



## Utilizing Pictures to Elevate Students' Writing Skills

Putri Dewi Ningsih<sup>1</sup>, Dyah Aminatun<sup>2</sup>

[Putridewin787@gmail.com](mailto:Putridewin787@gmail.com)<sup>1</sup>, [dyah\\_aminatun@teknokrat.ac.id](mailto:dyah_aminatun@teknokrat.ac.id)<sup>2</sup>

Universitas Teknokrat Indonesia<sup>1,2</sup>

### Abstract

*The purpose of this research was to determine the effectiveness of pictures in the writing class of senior high school students. This research used a quantitative method with using the quasi-experimental design. The subjects of the research were the second year students of senior high school in Marga Agung Regency, South Lampung, Lampung, Indonesia. The total number of samples was 42 students, who were distributed in two classes. Each class consists of 21 students. The writing test was used as the instrument to gather information on the students' writing skills using the images. The researchers came to the conclusion that the images improve senior high school pupils' writing abilities based on the results. It was because pictures could be a model designed for students to find, query, execute, and search for information, and draw their conclusion.*

**Keywords:** *effectiveness, pictures, students, writing skills*

## Introduction

Writing is a part of English skills. Writing is a way to transfer ideas to other people through paper. According to Pardiyono (2006), writing is one form of the use of language activities expressed through the form of writing. Besides, Alfaki (2015) states that writing is a process of thinking about ideas, thinking about how to express the ideas into good writing, and arranging the ideas into a statement. From the statement above, writing is an activity to express thoughts into written form and to make people understand the content easily.

In the level of higher education, students need to learn English writing for academic purposes, which is even considered more complicated as it demands higher thinking abilities (Alhosani, 2008). In the academic setting, students are required to do their writing tasks such as assignments, reports, thesis and dissertations. A growing body of research has highlighted the importance of academic writing not only for academic but also professional success (Bruning & Horn, 2000; Hamman, 2005; Johannesen, 2001). Bjork and Raisanen (1997) also stated that academic writing skills are important to be learned and developed in all disciplines because students will get to complete the assignments and the final reports as a course requirement.

In SMK Bina Nusantara, where the researchers took place for research, the researchers found out why English is not very important for them because it is not their main language for what they use in daily life. However, the researchers still focused on what the researchers need to do, as Kurt & Atay (2007) stated that the level of difficulty is particularly more significant in writing skill, compared to the other three skills; listening, speaking, and reading, because it encompasses problem solving and deploying strategies to achieve communicative goals. In addition, Richards & Renandya (2002) stated that it takes the researchers' ability to use the appropriate choices of vocabulary, sentence, and paragraph organization to produce a readable text along with a particular rhetorical pattern.

Based on Asep (2014), Vocabulary is the fundamental element in constructing sentences, which is the core of effective writing skills. Students almost use spoken and written words every single day to communicate their ideas, beliefs, and feelings with people around them. A good vocabulary repertoire can help students to speak or write to deliver their thoughts. The second was grammar. When it comes to writing, grammar is crucial. According to Muhammad Fareed et al. (2016), students make mistakes in subject-verb agreement, pronouns, tenses, articles, prepositions, and basic sentence structures. Grammar ability can be improved through reading activities and grammar-related activities. The last is spelling. The students have the habit to spell according to their pronunciation, and this will lead to wrong spelling, as mentioned by Afrin (2016). The students will either add or leave letters of the words. For an example, "ballon" instead of "balloon." According to Nyang'au Benard (2014), memorization of the spelling will help the students to have good spelling.

Not only the students face the problem of learning English, especially Writing skills, but the teachers could find themselves in difficult to teach English writing skills. These are some problems that happened in the school and how to solve the problems. Firstly, giving a motivation to students. Nowadays, teachers are having a hard time motivating the students. Not because of the students' naughtiness, but the students are

not interested in learning writing, and this claim is supported by Asep (2014). When students choose to feel reluctant in learning, it is a sign of a lack of motivation (Abrar, 2016). After that, lack of students' parent support is also a crucial part. Parental indifference is another challenge. Lack of parents' support will make it hard for teachers to help the students. Based from the school, Parents thought that learning English is not important as they are learning another subject, such as a mechanical subject. Students who feel lack of warmth and affection from their parents will be drawn back from succeeding in their learning process (Gundogmus, 2018). According to Anyiendah (2017) lack of students' interest is another challenge. Developing writing skills is always challenging; however, it is always an interesting task. Especially when it comes to writing, some students zone out. The students need to know punctuation, grammar, vocabulary, spelling and sentence structure in order to write a good piece of writing.

