

## Improving The Writing Skill Of The Second Graders Of Mts Nahdlatul Wathan 2 Rensing Lombok Through The Picture Word Inductive Model Strategy

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### *Abstract*

The problem of this research was how to improve the students' ability to write English using the picture word inductive model strategy. The research type was a collaborative action research. The subject consisted of 26 students of the second graders of MTs NW 2 Rensing Lombok. The research data were collected using four kinds of instruments, which were the writing tasks, observation checklist, field notes, and a set of questionnaires for collecting data on the students' ability in improving the students' ability to write English using the picture word inductive model strategy. The reflection was based on the findings during the observation and compared to the criteria of success including: (1) by using the writing tasks, the students' writing achievement improved ( $\geq 75\%$  students of the class achieved the score greater than or equal to 60 of the range that lies from 0-100), and (2) by using an observation checklist and field notes, the students were actively involved in the ten writing activities. The findings indicated that using the picture word inductive model strategy was one of the strategy could improve students' ability in writing descriptive paragraphs. After the researcher conducted the first and the second cycle, it was shown that the result of the first and second cycle improved.

**Key Words:** *the PWIM strategy, writing skill, descriptive paragraphs*

### 1. INTRODUCTION

English is taught as a foreign language in Indonesia and its aim is to enable students to master the four English skills, i.e. listening, speaking, reading, and writing (Depdiknas, 2006:287). In teaching and learning process, writing places the last of the four skills. It is said in Standard of Content (Depdiknas, 2006:64) that the students are expected to listen, speak, read, and write in a literary stage. Still Standard of Content goes on stating that teaching English at SMP/MTs targets toward the students being able to achieve a functional level, that is, to communicate both written and spoken forms deal with daily matters.

However, in fact, teaching the writing skill in the junior high school has not been properly emphasized much because of the following reasons. First, in practice, the teaching of the English skills is presented in an integrated manner in which the reading skill is mostly emphasized, whereas writing is given a minor

proportion. Alwasilah (2004:99) asserts, "Teaching writing has been considered the most neglected subject in Indonesian schools." Second, in the Graduate Standard Competence (*Standar Kompetensi Kelulusan, henceforth: the SKL*) of the National Examination year 2008, as writing skills the students are only required to arrange jumbled sentences and to complete incomplete paragraphs (Depdiknas, 2006). Therefore, both the English teachers and students consider the writing skill is not as important as the reading skill, which is much emphasized in the National Examination, and thus it can be neglected. Third, most English teachers avoid teaching writing skills because teaching this language skill consume much time in scoring students' writings (Mukminatien, 1991), whereas the time allocated for the teaching of English is very limited that is four hours in a week (Depdiknas, 2006).

Writing is considered a complicated language skill. Richards & Renandya (2002) state that writing is the most difficult skill to master because of its difficulties in generating, organizing, and translating ideas into a readable text. A writer should consider several language aspects in composing a final writing. They are language use (grammar, vocabulary, linkers), punctuation, spelling, and so on (Harmer, 2003:257). The function of punctuation, which is to express the stressing of important information in writing, for example, is similar to pause and intonation in speaking. Therefore, a writer, either beginner or skillful ones, should understand the language aspects first. Understanding them is actually advantageous for writing activities, meaning that writing can strengthen students' knowledge and skills in those domains.

Descriptive texts are text types that an English teacher has to teach to the second graders of Islamic junior high school (MTs) (Depdiknas, 2006:9). A description can be written if the students know well who or what students want to describe. They must know the object or place they want to describe to the reader. Therefore, to begin to write a description, the students must be geared to answer the questions of who, what, where, when and how of the person, object, or place they want to write. In addition, writing a description allows students to

share interesting impressions of a person, a place, or an object surrounding the students (Troyka, 1987).

On the basis of the result of the preliminary study, the researcher finds some problems faced by the students in writing a descriptive paragraph. First, the students do not have ideas and do not know how to express their ideas into a unified written form. Second, they have limited vocabulary and grammar mastery. Third, the students have low motivation and seem uninterested in doing a writing task. Then, their writing achievement is still under the Minimum Passing Grade (*Kriteria Ketuntasan Minimal, henceforth: the KKM*). It can be seen from the results of the preliminary study in which they just got 44 on the average, whereas, the KKM is 56. It indicates that the students' writing skill is not good enough and therefore, needs to be improved.

