

Using the Chained Pictures Media in Teaching Writing Skill for English Foreign Language Learners in Islamic Higher Education

Sari Famularsih*, Alfin Rosyidha

Universitas Islam Negeri Salatiga, Indonesia

*Email: sari_famularsih@iainsalatiga.ac.id

Abstract. The research aims to know the implementation of chained pictures as a media to develop EFL learners writing mastery in narrative text. To an extent, it intends to find out the result of its implementation toward EFL learners writing skill. The researcher conducted the research using Classroom Action Research (CAR) involving 36 learners; 13 learners of UIN Salatiga and 23 learners UIN Samarinda. CAR incorporated qualitative as well as quantitative data. To get both of the data, the writer uses three techniques of data collection; those are observation, interview and testing. The research is done in three phases; the preliminary research, the cycle 1, and the cycle 2. In the preliminary research, the mean score of the EFL learners is 51.92 out of 100 or 15.4% of the learners passing the minimum standard score. Later, the EFL learners achieved the mean score of 63.92 out of 100 or 43.5% of the learners passing the minimum standard score in the cycle 1. In the cycle 2, the result showed that the mean score is 72.25 out of 100 or 82.5% of the learners passing the minimum standard score. Regarding the observation and questionnaire, it depicts the positive result of the chained picture implementation. The research proved that chained pictures are able to improve EFL learners writing skill on narrative text.

Key words: chained pictures; writing skill; narrative text.

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INTRODUCTION

In learning English, there are four skills to be mastered by the learners; those skills are listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Each skill is equally important to learn. However, writing skill is the crucial skills that the English Foreign Language (EFL) learners require to be proficient in. This statement is supported by Harmer (1991), he declares each skill has its own adversities for learner, however, writing has been the most complicated skill to learn for writing categorizes as production skill and requiring a feedback. Learners must produce language in a written form. Inasmuch of that reason, writing, then, is well-known as an active skill.

Justifying Harmer's statement, Lundsteen in Palmer et al. (1994:1) said that writing is a mean to go forward with the world. Many mass media utilize written language to share the information or communicate with the audiences, such as newspaper, magazine, blog, website, and even social media. Build upon those reasons, it is crystal clear that writing skill is of great importance for the EFL learners in order to maintain a good communication and establish good relation with others. Teaching writing skill, then, is an intricate activity. It is caused "writing involves more than putting sentences together in

language that is grammatically correct and appropriate" (Hadfield & Hadfield, 2008). The ideas in those sentences require to be organized in a logical way in order to make a coherent text which is convenient for the reader to follow.

To an extent, with that of vital purpose, Harmer (2007:278) continued his saying that mastering productive skill such as writing may cause particular pressure if they do not know how to express their idea using the appropriate grammar or certain expressions. Therefore, it is obvious that to be able to write precisely, EFL learners must have a proper mastery on grammar, content, organization, vocabulary, and mechanics. For the EFL learners in the university level, they are obligated to learn and master various types of the functional texts. During senior high school, the most frequent functional texts to learn are recount, description, and procedure. To an extent, the more complicated structure of argumentation and narrative text are learned in the higher education. Narrative text writing, therefore, becomes a complex type as the learners in most cases are asked to write a story based on the given themes. Narrative is a kind of writing that most people choose when they tell a story (Oshima & Hogue, 2007). In addition, Smalley et al. (2015), they said that narrative usually arrange events in chronological order;

meaning that it moves from what happened in the beginning to what happened at the end. Furthermore, what makes narrative story different with other kinds of writing is the moral value which is encompassed in the story and it denotes the success of a narrative writing as the readers pull that string and derive the value (Pharr et al., 2005). By saying so, it can be derived that narrative text writing is a sophisticated skill that the EFL learners require to master.

Brown (2004) said that it is understandable that the learners encounter difficulty of learning to write 'well' in any language because even it is also difficult to write well in our own native language. Moreover, in writing activity, most of people have to try to grab the ideas in their brain and engage those ideas coherently in new structure and new ways of composing them. In the case of EFL learners, writing is one of the most complex skills as they have to comprehend the structure as well the vocabulary being used in English which is not their first language. However, it is a critical skill within which the EFL learners have to master in order to be an expert. The researcher, then, observed the EFL learners and asked them to do a writing test. The result of the test presented that they were lack of writing skill competency. Based on the test above, it was found several factors that became the problem for the EFL learners in Indonesia. Firstly, the learners required to be capable to elaborate their thought to write a narrative text wherein they found it was difficult to get the basic idea of the story. Secondly, the learners were lack vocabularies. It happened due to the teacher's instruction to the learners to write a narrative text directly without media and realia. Lastly, the problem was learners were not capable to make a good chronological order in writing. Therefore, the researcher was trying to figure out the solution for the problems encountered by EFL learners.