Many kinds of instructional media can be used in the teaching and learning process. According to Samjaya (2012), there are three types of media, namely audio (radio, tape recorder, cassette), visual (picture, photograph, drawing), and audiovisual (video). In line with him, Harmer (2007) proposes music, pictures, and films as excellent stimuli for writing. Definition of Pictures are two-dimensional visual representation or person, places, or things. They can be painted or drawn, colored or black and white. Yunus (1981) classifies pictures into three types: composite picture, picture series, and individual picture. He describes picture series as a number of linked pictures which form a series of sequences in order tell a sequence of events or a story. The use of picture series can help the students to write types of text that require sequences like procedure, recount, and narrative. For example, Desitawardhani (2014) carried out classroom action research. Three discoveries emerged from her investigation. First of all, image series can help pupils become better writers by helping them create text.

Based on the previous research, some benefits could be taken from that research. The students' writing problems in several writing elements can be reduced. It might happen because picture series could give the learners illustrations and help them to "translate" their thought in writing form. Harmer (2004) stated that teaching writing means to teach students how to produce ideas and "translate" them into readable sentences. Besides, it is also demonstrating to the students how to organize sentences into a well-formed paragraph. Based on his previous research, he illustrated that there must be at least five procedures (demonstrating, motivating and provoking, supporting, responding, and evaluating). Picture series manages to make students more motivated as well as interested in the teaching and learning process. As a result, they feel enjoyment, and finally, their writing ability could be improved. There are some studies related to the implementation of picture series to teach writing. In this case, Sudaryo (2013) and Hasanah (2009) conducted classroom action research by utilizing picture series in improving students' writing ability. The result of their research showed that picture series are useful to improve students' writing ability. Similar to them, Mudassir (2014) and Asrifan (2015) conducted research by implementing picture series in teaching writing. Both of their studies indicated that picture series are beneficial in teaching writing. In short, based on the results of the research, it is implied that picture series was an effective way to improve students writing ability. It is better for the teachers to apply picture series in their teaching and learning process of writing.

After all the problems that the researchers found out in the field, it also opens an interesting thought to do research about enhancing writing skills in high school with pictures as a medium for the research. The researchers thought that with the lack of English skills in high school students, especially in writing, it's a sign of failure in learning English in high school level. That's why the urgency of this research is to employ a different way in learning English using pictures as media. Furthermore, writing skills in English are an important part for students for their future if they continue their studies to higher-level education.

## Method

The researchers used a quasi-experimental method with a nonequivalent control class design, randomly selecting the experimental and control groups. The experimental class was taught using pictures, while the control class was taught conventionally, such as being taught English in class daily. Research design was adapted from Gay et al. (2006).

The population of the research is the second year of SMK Bina Nusantara. The total number of samples is 42 students, which are distributed in 2 classes. Each class consists of 15 students. The sampling technique used in this research is cluster random sampling. The researchers chose two classes of the second-year students of SMK Bina Nusantara randomly. The classes were XI Busana 1 and XI Busana 2. XI Busana 1, as the experimental class, consists of 21 students, and XI Busana 2, as the control class, consists of 21 students.

Following the pretest, the researchers treated the experimental group with visuals and taught the control group without them. In the first meeting, the researchers gave a topic about occupation, famous places, and famous people. The photographs were given to students three times, during posttest, pretest, and the treatment. During the treatment, the researchers presented the students with subjects, provided photographs, and asked them to compose an essay.

Data from the test were evaluated quantitatively, including descriptive statistics, following the processes outlined below: Assessing students' answers on the pretest, gave the students treatment by giving a tutorial on how to answer the question correctly with correct grammar, vocabulary, and tense. After the treatment, students took the posttest and answered the question with the same photographs before they collected their assignments. The researchers employed the following rating rubric based on Jacob et al. (in Yusuf, 2005), scoring rubric for (1) content, (2) organization, (3) vocabulary, (4) language use, and (5) mechanics.

In this case, the lowest score is 33 and the highest score is 100 relate to Jacobs' scoring system. So, the rating score ranges from 33 to 100 (interval 67), and classify into 6 levels/categories. Calculating the mean score and t-test between the writing of the experimental and control group by using SPSS 17.0 program (Gay, 2006). This analysis is part of SPSS analysis that is used as a tool for collecting data, processing and analyzing data, drawing conclusions, and making decisions based on the results of the analysis of the data collected (Rahman, 2007)

## Findings and Discussion

This section will be discussing the findings gained from the teaching and learning process and the writing test employing pictures.