One of the ways considered effective in the teaching of writing is by using instructional media. Mukminatien (1991) states that the instructional media are important in the teaching learning process since they can enhance and promote learning and support a teacher's instruction. Therefore, the Picture Word Inductive Model strategy (*henceforth, the PWIM*), which used instructional media, is applied to improve students' skill in writing a descriptive paragraph.

The PWIM strategy has been used successfully by the developers with beginning writers in the primary grades and writers of all ability levels through the middle grades (Joyce & Calhoun, 1998; Calhoun, 1999; Joyce, Hrycauk, & Calhoun, 2001). Because it uses pictures as a stimulus for writing, and word study activities, it has much potential for use with second language learners. The strategy can be particularly beneficial for students entering the upper grades who are in the initial stages of writing and who are faced with several different subject areas and classes each day.

Joyce & Calhoun (1998:22) propose the instructional sequence of the PWIM namely:

Students study a picture selected by the teacher; identify what they see in the picture for the teacher to label; read and review the words generated; use the picture word chart to read their own sets of words; classify words according to properties they can identify;

and develop titles, sentences, and paragraphs about their picture. When adapted for use with ESL/EFL students, the procedure may take several days, weeks, or even months and may involve several pictures and photos from varied sources on a related topic serving as the stimulus material.

Based on the background above, the researcher formulates the following research question: How can the Picture Word Inductive Model strategy improve the writing skill of the second graders of MTs Nahdlatul Wathan 2 Rensing Lombok in writing a descriptive text?

Related to the research problem above, the objective of this research is then specified: the research is aimed at improving the writing skill of the second graders of MTs Nahdlatul Wathan 2 Rensing Lombok in writing a descriptive text through the Picture Word Inductive Model strategy.

The result of this research is expected to be useful information to the teachers, the school principal, and the future researchers. First, it provides the English teachers an alternative strategy in teaching writing to the students. Second, it provides the school principal information to facilitate the students in improving their writing ability. Third, it provides other researchers who wish to conduct research in a similar field of research as their reference.

This research limited to the teaching of English descriptive paragraph at the second graders of MTs NW 2 Rensing Lombok using the picture word inductive model strategy to improve their ability to write English. The writer focused his attention in improving the students' ability to write English descriptive paragraph and the students' participation in following the ten processes of teaching and learning using the picture word inductive model strategy. The topics or themes used were: (1) tame animals, (2) my favorite idols. The picture word inductive model strategy was used to attract and encourage the students to improve their ability to construct their understanding and the ability to write English and help the teacher to present the materials.

## 2. DISCUSSION

From the review of related literature, the researcher found some studies had been conducted using pictures as media or strategy of instruction in improving the students' ability to write English. Some of them: (1) Samsuddin (2009) stated that the use of picture series, the students' ability both in the teaching and learning process and in the learning result increased from the first cycle to the second cycle. Most of the students gained improvement in writing narrative paragraphs by using picture series; (2) Susanti (2009) on the writing found that the students could produce a recount text through pictures sequences which obtained the mean score 66.0 in which 73.3% of the students who got score 65 or above. In addition, the students were active and enthusiastic in the teaching and learning process. Writing became enjoyable and an interesting activity for them through the implementation of this strategy. Besides, (3) Hasanah (2009) discovered that the ability of students in writing a procedure paragraph, especially in content and organization, was improved. The findings showed that the criteria of success were successfully achieved in Cycle 2. The criteria of success were set up at least 60% of the subjects reach a final score of 70 in the analytical scoring rubric.; (4) Swartzendruber (2007) employed a quasi-experimental study to determine if students' vocabulary acquisition is enhanced with the PWIM strategy. The results from this study indicated that the PWIM strategy appears to be an effective instructional tool for classroom teachers to use in facilitating vocabulary acquisition. Unlike the other studies described previously, in this research, the use of the PWIM strategy was applied to improve the students' skill in writing a descriptive text. The use of the PWIM strategy helped the students to solve the students' problems since they had similar problems with the previous researchers' students.

