

Improving the Eleventh Grade Students' Narrative Text Writing Achievement through Comic Strips at MA Al-Amien Ambulu in 2014/2015 Academic Year

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Abstract

This research was intended to improve the eleventh grade students' participation and their narrative writing achievement through comic strips at MA Al-Amien Ambulu in 2014/2015 Academic Year. The research design was Classroom Action Research (CAR) which was consisted of planning of the action, implementation of the action, observation and evaluation, and reflection. The research subjects were the students of class XI IPA at MA AL-Amien Ambulu. The data were collected through observation and writing test and were analyzed quantitatively. Based on the result, it showed that there was an improvement on the percentage of the students who actively involved in the writing teaching learning process by fulfilling at least three indicators. It increased from 71.48% in Cycle 1 to 78.8% in Cycle 2. Then, the percentage of the students who got score 72 or higher also improved. The improvement could be seen from the result of narrative writing test that showed 66.67% of the students achieved the target of success criteria in Cycle 1 and it increased to 82.5% in Cycle 2. Based on those results, it was concluded that the use of comic strips could improve the eleventh grade students' narrative text writing achievement.

Keywords: *comic strips, narrative writing achievement, students' participation.*

Introduction

Writing is very important to be learnt and taught. Richard (1990:100) says that good writing skills are essentially important to academic success and a requirement for many occupations and professions. It means that writing can be used to support a person's success in academic, occupations, and professions. According to Institutional Level Curriculum (Kurikulum Tingkat Satuan Pendidikan/KTSP), there are many types of text that need to be learnt by the students. One of the writing materials that should be learnt by the eleventh grade students in senior high school is narrative text.

The results of preliminary study through interview and observation on January 9th and 10th, 2014 at MA Al-Amien Ambulu revealed that the students had writing problems in grammar mastery. They often made grammatical mistakes in their sentences such as the use of tenses. They also lacked of vocabulary. They often asked to the teacher about so many words that they did not know how to write them in English. Besides, they also had difficulties in finding idea about what to write. They took too much time to begin their writing. Based on those problems, there were several causes identified. First, the technique in teaching writing was designed by the teacher. She used free writing technique. There was no feedback for the students because she kept the students' writing results. Thus, the students did not know what in mistakes in their writing were. She also rarely used visual media such as pictures, real things, or poster while teaching writing. Besides, the students also had low motivation and it made them bores. They were busy with

their own activities and did not pay attention to the teacher. In addition, there were only 15 students out of 43 students who got ≥ 72 as the standard passing grade and they were also passive during the teaching learning process of writing narrative text in the class.

Referring to the problems identified as well as the causes of the problems, the researcher purposed an effective solution to solve those problems by using "comic strips" as the media in teaching writing. There were several reasons for using comic strips to improve students' narrative text writing achievement. Batema (2014) states that comic strips teach the art of writing. She also states that the stories in comics often have a clear beginning, middle, and end. Therefore, it can help the students to find their idea and they can create a good piece of writing based on the comic strips. Csabay (2006:24) states comic strips bring a cheerful atmosphere into the class. It means that comics can increase students' motivation.

Previous researchers found that comic strips could improve the students' writing achievement. A research conducted by Budiman *et. al* (2012:36) proved that comic strips could improve students' analytical exposition writing ability. Besides, the students' interest and motivation also improved. Another research conducted by Utomo (2013:66) concluded that there was a significant effect of using comic strips on the eleventh grade students' spoof writing achievement. Based on those researches, it can be seen that comic strips can improve students' writing ability in different kinds of text.

From the theories as mentioned above and two previous studies, it was revealed that comic strips could contribute effectively in improving students' writing skill as well as students' participation in writing class. To confirm the results of previous studies, therefore an action research in different setting entitled "*Improving the Eleventh Grade Students' Narrative Text Writing Achievement through Comic Strips at MA Al-Amien Ambulu in 2014/2015 Academic Year*" was conducted.

The problems of the research were: (1) How can the use of comic strips improve the eleventh grade students' participation in writing teaching learning process at MA Al-Amien Ambulu in 2014/2015 academic year?; (2) How can the use of comic strips improve the eleventh grade students' narrative writing achievement at MA Al-Amien Ambulu in 2014/2015 academic year?. Then, the research objectives were: (1) To improve the eleventh grade students' participation in writing teaching learning process at MA Al-Amien Ambulu in 2014/2015 academic year; (2) To improve the eleventh grade students' narrative writing achievement at MA Al-Amien Ambulu in 2014/2015 academic year.

Research Methodology

The design of this research was classroom action research that was done collaboratively with the English teacher by adapting the cycle model of the action research from Lewin in Elliot (1991:70) with a sequence of steps namely planning of the action, implementation of the action, observation and evaluation, and reflection. This research was conducted at MA Al-Amien Ambulu and it was chosen purposively. The research subjects were 43 students from class XI IPA at MA Al-Amien Ambulu. The data collection method applied in this research were writing test and observation. Writing test was used to collect the data about students' writing achievement, while observation was used to collect the data about students' participation.

Concerning with the scoring method, the researcher applied analytical scoring method to evaluate the students' writing test. There were five aspects of writing that were evaluated in this research, namely grammar, content, mechanic, vocabulary, and organization. The scoring guide used in this research was adapted from Heaton (1991:146) and Hughes (2003:104). Then, the results of observation in the form of checklist and the results of writing test were analyzed by using the formula that was adapted from Ali (1993:186).

The criteria used to evaluate the success of the action were: (1) at least 75% of the students were actively participated during the narrative writing teaching learning process; (2) at least 75% of the students achieved the target requirement score that was ≥ 72 in the writing test.