Affirming his previous statement, Harmer (2004) suggests that there are four media which can be implemented in the process of teaching and learning, especially to facilitate teaching writing skill. Those media are realia, pictures, cards, and cuisenaire rods. The implementation of picture is expecting to help the learners in creating cohesive, coherent, and systematic structure of the sentences as well as paragraph to make the series of events which is constructed in a chronological order. Considering the concern of the researcher to improve the EFL learners' skill in narrative text writing, picture is chosen to be the media of learning as the narrative text requires

an appropriate chronological order of the events. To an extent, pictures are significant most importantly in providing the illustration for the common vocabulary and language forms to be used (Raimes, 2000). Chained pictures, then, are a number of related composite pictures linked to each other in order to form a series or sequences. They consist of cartoon strips and instruction strips which help students to create the cohesive paragraph (Wright, 1989). The pictures inspire the EFL learners in expressing their ideas and constructing into sentences, and then, into paragraph. Such activity if it is done in a group will be much more meaningful as it involves estafet writing wherein it aims to establish learning as a fun activity, in this case, to improve students' interest in learning narrative text writing (Syathariah, 2011).

Build upon the explanation above, therefore, the researcher is interested in finding out the implementation of chained pictures as a media to develop EFL learners' writing mastery in narrative text. To an extent, the researcher intends to find out the response of its implementation toward EFL learners' writing skill.

METHODS

As the researcher intends to know the implementation of chained picture, the appropriate approach to be used is Classroom Action Research (CAR). Kemis and Teggart in Madya (1994) stated that action research is a collective self-reflective research conducted by participants in social situations to enhance the logic and worthiness of the educational and social practices, as well as their understanding of those practices and of the situations in which those practices are taken place. In addition, according to Bassey (1998) in Koshy (2005), the importance of performing CAR is that action research is needed as an enquiry which is carried out in order to understand, to evaluate and then to change, in order to improve educational practice. Indeed, such approach is chosen by the researcher to perform this research. Furthermore, Lewin as explain by Uno (2011) in his book, there are four steps in performing CAR. First, planning; it is the first step wherein the researcher creates a plan in order to arrange a treatment to resolve the problem that encountered in the process of teaching and learning. Second, acting; during this step, the researcher implements the plan which was made in the previous step. Third, observing; the researcher notices and monitors the teaching and learning process closely as well as collects

the data from the action implemented. Forth, reflecting; it means that the researcher evaluates the teaching and learning process and assesses the improvement of the learners.

This research is organized in a particular setting that is in the classroom situations of the EFL learners in the Islamic Higher Education in Indonesia; those are UIN Salatiga and UIN Samarinda. Based on that reason, the researcher has collaboration with the English teacher to perform the research. The subjects of this research are the third semester learners of International Class Program of UIN Salatiga and UIN Samarinda in the academic year of 2018/2019. The total of the subjects are 36 learners; 13 learners of UIN Salatiga and 23 learners UIN Samarinda. In line with the same grade they have, it is assumed that they are in the same level of English learning.

This research has two types of data; those are qualitative data and supported by quantitative data. The qualitative data is obtained from the process of teaching and learning in the form of words or descriptions. The data is gained through some methods such as tests and observations. The researcher also implemented some instruments such as field notes, observation checklist, camera, and recorder. In addition, this research also uses quantitative data which is in the form of the EFL learners' score. This supporting data is gained through performing some tests.

To gain both of qualitative and quantitative data, the writer uses three techniques of collecting data; those are observation, interview and testing. Since this research use classroom action research, the writer did the research in two cycles those are the cycle I and the cycle II. The steps in every cycle are same. It comprises planning, action, observation, and reflection (Arikunto, 2006). However, before doing the cycle, the researcher performed the preliminary research in order to find out the real condition of the EFL learners' skill regarding narrative text writing.