In learning the English language, students are expected to master four language skills, namely listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Those skills then can be classified into two major terms, passive-receptive, and active-productive skills (Djiwandono, 2008:116-121). Receptive skills are the ways in which people extract meaning from discourse they see and hear (Harmer, 2003:199). It means that the students are expected to be able to recognize and understand texts of the

target language. In productive skills, students should use all and any language at their disposal to achieve a communicative purpose rather than be restricted to specific practice points (Harmer, 2003:249). In other words, to master productive skills (speaking and writing), the students must be active to use the texts.

Unlike receptive skills, speaking and writing encourage students to apply their understanding in oral and written forms. Practically, if the students have internalized aspects of the target language such as vocabulary, grammar, then they should be able to produce language in real communication. Despite the fact that there are occasions when speaking and writing looks very much the same, there are also differences between them. The general terms used to show the difference are time and space, participants, process, organization and language, and signs and symbols (Harmer, 2004:7-10). If speaking skill directs the students to use the language in a direct communication in which the audiences are in the same place and the right time, writing skills direct them to use the language in the indirect communication. Brereton (1982:20) states that writing differs from speaking in one very important way, the text has to carry all the meanings, because the writer is never around to explain. Therefore, it is not surprising if Cahyono and Widiati (2006:139) conclude that writing is regarded as the most complicated skill compared to the other three language skills.

To illustrate the nature of writing, the following definitions can give a further picture about it. Writing is the complex system people use when transcribing ideas into written form (Stone, 1990:11). In other words, writing is putting thoughts and images of the writer into universal symbolism that all readers can understand. In writing, a writer takes a subject idea, or viewpoint, and then molds it to interest readers. That last definition has shown that media is absolutely needed to transfer the idea. In line with definitions of writing, Gebhard (2000:221) proposes things associated with writing; they are word-choice, use of appropriate grammar, syntax, mechanics, and organization of ideas into a coherent and cohesive form. In addition, writing also includes a focus on audience and purpose, as well as a recursive process of discovering meaning. Based on those preceding definitions, it can be concluded that writing is a process

of putting what the writers think and feel in order to arouse the interest of the readers so they can get valuable information.

One issue in teaching writing is approaches used in teaching writing. Brown (2001:335) mentions two well-known approaches in teaching writing namely product and process approach. Determining approaches in teaching writing is basically related on how people view the writing itself. Those two approaches have their own characteristics. In the writer's point of view, the process-writing approach is more appropriate to be applied in teaching writing skills because students still need a long process to produce a good final writing product. Unlike the product approach, which stresses on the students' product by ignoring the process, the process approach keeps the balance between product and process. In line with process approach, the following are the characteristics of process approach as mentioned by Shih (1989 as quoted by Brown, 2001:335) namely: focus on the process of writing that leads to the final written product; help student writers to understand their own composing process; help them to build repertoires of strategies for pre-writing, drafting, and re-writing; give students time to write and rewrite; place central importance on the process of revision; students discover what they want to say as they write; give students feedback throughout the composing process (not just on the final products) as they attempt to bring their expression closer and closer to intention; encourage feedback from both instructor and peers; and include individual conference between teacher and student during the process of composition.

In the teaching of writing process, a teacher should teach students writing ability through a sequence of steps. Dealing with the steps, Seow (as quoted by Richards & Renandya, 2002:315) states "writing process as a private activity may be broadly seen as comprising four main stages: planning drafting, revising, and editing". The process of writing may flow so neatly, however it often goes forward and backward fashions. Tompkins & Hoskisson (1995:211) state that the labeling and numbering of the stage of the writing process does not mean that the writing process is a linear series of neatly packaged categories. A writer may jump ahead to worry about spelling (a concern of editing) and back to

generate idea when writing a second draft (revision). To conclude, teachers can divide the process of writing into four steps; they are pre-writing (planning), drafting, revising, and editing to teach systematically writing ability.

Why did the picture word inductive model strategy use? Generally, the main function of visual materials including pictures, in the language lesson, is to help create a situation, which interests the students. According to Wright (1992:16), pictures make a particularly powerful contribution to both the content and the process of language learning. She also suggests that pictures can often be used to promote productive skills like speaking and writing. As pictures can be used to assist students in stimulating the students' inspiration (Wright, 1992), pictures are used in this research to help the students get involved and to get information on what they should write. Thus, they will have interest to develop their ideas based on what they see in the pictures.