### The percentage of students' achievement for the pretest

The following table presents the students' pretest scores and percentages for the experimental and control classes.

*Table 1. The Percentage of Students' Pretest Scores*

Score Interval	Classification	Score	Experimental Class		Control Class	
			Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
89 – 100	Very good	100	0	0%	0	0%
78 – 88	Good	88	0	0%	0	0%
67 – 77	Fairly Good	77	2	10%	0	0%
56 – 66	Fair	56	8	38%	0	0%
45 – 55	Poor	45	10	48%	8	38%
33 – 44	Very Poor	44	1	5%	13	62%
TOTAL			21	100%	21	100%

Based on the table 7 above, it is known that the pretest result most of the students in the experimental class were in the poor category. 2 students (10%) got fairly good, 8 students (38%) got fair, 10 students (48%) got poor, and 1 student (5%) got very poor. On the other hand, the most pretest result of the control class was categorized in the very poor category. Of the 21 respondents, the data indicated that 8 students (38%) got poor, and 13 students (62%) got very poor.

### The percentage of students' achievement for the posttest

The following shows the percentage of students' pretest scores who were taught using pictures, which was different from those who were taught without pictures.

*Table 2. The Percentage of Students' Posttest Scores*

Score Interval	Classification	Score	Experimental Class		Control Class	
			Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
89 – 100	Very good	100	0	0%	0	0%
78 – 88	Good	88	0	0%	0	0%
67 – 77	Fairly Good	77	8	38%	0	0%
56 – 66	Fair	56	11	52%	0	0%
45 – 55	Poor	45	2	10%	21	100%
33 – 44	Very Poor	44	0	0%	0	0%
TOTAL			21	100%	21	100%

The data above shows that the students' achievement in the experimental class in the posttest was increased, 8 students (38%) got fairly good, 11 students (52%) got

fair, and 2 students (10%) got poor. While in the control class, all of the students (100%) got poor and no one got very poor.

### The normality test result of students' pretest for the experimental and control classes

Before giving treatment to the experimental class, a pretest was given to know the students' achievement. Besides, the purpose of the test was to find out whether or not both experimental and control classes were at the same level. The result of the mean score and standard deviation of the students' pretest scores was gained by the students using pictures, and without picture,s can be seen in a table as follows:

Table 3. The Normality Test Result of Students' Pretest

		Tests of Normality					
Class		Kolmogorov-Smirnov <sup>a</sup>			Shapiro-Wilk		
		Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
Writing skill test	Pretest (Experimental Test)	.204	21	.023	.907	21	.048
	Posttest (Experimental Test)	.144	21	.200 <sup>*</sup>	.921	21	.093
	Pretest (Control Group Test)	.129	22	.200 <sup>*</sup>	.977	22	.867
	Posttest (Control Group Test)	.182	20	.080	.935	20	.193

\*. This is a lower bound of the true significance.

a. Lilliefors Significance Correction

Based on the table above, it shows that the significance level of the Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov and Shapiro-Wilk test for pretest and posttest data for the experimental class and control class. The first result of the experimental class's pretest was  $.048 > 0.05$ , then the result of the experimental class's posttest was  $.093 > 0.05$ . In the control group's pretest, the result was  $0.867 > 0.05$ . Meanwhile, in the control group's posttest was  $0.193 > 0.05$ . In conclusion, the data are in a normal distribution. Finally, it can be concluded that  $H_0$  was accepted and  $H_a$  was rejected. In other words, the data are normally distributed.

### Test of significance (t-test)

The researchers used a t-test (test of significance) for an independent sample test. This is a test to know the significant difference between the results of students' mean scores in the pretest and posttest in the control class and the experimental class before and after being taught using pictures.

The level of significance = 0.05, the only thing which is needed; the degree of freedom (df) = 20, where  $N-1 = 21-1$ . Because this is a pretest between the Control and Experimental classes, the total number of the degree of freedom (df) is 40. Here is the result of the t-test is presented in the following table:

Table 4. T-test of Student Achievement on Control and Experimental Classes in Pretest

**Group Statistics**

	Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Score	1.00	21	57.5238	4.16676	.90926
	2.00	21	42.9048	3.23890	.70679

**Independent Samples Test**

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
								Lower		Upper
Score	Equal variances assumed	2.914	.096	12.694	40	.000	14.61905	1.15165	12.29147	16.94662
	Equal variances not assumed			12.694	37.705	.000	14.61905	1.15165	12.28705	16.95105

Based on the result of data analysis as summarized in Table 11 in the pretest of the experimental class as Group 1 and the control class as Group 2, the researchers found that the significance (Sig.2-tailed) is .000, which means that there is a significant difference in the pretest.