The analytic scoring technique was chose to analyse the collected data. Supporting this decision, Brown (2004) stated that analytic scoring is the foremost technique to provide the evaluation of classroom's teaching and learning process. The initial step was determining the rating scale. It is objected to facilitate the teacher in giving the mark to the EFL learners' work. It is also able to utilize as a scoring guidance in order to decrease subjectivity from the corrector. Indeed, the analytic scoring guidance being used in this research is written by Weigle (2002). After

that, the researcher merged all of score category in order to render an individual score. To an extent, the researcher elaborated a pre-test and post test in this classroom action research, then, the mean formula will be implemented to discover the EFL learners' average score in every test.

After chained pictures being implemented, the researcher made use of questionnaire to find out the EFL learners response. The questions in the questionnaire were characterized into *yes/no* questions in order to facilitate the researcher in analyzing the data collection.

The data collection was gathered from the observation result, test, and questionnaire. The researcher did the observation to collect the data during the teaching and learning process. Build upon the result of the observation, the researcher obtained the data related to participation, enthusiasm, and teamwork of the EFL learners in the narrative text writing. In addition, the teachers' performance and presentation in teaching process of narrative text was being examined during the observation process. After the observation, the teacher provided test which was divided into three phases, starting from the preliminary research, the cycle 1, up to the cycle 2. The result of the test, then, was expected to give information regarding the EFL learners' improvement in writing narrative text. Last but not least, the researcher gave the questionnaire at the end of cycle 1. As mentioned before, the data of the questionnaire was useful for the researcher to identify the response of the EFL learners after being taught by chained picture in writing narrative text.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The preliminary research was conducted during teaching and learning process in the classroom. The preliminary research is aimed to know the EFL learners' estate and the writing skill of the EFL learners prior to the implementation of chained picture. In teaching process, the teacher used conventional method.

After implementing the conventional method and doing the test, the average score and the percentage of EFL learners were calculated and determined regarding who achieved the score of the minimum standard. The result showed that the average score of EFL learners was 51.92 out of 100 or 51.92% of the learners passing the minimum standard score on the preliminary test. Based on this test, yet, the result was not satisfying. From this preliminary test, it is

concluded that the aspect of the learning content was the main problem. This learning content can be elucidated into topic development and sentence conclusions, aspects of language use such as the grammar utilization, especially in the form of tenses, and mechanical aspects such as capitalization and forming paragraph.

Since the preliminary test was not going well, the researcher decided to conduct the first cycle. Beforehand, the researcher specified the achievement indicators. Then, those indicators were objected as the standard which would be achieved in this research. The researcher decided three indicators as the standard achievement of this research; those are the EFL learners' mean score improvement in writing narrative text, the achievement of the minimum standard score (70 out of 100) of equal to or higher than 80% in total amount of EFL learners in this research, and the discovery of positive response from EFL learners in the learning process of narrative text writing using chained pictures.

1. The Cycle 1

This activity was arranged to implement the different technique in teaching narrative text writing as compared to the preliminary research which was done conventionally. This implementation, then, is expected to improve EFL learners' skill on narrative text writing.

a. Planning

During this phase, a planning was made by the collaboration of teacher and researcher for the action considering the problems being encountered by the learners in the narrative text writing. In advance of the planning implementation, the researcher prepared all the necessity which prone to be useful during teaching and learning process, for instances lesson plan, teaching material, presentation, observation checklist, chained picture, questionnaire, and test instrument.

b. Acting

This phase was completed in one week during the first cycle which comprised two meetings. In the process of teaching and learning, the teacher taught the learners based on the constructed lesson plan. The teaching and learning activities which were done by the teacher can be described as follows.

1) First Meeting

There were 36 learners during the first meeting in the first cycle. The class was begun with greeting, checking attendance, as well as explaining the learning objectives done by the teacher. Afterwards, the teacher presented an

instance of narrative text through power point presentation. The teacher randomly requested the learners to read the presented text. In order to create an active learning, the teacher engaged the learners to identify the generic structure and language feature of the text. To an extent, a chance was given to the learners to probe questions regarding the presented material. Accordingly, the teacher illustrated a technique that was going to be implemented in the learning process of narrative text writing; that is chained picture. The teacher, then, illustrated the writing rules. By and by, the teacher split learners into six groups consisted of 6-7 learners and provided chained picture for each group. Later, the learners carried out the procedures in accordance with the teacher's instruction. Subsequent to the writing completion of each member in the group, the teacher requested them to revise their work jointly. Each group had to present their work to the whole class. Due to the limitation of the time, only one group was able to present their work. At the final of the lesson, the teacher and the learners reviewed and concluded the material. The teacher ended the first meeting by conveying the planning for the upcoming meeting.

