

## *Improving the VII B Students' Descriptive Paragraph Writing Achievement by Using Composite Pictures at SMP Negeri 4 Tanggul”*

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### **Abstract**

*This classroom action research was intended to improve the VII B students' descriptive paragraph writing achievement by using composite pictures at SMP Negeri 4 Tanggul. This research began by conducting a preliminary study by interviewing the English teacher of the seventh grade students of SMP Negeri 4 Tanggul. It was found that the VII B students of SMP Negeri 4 Tanggul experienced difficulties in writing especially writing descriptive paragraph. The English teacher said that the students who reached the minimum score requirement that is 70 were only 9 students or 26.5 % of total students in the class. It was because they lacked vocabulary, unable to use mechanical and grammatical structures correctly, difficulties to start to write, developed and organized their ideas. Moreover the students also had low motivation to participate in learning writing because of those difficulties. To solve the problem above, the researcher used composite pictures as teaching media in teaching writing of descriptive paragraph. The researcher used composite pictures because it was an interesting media to improve the students' descriptive paragraph writing achievement as well as their participation during the teaching learning process.*

**Keywords:** Classroom Action Research (CAR), Writing Achievement, Composite Pictures

### **Introduction**

English as international language is learnt by some countries as a foreign language and in other countries as a second language (Tonkin 2003: 16). In Indonesia, English as is taught as a compulsory subject at Junior High School up to University as a foreign language.

Based on the 2006 Institutional Level Curriculum (*Kurikulum Tingkat Satuan Pendidikan* or KTSP, 2006) there are four skills that should be learnt: listening, speaking, reading and writing, and also the three language components: grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation. So in this case, writing is one of the skills that should be mastered by the students who are learning English as a foreign language.

The basic competence of writing is that the students are able to explain all sort of meaning (interpersonal, ideational, textual) into various written text and monologue especially in the form of descriptive, narrative, spoof/recount, procedure, report, and anecdote (Depdiknas, 2006:106).

Grant (1987:94) states that for many learners, a new language is not really properly learned until they have written it down. It means that the students as EFL learners must have the ability to write in order to master the language. However, writing skill in English is considered as a difficult skill. As stated by Hughey et al. (1983:38),

writing is often found as the difficult skill of all the English skills, both as the first and the second language. The difficulties can be caused by some factors such as: limited vocabularies and grammatical structures, unable to develop ideas, unable to organize ideas, and unable to use mechanics of writing correctly.

These difficulties are also experienced by the students of seventh grade at SMP Negeri 4 Tanggul especially class VII B. Based on the preliminary study conducted by the researcher at SMP Negeri 4 Tanggul, the seventh year English teacher said that the students still got problems in learning English especially in writing. It was found that the students of this class were poor in writing. The areas of difficulties were related to: lack of vocabulary, tenses/structure mastery, mechanic skills, content and difficulties in organizing their ideas. The VII B students of SMP Negeri 4 Tanggul also have difficulty in finding ideas to write. They cannot start writing easily, they usually need several minutes to find any ideas. So, this problem is time consuming. The students also have low motivation to participate in learning writing because of those difficulties. In addition, the English teacher only used LKS in teaching English. She taught English by giving explanation first to the students, after that she gave them example and then asked the students to do the exercise in LKS. This way made the students feel bored during the class, the teacher should give some varieties in the teaching learning process.

The preliminary study showed that the score of writing achievement was still low. As a result, 9 students (26.5% of the students) who got score 70 or higher, 25 students (73.5% of the students) got the writing score less than 70. The mean score of writing test was 59.65, while the standard requirement score is 70. The researcher found that the result of writing test previously conducted by the teacher proved that the mean scores were still behind the learning accomplishment requirement, especially in the use of five aspects of writing that consist in the areas of vocabularies, tenses or structure masteries, mechanical skills, organization and content of the paragraph. This fact encourages the writer to conduct a classroom action research by presenting a learning media of composite pictures in teaching writing which hopefully could help the students solve their problems and make them more active to participate in the writing class. In this case, a composite picture was selected as an instructional media because it has some functions as it contributes to raise interest and motivation, a sense of context of the language and a specific reference point or stimulus (Wright, 1989:2). So, by using composite pictures the students more active to participate in learning writing and the students' problem in finding ideas to write can be solved. They only need take a look at the picture, then describe anything they found in the picture.

The findings of the previous researchers are important to support this research. Sudrajad (2011) conducted classroom action research at SMP Negeri 2 Kencong that was intended to improve the eighth grade students' descriptive text writing achievement through composite pictures. His research result showed there was an improvement on the students' descriptive text writing achievement as well as their participation in teaching writing process. It could be seen from the percentage of the students who got scores  $\geq 73$  which increased from 63.6% in the first cycle to 78.8% in the second cycle. Another research was classroom action research conducted by Nistina (2012) who applied classroom action research at SMP Negeri 1 Krenjengan Probolinggo that was intended to improve the eight grade students' recount text writing achievement by using composite pictures. Her research result showed that the students' recount text writing achievement was improved. It could be seen from the percentage of the students who got scores  $\geq 70$  increased from 54.5% in the first cycle to 72.7% in the second cycle.