*Table 5. T-test of Students' Achievement on Control and Experimental Classes in Posttest*

**Group Statistics**

	Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Score	1	21	72.3810	5.56306	1.21396
	2	21	48.8571	1.79682	.39210

**Independent Samples Test**

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
								Lower		Upper
Score	Equal variances assumed	14.867	.000	18.440	40	.000	23.52381	1.27571	20.94550	26.10212
	Equal variances not assumed			18.440	24.128	.000	23.52381	1.27571	20.89161	26.15601

Based on the result of data analysis as summarized in Table 12 in the posttest of the experimental class as Group 1 and the control class as Group 2, the researchers found that the significance (Sig.2-tailed) is .000, which means that there is a significant difference in the posttest.

Analyzing the result above, it can be said that using pictures as the media could help the students to build their imagination without hesitation and for better results in increasing writing skills. According to Chee & Wong (2003), visual media is considered the most effective way in learning since students learn most through the sense of sight, then through the sense of hearing, and the remainder via the senses of smell, touch, and taste. Pictures, as the visual media, are very useful for teaching writing. There are a lot of choices of pictures that can be used as aid in teaching writing, such as one picture, picture series, diagrams, tables, maps, and charts (Raimes, 1983).

It is demonstrated by the fact that students' writing abilities improved following one treatment employing the image media. Wright (1989) stated that picture series are pictures that show some actions or events in a chronological order. It can be used as one of the stimuli in the learning activity for the students. When picture series are used as media of teaching writing, it can help the students to generate the idea in terms of deciding the theme and the information they want to write. The pictures must be simple and unambiguous. The teachers can help the students by providing some guided questions in order to stimulate a sequence of sentences (Brown, 2004). To solve the problem above, pictures as visual material offers attractive and stimulating framework for writing practice (Sakkir & Dollah, 2019). Since the students were taught using pictures technique, their ability in English writing skills rose significantly. According to Huda (2014) in Barr (2015), pictures are a learning technique and a part of cooperative learning that uses pictures as a learning media, to apply pictures technique, there are several steps that must be followed: submissions, presenting the material, picture presentation, and picture framing.

## Conclusion

The research found that the problem with learning English in school is that they didn't think English was important for their education or career. Not only that, lack of support, spirit from their surroundings (parents, teachers, and even friends), and media make students lack motivation to learn English. In this case, the researchers found the idea of teaching English with interesting media, which is through pictures. Using pictures as a medium for learning English, students found themselves comfortable and enjoyed the new method that the researchers introduced. The result of this research was that students' writing skills scores were increasing with the pictures as media, and the English teacher in the school also agreed that this method could be useful for students the next day. The result of the test showed the difference between the pretest and the posttest. In the pretest, their score was not very qualified. But the t-test result showed students' writing skills were rising significantly by using pictures as media. The response of both classes, the experimental class and the control group class, was good as they studied very well with good scores. As the score was qualified or good, the researchers believed that this research might also be helpful for future researchers who will use this research as one of the references. The researchers hoped that this research would not only be useful for collecting data, but also useful for teaching English every day. With the increasing development of technology, the researchers also hope that the teachers could implement this media by combining it with technology to motivate students, such as using AI pictures, drawing tools, or 3D pictures, so that students will find new ideas while they are learning English.

## References

- Abrar, M. (2016). Teaching English Problems: An Analysis of EFL Primary School Teachers in Kuala Tungkal. Birmingham, UK: The 16th Indonesian Scholars International Convention.
- Afrin, S. (2016). Writing Problems of Non-English Major Undergraduate Students in Bangladesh: An Observation. *Open Journal of Social Sciences*, 4, 104-115.