Pictures used in this study are pictures associated with words. According to Joyce and Calhoun (1998), the PWIM is a strategy, which uses pictures containing familiar objects and actions to elicit words from children's listening and speaking vocabularies. Essentially, students study various pictures and then "shake out" the words they see, while the teacher draws a line to the corresponding word or phrase, spelling it and having the students repeat the pronunciation and spelling. With practice, experience, and modeling, the students develop a greater understanding of the conventions of English as they classify the words according to common letter patterns and begin to internalize phonetic and structural principles (Joyce, Hrycauk, & Calhoun, 2001:43).

In this research, the PWIM is a strategy, which uses a picture associated with words describing familiar scenes or photos of everyday objects and the children 'shake' words out. In addition, the picture, which contains a line from the identified object or area, is given to the students. This is aimed at letting the students use their imagination to make sentences based on the words/phrases provided in the picture. In this case, the words will help the students to have idea in writing sentences while seeing the picture associated with words/phrases. A major principle of the PWIM strategy is to build on children's growing



storehouse of spoken and understood words and syntactic forms and facilitate the transition to writing (Calhoun, 1999:22). Furthermore, he also states that the strategy could be used with a whole class, small groups, pairs, or individually to lead students into inquiring about words and adding them to their vocabularies, discovering phonetic and structural principles, and engaging writing activities. This strategy is designed to capitalize on a student's ability to think inductively.

A set of procedures or steps of conducting the PWIM strategy are taken from Calhoun (1999:20) as follows:

1. Select a picture.
2. Ask students to identify what they see in the picture.
3. Label the picture parts identified. (Draw a line from the identified object or area, say the word, write the word; ask students to spell the word aloud and then to pronounce it).
4. Read and review the picture word chart aloud.
5. Ask students to read the words (using the lines on the chart if necessary) and to classify the words into a variety of groups.
6. Read and review the picture word chart (say the word, spell it, and say it again).
7. Add words, if desired, to the picture word chart and to the word banks.
8. Lead students into creating a title for the picture word chart.
9. Ask students to generate a sentence, sentences, or paragraphs about the picture word chart (ask students to classify sentences; model putting the sentences into a good paragraph).
10. Read and review the sentences and paragraphs.

There are a number of advantages of employing the PWIM strategy in language learning. According to Calhoun (1999) as quoted by Wood & Tinajero (2002), the PWIM strategy has the following advantages in teaching and learning processes particularly for teaching and learning writing skills. First, the strategy emphasizes phonics, grammar, mechanics, and usage of Standard English, while enabling second language learners to begin the new learning in their native language. Second, pictures provide concrete referents for the learning of new words, phrases, and sentences. Third, because students employ pictures related to content materials under study, they feel a part of the classroom community and can participate in class activities. Fourth, second language learners are paired

with class tutors who assist with the identification and writing of the English equivalent to the word. Fifth, the picture word chart serves as an immediate reference to enable students to add these words to their sight vocabulary. The teacher can choose to emphasize almost any sound and symbol relationship (introduced or taken to mastery). Sixth, students are assisted in seeing the patterns and relationships of the English language, enabling them to apply this learning to newly encountered words. Finally, students hear and see words spelled correctly and participate in the correct spelling and writing.

In assessing the students' writing, an analytic scoring rubric adapted from Cohen (1994) is used rather than holistic scoring based on the consideration that analytic scoring uses separate scales to assess different aspects of writing. The use of separately delineated scales may guard against the possibility that raters will collapse categories during the rating process, since they must produce a separate rating for each scale. It is a more useful tool for the training of raters and the standardization of their ratings than a holistic one is (Weir, 1990). The consideration of using analytic scoring adapted from Cohen is to provide simpler and clearer criteria of each aspect than others.

### 3. METHOD

The method used in this research was classroom action research focused on improving the students' ability to write English descriptive paragraphs using the picture word inductive strategy. The subject of the research consisted of 26 students of the second graders of MTs NW 2 Rensing Lombok.