Considering the background of the research above, the researcher was intended to conduct classroom action research entitled “Improving the VII B Students' Descriptive Paragraph Writing Achievement by Using Composite Pictures at SMP Negeri 4 Tanggul”.

## Research Method

The research design that used in this research was Classroom Action Research (CAR). The aim of this research was using composite pictures to improve class VII B students' descriptive paragraph writing achievement at SMP Negeri 4 Tanggul. Elliot (1991:69) explains that an action research is the study of a social situation, with a view to improve the quality of action. In addition, Mc Millan (1992:12) says that a classroom action research is a specific type of applied research that its purpose is to solve a specific classroom problem or make decision at a single local site. From the definitions, it can be concluded that classroom action research was intended to solve the problem and to improve the teaching learning process in a classroom.

This classroom action research was conducted collaboratively with the English teacher. This action research was applied in cycle which covers: planning of the action, implementing of the action, observation and evaluation, reflection of the action (Elliot, 1991:69). Since the result of the students' writing test in Cycle 1 did not achieve the target score of the research, the action was continued to Cycle 2.

In this research, the data was collected by the writing test and observation. Writing test was used to gain the data that was collected from the students' writing test in the form of students' writing score. Meanwhile, the observation checklist was used to know the students' activities during the teaching writing by using composite pictures as the media.

## Discussion

The result of observation of the students' participation showed the improvement. There was 54.41 % in Cycle 1 improved up to 77.94 % in Cycle 2. This showed that the students were more active in the teaching learning process in the Cycle 2. It can be concluded that the use of composite pictures in the descriptive paragraph writing could improve the students' participation during the teaching learning process. In Cycle 2, the students were more active in paying attention to the teacher, answering the teacher's questions, asking to the teacher, and doing the exercises than in Cycle 1. In line with this, Wright (1989:2) states that pictures can contribute to interest and motivation. Therefore, the use of composite pictures as the instructional media in teaching learning process made the VII B students interested and motivated to participate actively during the class. In addition, the 5 indicators were very important because the students' actively very influential to the students' writing achievement.

Furthermore, teaching writing by using composite pictures as teaching media could improve the students' descriptive paragraph writing achievement as well as their participation in the teaching and learning process. It can be seen from the improvement of the students' score in both cycles.

The writing test result showed that the use of composite pictures could improve the students' descriptive paragraph writing achievement. This media helped the students to find their ideas. It is supported by the statement of Wright (1989:4-6), pictures can improve some aspects of language such as vocabulary, function, situation and four language skills. In vocabulary aspect, composite pictures could enrich students' vocabulary by presenting the things in the picture. In the function and situation aspect, the students' could see the picture to determine what function and situation was in the composite pictures. In addition, Wright (1989:198) states that composite pictures are full of information. So that they can be presented in meaningful statements to express their imagination to write in a descriptive paragraph. Therefore, the students did not waste the time to think longer to find any ideas to write and develop them. They have already had ideas to write by using composite pictures.

### Conclusion and Suggestion

Based on the results of data analysis and discussion, it could be concluded that:

- 1) The use of composite pictures could improve class VII B students' participation at SMP Negeri 4 Tanggul. The results of the students' who actively participation in the teaching learning process improved in each cycle. The results showed improvement of the percentage of the students' active participation from 54.41 % in Cycle 1 to 77.94 % in Cycle 2;
- 2) The use of composite pictures could improve class VII B students' improvement of the students who got score  $\geq 70$  or more improved from 52.94 % in Cycle 1 up to 79.41 % in Cycle 2.

By considering the results above, some suggestions are given to the following people:

#### 1) Teacher

It is suggested that the English teacher use composite pictures in teaching writing to improve both the students' participation and writing achievement in the teaching learning process. It is due to the fact that the use of composite pictures could improve the students' writing achievement as well as their participation. The teacher has to use familiar pictures which relating to their personal experience. Besides, the teacher also has to use an appropriate teaching method such as Contextual Teaching Learning (CTL) by giving his/her students some guided questions in the teaching learning process since the students of junior high schools level need more guidance.

#### 2) The Students

By using composite pictures, the researcher expects that the students continually use composite pictures as the media to express their ideas in order to make a descriptive paragraph. Besides, by using composite pictures, the students can expand their ideas or motivate

themselves to help them to improve their descriptive paragraph writing achievement.

#### 3) The Future Researchers

The result of this research can be used as a source of information for the future researchers who has the same problem with the teaching of writing to use composite pictures as teaching media in the teaching and learning process in order to conduct another research with different design such as experimental research, different subject and school, or the same skill with different text such as writing narrative text.

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