Research Finding and Discussion

This research was conducted in two cycles. Each cycle was done in three meetings. The actions were given in the first and second meeting and the writing test was given in the third meeting. The research findings were based on the results of the observation and the writing test. The

observation was done during the narrative writing teaching learning process through comic strips. The observation in the form of checklist was used to record the students' participation. The indicators observed were: (1) paying attention to the lesson; (2) asking question to the teacher; (3) answering teacher's question; (4) discussing with their partner; (5) doing the exercises.

In Cycle 1, the result of the observation showed that there were 70% of the students who were active in meeting 1 and 72.97% in meeting 2. While the passive students were 30% in meeting 1 and 27.03% in meeting two. This high percentage of passive students came up because most of the students did not fulfill indicators (2) asking question to the teacher and (3) answering teacher's question. Then, from the result of students' narrative writing test in Cycle 1, it was known that only 66.67% of the students who got ≥ 72 . It meant that the result of the students' writing test had not achieved the target yet.

Dealing with the low percentages of the students who had not achieved the target yet, there were some aspects that influenced the results of the action in Cycle 1. First, the students had difficulties in filling the story map. It might due their difficulty in comprehending the comic strips. Second, some students made mistakes in mechanical skill. They wrote inappropriate capital letters and ignored the spelling of the words. In addition, there were some students who felt sleepy because the action was done in the last school hour.

To solve those problems, the teacher gave more explanation about how to fill the story map even though it was been explained in teaching learning process besides, the researcher also explained more about mechanical skill. Then, the researcher gave feedback to the students about their writing test in Cycle 1. Besides, the researcher asked the students to bring the dictionary to help them in comprehending some difficult words in the comic strips. In addition, the researcher gave more time for the students' discussion and the researcher gave explanation about the comic strips to make the students more understood about the comic strips. Then, the researcher gave more interesting comic strips for the next cycle so that the students did not feel sleepy.

After the actions were done in Cycle 2, it was found that the students' participation and their writing achievement had been improved. The percentage of students' participation was increased from 76.2% in meeting 1 to 81.4% in meeting 2. While the passive students were 23.8% in meeting 1 and 21.2% in meeting two. This percentage of passive students was lower than the percentage in Cycle 1. But, there were still only three indicators that contributed well to this research. The students only fulfilled indicators (1) paying attention to the lesson, (4) discussing with their partner, and (5) doing the exercises. Meanwhile, indicators (2) asking question to the teacher and (3) answering teacher's question were not optimally done because not all of the students had chance to ask questions and not all of the students were asked questions by the teacher. Then, from the results of writing test in Cycle 2, it was known that there were 82.5% of

40 students who got ≥ 72 in writing test. From the results of Cycle 2, it could be said that the results had successfully achieved the target criteria of this research. Therefore, the actions were stopped.

The findings of this research are in line with some experts suggestions on the use of comic strips in teaching writing. As Drolet (2010: 135) says, the use of comics has been suggested as a model to be used to help students develop their writing skills. It means that comic strips can be used as a media due it function in helping students develop their writing skills. There are so many benefits in using comic strips as a media in teaching writing. Brocka (in Nigay, 2005) states that comic strips can help students to practice describing characters using adjectives. Besides, comic strips can help students to practice expanding vocabulary because there were so many new vocabulary that are used by the characters in the comic strips. Comic strips also help students to practice writing direct or indirect speech and practice formation of different verb tenses by changing the sentences in the bubbles into indirect form. Further, comic strips also help the students to know the plot of the story because the generic structures of narrative text are clearly drawn in the comic strips. It is in line with Batema (2014) who says that comics often have clear beginning, middle, and end. The results of students' writing showed that most of the students got high scores for the aspect of organization which is related to the generic structures of narrative text. In addition, comic strips bring a cheerful atmosphere into the class (Csabay, 2006:24). It was proved by students' participation which improved from Cycle 1 to Cycle 2.

Further, previous researchers found that comic strips could improve the students' writing achievement. A research conducted by Budiman *et. al* (2012:36) proved that comic strips can improve the students' interest and motivation and students' analytical exposition writing ability. Besides, another research that was conducted by Utomo (2013:66) concluded that there was a significant effect of using comic strips on the eleventh grade students' spoof writing achievement at SMAN 1 Kencong Jember in the 2012/2013 academic year. Based on those researches, it can be seen that comic strips can improve students' writing ability in different kinds of text.

Conclusion and Suggestions

Based on the results of data analysis and discussion, it can be concluded that teaching writing through media comic strips can improve the eleventh grade students' participation and their narrative writing achievement in teaching learning process at MA Al-Amien Ambulu in 2014/2015 academic year. It could be seen from the result of observation. It was known that the students' participation in teaching learning process increased from 71.48% of the students in the first cycle to 78.8% of the students in the second cycle who were active during the teaching learning process. Then, the improvement of the students' writing could be seen from the percentage 66.67% in Cycle 1 and it increased to 82.5% in Cycle 2. Those results had achieved the standard requirement that was targeted in this research.

Considering the research results, some suggestions were given to these following people. First, the English teacher is suggested to use comic strips as an alternative media in teaching writing. It is due to the fact that the use comic strips could improve the students' participation as well as their writing achievement. If the English teacher got the difficulties in finding an appropriate comic strips, she can make the comic strips by herself in www.bitstrips.com or the other websites which can be used to create comic strips. Second, the students are expected to be able to write their writing better by using comic strips as their media. The last, the future researchers are suggested to use the result of this research as information in conducting the other classroom action researches by using comic strips. Besides, the result of this research also be used as information to conduct experimental research by comparing comic strips with the other kinds of ELT media. It is also suggested for the future researcher to be careful in choosing the comic strips so that it can be used effectively. If the future researcher wants to observe the students' participation, it is suggested for him/her to modify the indicators of observation that related to the steps of teaching the skills.

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