In this study, the researcher worked together with one of the English teachers to carry out the research; the collaborator acted as an observer. Before implementing the strategy, the researcher trained the collaborator in order to have the same view about the following points: the strategy implemented, the procedure of the teaching and learning process, how to collect the data using the instruments, and how to score the students' tasks using a scoring rubric. The researcher conducted the research in a cyclical process that consisted of four main steps, namely: planning, implementing, observing, and reflecting. The four main steps were preceded by a preliminary observation with its analysis and problem

identification. A preliminary observation is necessary to identify the students' problem before implementing the plan. The next step was to make the plan of the action based on the findings in the preliminary study. It concluded that designing the strategy of the activity, the lesson plan, preparing the teaching media and instructional materials and the criteria of success. Then action was conducted in the teaching and learning process. After that, the collaborator observed the action to collect the data during the action. The last was doing data analysis and a reflection that show the results of the action done in each cycle. The plan would be revised and continued to the next cycle if the result was considered unsatisfactory. The activities would be repeated until the researcher could achieve or meet the criteria of success.

To collect data, the instruments to be used: (1) a writing task, (2) observation checklist, (3) field notes, and (4) a set of questionnaires. The writing task was administered to find out the improvement of the students' writing ability. It was also administered to measure about the improvement of their writing ability from the cycle 1 and cycle 2. The observation checklist was administered to observe the way in which the PWIM strategy is applied and to gather information about the students' motivation during the treatment meetings. The field notes was administered to record detailed information and descriptions of what happens, what the observer hears, sees, and experiences during the implementation. The questionnaire was administered to obtain the students' response about the implementation of using the PWIM strategy in writing descriptive texts.

In technique of data analysis, the data on the students' writing skills were collected in line with the instruments (writing task, questionnaires, and observation checklist) and the students' final writings were analyzed using the analytical-scoring rubric. The scoring rubric is broken down into components of writing, namely contents, organization, vocabulary, grammar, and mechanics, and weighted differently for each component. The research findings were described the activities done in each cycle of the research as encompassing planning, implementing, observation, and reflection. The research findings were described

separately from one cycle to another with the aim at showing the similarities, the differences, the changes, and the development that occurred during and between the cycles. The data is analyzed by matching the scores obtained by the students and the criteria of success. Based on data analysis, a judgment is drawn to determine whether the criteria of success have been achieved or not. When the students' achievement has met the criteria of success, the research is considered successful. On the other hand, a following cycle has to be carried out when the students' achievement has not met the criteria of success because it is considered unsuccessful. Before conducting the following cycle, the lesson plan is redesigned before implementing it in the classroom.

The result of the research findings indicated that in the first cycle, none of them achieved *Very Good* level, 18 (69.23%) of them achieved *Good* level, 8 (30.76%) achieved *Fair* level, and none of them achieved *Poor* level. Meanwhile, in the second cycle, most of the students were able to achieve *Good* level (at five criteria: content, organization, grammar, vocabulary, and mechanics) prescribed for successful writing of descriptive paragraphs. Of 26 students, 11 (42.30%) of them could achieve *Very Good* level, 13 (50.00%) achieved *Good* level, 2 (7.69%) achieved *Fair* level, and none of them achieved *Poor* level. To conclude, the result of the students' final products had met the criteria of success.

#### 4. CONCLUSIONS

Based on the findings and discussion in the previous parts, the conclusions of the research are formulated as follows: First, the result of the data analysis shows that the PWIM strategy is successful in improving the ability of the second graders of MTs Nahdlatul Wathan 2 Rensing Lombok in writing descriptive paragraphs. The success is shown by the achievement of the two criteria of success, which dealt with the students' participation in the teaching and learning process and the students' scores for their final products. Second, concerning the students' participation, based on the result of the observation checklists and field notes, it revealed that the PWIM strategy could enhance the students' participation in which most of them (92.30%) were actively

participated in the teaching and learning process. This led to the conclusion that using of the PWIM strategy as a teaching strategy is a need in English language teaching and learning in improving their ability to write English in the terms of content, organization, vocabulary, grammar, and mechanics based on the context of situation. It has brought a good nuance and variation in English language teaching particularly in teaching writing ability.

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