strips in the cycle II, but the topic was different from cycle I.
2. Teacher changed the way she teaches, such as to be more confident, and gives interesting explanation for the students.
3. Teacher paid attention to all of the students and help them in giving correction on their writing exercises.
4. Teacher focused on the generic structures and language features of narrative text. Teacher also needs to focus on the components of writing.
5. Teacher provided the relevant topic to the students' need and topic should be related to their daily life.

The treatments in the cycle II also was given for three meetings. The procedures of applying comic strips to the students were still the same as that of cycle I. The result of cycle 2 showed a significant improvement.

There was a significant improvement of the students' writing ability. The result of post-test 2 showed that the students' mean score was 78.4. It was higher than the KKM of English subject at SMAN 5 Pekanbaru. The result of observation also satisfied the writer. Almost all of the students did all of the comic strips procedures.

Therefore, the writer decided to stop her observation in cycle II because it showed the satisfying result. It was found that the teacher's and students' activities in teaching and learning process was obviously better than that of cycle 1.

The progression could be seen on observation sheets and field notes that collaborator made during the class activities. There was a significant improvement of the students' activity from cycle I to the cycle II. Almost students did the procedures of application comic strips in cycle II. The students were highly involved in the classroom activities. It means that, the application of comic strips could engage the students' interest in participating in the process of learning.

The data of field note showed a significant progress during teaching and learning process. It indicated that the use of comic strips could engage the students' interest to participate in the process of learning.

The result of post-test 2 showed that the students have achieved the KKM. Therefore, the writer decided to stop the research since she had achieved the aim of conducting this research. The writer thought that the implementation of comic strips was enough in cycle II.

CONCLUSIONS

Based on the students' scores in pre-test, post-test I and post-test II, there was significant improvement. The average score of pre-test was 60.4 (Mediocre level), while the average score of post test I was 68.1 (Good level), the average score of post test 2 was 78.4 (Good level). It means that the students' achievement in writing narrative texts was better after implementing comic strips as learning media which could improve the writing ability of the second year students of SMA Negeri 5 Pekanbaru. The mean score of students' post test 2 had achieved the minimum passing score of English subject at SMA Negeri 5 Pekanbaru. It means that the students could get better scores than the minimum criteria of achievement in the post test II.

The writer concludes that using comic stripssuccessfully improved the students' ability of class XI Science 2 of SMA Negeri 5 Pekanbaru in writing narrative texts. It was proven by the increase in average scores of the students from 60.4 in pre-test, increased to 68.1 in the post test I, and up again to 78.4 in post test II. This improvement happened because this writing strategy was so appropriate to be implemented to the class.

The improvement happened because of some factors such as the motivation that always given by the writer in every meeting to the students, students' attention that which were increasing meeting by meeting, good cooperation between the writer with the students and between students with each other. The other factor like the suitability of the application in order to solve the problem of the students also has given positive impact for them. Moreover, this writing strategy also helps to improve the students' interest and motivation in writing, especially in writing narrative texts. It can be seen from the increasing number of the participants who involved in class activities in each meeting. So, the key factors that determine the success of this strategy lie in the execution and the implementation of this strategy that had made the students day by day increasingly interested in learning to write.

Thus, using comic strips in teaching writing is effective to improve students' ability in writing narrative texts.

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