2) Second Meeting

After a week, the second meeting was conducted in the first cycle. The teacher began the lesson by reviewing the previous material. Subsequently, the teacher provided a writing test to the learners. To examine whether the new technique implemented is effective or not, the teacher assigned the learners to compose narrative text based on given chained picture individually. They were instructed to write minimum of 150 words in forty minutes. Following the completion of the test, the learners were asked to answer the questionnaire. The questionnaire is aimed to examine the EFL learners' responses after chained picture being implemented in narrative text writing. At the final session of the lesson, the teacher concluded the subject involving the learners.

3) Observing

As an observer, the researcher monitored the process of teaching and learning while the teacher was teaching the learners by using observation checklist. The observation focused on the teacher's and the EFL learners' activities which were discovered in the process of teaching and learning. It was utilized to examine to what extent the action result achieved the aims. Furthermore, the result of the observation showed that there was an improvement regarding EFL learners'

enthusiasm and participation even though some were found less enthusiastic in the lesson. They listened carefully to the lesson even though some of them still dealt with difficulties in probing and responding the questions. Moreover, the learners also trained to develop a good teamwork in this cycle. To an extent, a good responsibility toward their team was also maintained during the team work.

4) Reflecting

In this phase, the conclusion of the implemented action was drawn through the discussion between the researcher and the teacher. At the end of the cycle, the mean score of the EFL learners was 63.92 out of 100 or 43.5% of the learners passing the minimum standard score. Build upon this test result, it can be seen that the first cycle was preferable than the preliminary test. The researcher found the improvement during this cycle though it is not as high as the expecting standard. Furthermore, the observation result presented that the EFL learners' situation was also surpass in the preliminary observation, however, the EFL learners' were still lack of enthusiasm. Besides, there were some of the learners who were not active and keen in paying attention to the teacher's explanation. They were also not excited in doing the test as they faced trouble in finding the proper word to depict the picture. Based on the analysis, this problem emerged due to the vocalization of the teacher which was not clear in process of teaching and learning. In addition, the classroom management of the teacher was not quite good. To an extent, the learners found difficulties in probing questions and uttering their opinion about the material due to lack of the chances given by the teacher during the process of teaching and learning.

Build upon the explanation above, the researcher found that the result of the first cycle was not satisfying enough. Therefore, the researcher determined to carry on the action to the following cycle. Indeed, the further cycle was expected to be able to provide better explanation to boost the learners' enthusiasm, interesting thematic chained picture along with the keywords. By doing so, the researcher aimed to bring about the better result than the previous cycle.

2. The Cycle 2

The cycle 2 was arranged in order to compare the result of the first cycle. In addition, the teacher and the researcher performed the next cycle with

the expectation of EFL learners' improvement of writing narrative text. The phase in the second cycle can be explained as follows.

a. Revised Planning

Within this phase, the teacher along with the researcher revised the prior lesson plan. The created a modified lesson plan to solve the problem encountered in the first cycle. Though they were still using chained picture, they upgraded the technique. By doing so, they expected to overcome the difficulty encountered by the students in the learning process of narrative text writing. The modification done by the teacher and the researcher were found in using different material and exercise. Besides, the observation checklist was provided for monitoring the EFL learners' activities in process of teaching and learning. At the end, the revised planning was to give a test to know the EFL learners' improvement in writing narrative text. Revising the previous test, they added some keywords in each picture to facilitate the learners in composing narrative text.

b. Acting

Similar to the action in the previous cycle, this phase was completed in one week during the first cycle that composed of two meetings. The lesson was taught based on the revised lesson plan that had been made related to narrative text writing using chained picture. The teaching and learning activities can be presented as follows.

1) First Meeting

There were 36 learners joined in the second cycle. The process of teaching and learning was quite similar with the action in the first cycle. However, rather than giving a complex explanation regarding the material theoretically, the teacher provided much more examples for the students to increase their understanding practically.