- Alfaki, I. M. (2015) University Students' English Writing Problems: Diagnosis and Remedy. *International Journal of English Language Teaching*, 3(3), 40-52.
- Alhosani, N.M. (2008). *Utilizing the writing process approach with English as a second language writers: A case study of five fifth grade of ESL Arab students* (Doctoral dissertation). Retrieved from ProQuest Dissertation and Thesis. (3341499).
- Anyiendah, M. S. (2017). Challenges Faced by Teachers When Teaching English in Public Primary Schools in Kenya.
- Asep, S. (2014). The Challenges in Teaching Writing Skill at Junior High School: Problems and Solutions.
- Asrifan, A. 2015. The Use of Pictures Story in Improving Students' Ability to Write Narrative Composition. *International Journal of Language and Linguistics*. 3(4), 244-251.
- Barr, F. D. (2015). Problematika penerapan model pembelajaran kooperatif tipe teams games tournaments ( tgt ) dan alternatif penyelesaiannya pada pembelajaran program studi pendidikan matematika program pascasarjana 2015.
- Bjork, L., & Raisanen, C. (1997). *Academic writing: A university writing course*. Lund, Sweden: Student litteratur.
- Brown, H.D. 2004. *Language Assessment: Principles and Classroom Practices*. New York: Pearson Education.
- Bruning, R., & Horn, C. (2000). Developing motivation to write. *Educational psychologist* 35(1), 25-37.
- Chee, T.S. & Wong, A.F.L. 2003. *Teaching and Learning with Technology: An Asia-Pacific Perspective*. Prentice Hall: Pearson Education Asia.
- Desitawardhani, N. 2014. Improving Students' Skills of Writing Explanation Texts through Picture Series for the Grade XII Students of SMA Negeri 2 Sleman in the Academic Year of 2013/ 2014. Thesis. Yogyakarta: State University of Yogyakarta (Online), (<https://eprints.uny.ac.id/>), accessed on January 4, 2019.
- Fareed, M., Ashraf, A., & Bilal, M. (2016). ESL Learners' Writing Skills: Problems, Factors and Suggestions. *Journal of Education and Social Sciences*, 4, 81-92.
- Gay L. R., et al., (2006). *Educational Research Competencies for Analysis and Applications: Eight Editions*. Columbus Ohio. Pearson Merrill Prentice Hall.
- Graham, S. (2010). Facilitating writing development. In D. Wyse, R. Andrews, & J. Hoffman (Eds), *The Routledge international handbook of English language, and literacy teaching* (pp. 125–136). New York, NY: Routledge.
- Gündogmus, H. D. (2018). The Difficulties Experienced by Teachers in the Process of Primary Reading and Writing Instruction and Their Solution Offers for Eliminating These Difficulties. *Universal Journal of Educational Research*, 6, 333-339.
- Hamman, L. (2005). Self-regulation in academic writing tasks. *International Journal of Teaching and Learning in Higher Education*, 17(1), 15-26.



- Harmer, J. 2004. *How to Teach Writing*. Essex: Pearson Education.
- Harmer, J. 2007. *How to Teach English*. Essex: Pearson Education
- Hasanah, R. 2009. *Improving the Students' Ability in Writing a Procedure Paragraph Through Picture Series at MTsN Malang III*. Unpublished S2 Thesis. Malang: State University of Malang.
- Johannesen, L.R. (2001). Teaching thinking and writing for a new century. *English Journal*, 90, 38-46.
- Kurt, G., & Atay, D. (2007). The effects of peer feedback on the writing anxiety of prospective Turkish teachers of EFL. *Journal of Theory and Practice in Education*, 3(1), 12-23.
- Mudassir, Y.S. 2014. *The Effectiveness of Using Picture Series on Students' Ability in Writing A Recount Text at Junior High School*. Unpublished S2 Thesis. Malang: State University of Malang.
- Nyang'au Benard, N. (2014). *Challenges Students Face in Learning Essay Writing Skills in English Language in Secondary Schools in Manga District, Nyamira County, Kenya*.
- Pardiyono. (2006). *Writing Clues for Better Writing Competence*. Yogyakarta: Penerbit Andi.
- Rahman, A. (2007). *Course Materials Statistics*. Makassar: Faculty of Arts and Language State University of Makassar.
- Raimes, A. 1983. *Techniques in Teaching Writing*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Richards, J.C., & Renandya, W.A. 2002. *Methodology in language teaching: An anthology of current practice*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Richards, J. C., & Renandya, W. A. (2002). *Methodology in Language Teaching: An Anthology of Current Practice*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Samjaya, W. 2012. *Media Komunikasi Pembelajaran*. Jakarta: Kencana Prenada Media Group.
- Sudaryo, D.M. 2013. *The Use of Picture Series Through Process Writing Approach to Improve the Students' Achievement in Writing Narrative Texts on Grade Eight of SMPN 1 Batu*. Unpublished S2 Thesis. Malang: State University of Malang.
- Wright, A. 1989. *Picture for Language Learning*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Yunus, N.A. 1981. *Preparing and Using Aids for English Language Teaching*. Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press.