Following the main activity, the learners were divided into six groups comprised 6-7 learners in each group. Comparing with the first cycle, the members of the group was made different than before. The teacher prepared chained picture for each group along with some keywords. Those keywords were objected to help the learners in writing a narrative text. Accordingly, the teacher's instruction was done by the learners. After they finished their work some groups were invited to present their work to whole class. At the final section of the class, the subject point of the lesson was concluded by the teacher together with the learners. Afterwards, the teacher told the lesson planning for the upcoming meeting.

2) Second Meeting

The total of 36 learners followed this second meeting. The activity done in this phase resembled the second meeting in the previous cycle. The teacher along with the students reviewed the material given in the previous meeting. After that, a test was given to the learners. They were requested to compose a narrative text built upon given chained picture individually. The test in this phase was distinct from the previous cycle. As mentioned before, they were provided with some keywords in this test which were objected to facilitate the learners in narrative text writing. The learners were requested to write minimum of 150 words in forty minutes. At the final session of the class, the teacher summarized the lesson together with the learners.

c. Observing

Based on the observation checklist obtained during the process of teaching and learning, it can be concluded that generally the EFL learners' situation was preferable than the prior cycle. The EFL learners' situation was great as it achieved the mean score of 72.25 out of 100 or 82.5% of the learners passing the minimum standard score. The report showed that the learners were more passionate and attentive in learning narrative text writing. In addition, they participate actively in doing the activities given by the teacher. Last but not least, most of the learners also attempted to ask some questions and give their idea about the material.

d. Reflecting

In the reflecting phase, the teacher and the researcher examined the implication of this cycle. After getting the outcome of the writing test, it was concluded that the EFL learners' skill in narrative text writing improved. The outcome, therefore, was better than the first cycle. Build upon the score obtained in the second cycle, there was an impressive achievement of the learners. The mean score of the learner was 72.25, meaning that they had passed the minimum standard score. Both the teacher and researcher were contented with the result. In addition, the learners were able to write a legible text. Besides, they enjoyed and were enthusiastic during the process of teaching and learning. The success of the class cannot be separated from the teacher who had performed well in delivering the material, using the media, and effectively implementing the technique.

According to the result of the second cycle as

well as the achievement of the research's target of minimum 80%, the researcher decided to stop the Classroom Action Research (CAR). Therefore, the second cycle is the last phase of the action taken by the researcher.

After performing the actions, the researcher provided questionnaire in order to know the EFL learners' response regarding the teaching and learning activity after applying chained picture in the learning process of narrative text writing. The questionnaire consisted of ten questions and categorized as closed questionnaire wherein the learners were required to answer yes or no. Based on the result, it depicted that (1) the learners prefer using chained picture in the English learning process, especially in narrative text writing; (2) the learners enjoy the learning process using chained picture; (3) the learners are enthusiastic to implement chained picture in learning narrative text writing; (4) the learners participate actively in learning process of narrative text writing using chained picture; (5) chained picture is proved to help the learners in building a cooperative relationship with their team in the learning process of narrative text writing; (6) chained picture is proved to help the learners to establish their responsibility in team; (7) chained picture is proved to help the learners to comprehend the narrative text subject; (8) chained picture is proved to facilitate the learners in writing narrative text; (9) the learners are able to produce a preferable narrative text after chained picture being implemented; and (10) the implementation of chained picture helps the teacher to engage the learners in the learning process.

CONCLUSION

Build upon the result of the analysis throughout the phases of the research, it is found that the implementation of chained picture to increase EFL learners' skill of the narrative text writing is effective. It is examined from the achievement of the mean scores which are increasing in each cycle. During the preliminary research, the mean score of the EFL learners is 51.92 out of 100 or 15.4% of the learners passing the minimum standard score. Later, the EFL learners achieved the mean score of 63.92 out of 100 or 43.5% of the learners passing the minimum standard score in the cycle 1. In the cycle 2, the result showed that the mean score is 72.25 out of 100 or 82.5% of the learners passing the score of the minimum standard. Considering the result of the observation as well as

questionnaire, it also depicts the positive result of the chained picture implementation. It is showed that after the implementation, the learners are more enthusiastic in learning narrative text as well as participate actively in every learning activity. Chained picture also helps the learners to maintain their responsibility and establish a good group work in finishing the assignment. Therefore, chained picture is proved to be able to help the learners comprehend narrative text effectively and produce the text nicely.

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