

Writing Stories Based on Picture Series as a Means of Developing Literacy and Imagination in Primary School Students

Putri Asci Wicahyanti

Primary School Teacher Education
Universitas Kanjuruhan PGRI Malang
Malang, Indonesia

ceeaceel@gmail.com

Abstract : *This study aims to describe the implementation of narrative story writing learning using picture series media for elementary school students and to evaluate the effectiveness of this method in improving students' writing skills. The background of this research is the low ability of students to develop ideas and compose narrative story structures in a coherent manner. The study was conducted at SD Negeri 3 Sukoraharjo Kepanjen using a descriptive qualitative approach. The research subjects consisted of 32 sixth-grade students and one Indonesian language teacher. Data were collected through observation, documentation of student writing, and interviews with both the teacher and students. The results showed that the use of picture series as visual stimuli increased student engagement, facilitated the development of story plots, and enriched narrative elements such as characters, settings, and conflicts. Students demonstrated improved ability to compose stories in a coherent and creative manner. Additionally, the teacher stated that this medium greatly assisted the learning process as it bridged students' imagination with systematic writing forms. These findings indicate that picture series are an effective medium for developing students' narrative writing skills.*

Keywords: *Writing serial stories, Serial pictures, Writing instruction, Imagination, Literacy skills*

INTRODUCTION

Writing skills are one of the essential aspects of literacy mastery for students at SD Negeri 3 Sukoraharjo Kepanjen. In the era of the *Merdeka Curriculum*, which emphasizes competency strengthening and differentiated learning, writing proficiency not only reflects language competence but also serves as a medium for honing thinking skills, creativity, and the ability to express ideas systematically. Unfortunately, various studies show that the writing abilities of elementary school students in Indonesia are still relatively low. According to the 2021 National Assessment (*Asesmen Nasional*) report by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology, many elementary students are still unable to compose coherent and sequential narrative texts.

One of the contributing factors to this low writing performance is the lack of contextual and creative learning approaches. Indonesian language instruction at the elementary level often focuses on mechanical aspects such as spelling, sentence structure, and multiple-choice exercises, which provide limited opportunities for students to imagine and freely express their ideas. In fact, at the stage of concrete operational cognitive development (the typical developmental phase for elementary-aged children), students possess great potential to learn through visual media and storytelling.

In this context, the use of picture series as a medium for story writing presents an interesting alternative. Picture series are sequences of illustrations arranged chronologically that depict a storyline. This medium can stimulate students to observe, interpret the meaning of each image, and develop a complete narrative based on the storyline. Moreover, visual media have proven effective in helping students understand narrative structure—such as orientation, conflict, climax, and resolution—which in turn improves the quality of their writing.

Several previous studies have shown that picture series media can improve the interest and writing skills of elementary students (Setyaningsih & Zulela, 2020; Sari & Fauziah, 2022). This method is not only enjoyable but also promotes active and meaningful learning, where students become active participants in the thinking and writing process. Nevertheless, the application of this method in the classroom still faces challenges, such as students' limited vocabulary, lack of teacher training in facilitating creative learning, and the limited availability of media tailored to students' local context.

Based on this background, this article aims to comprehensively discuss the strategy of teaching narrative writing using picture series among sixth-grade students at SDN 3 Sukoraharjo Kepanjen. The focus of the discussion includes the urgency of this

method, challenges in classroom implementation, and the teacher's role in facilitating a visually and imaginatively based writing process.

METHOD

This study employed a descriptive qualitative approach aimed at providing a detailed depiction of the narrative writing learning process using picture series media among elementary school students. This approach was chosen because it is suitable for exploring the dynamics of classroom learning in a natural context, and it allows an in-depth exploration of students' and teachers' experiences in implementing visual methods to develop writing skills. The study was conducted at SD Negeri 3 Sukoraharjo Kepanjen, involving 32 sixth-grade students and one Indonesian language teacher who had consistently used the picture series method for one semester.

Data collection was carried out using three primary techniques: direct classroom observation, documentation of students' written work, and unstructured interviews with the teacher and several purposively selected students. Observations were conducted to record the activities of both the teacher and students during the learning process, with a focus on the application of picture series media and students' responses to the activity. Documentation involved collecting and analyzing students' writing products, while interviews aimed to gain deeper insights into the perceptions of students and the teacher regarding the use of picture series as a writing stimulus.

The observed learning implementation consisted of several stages. The teacher began by presenting a picture series consisting of four to six illustrated panels. These images were selected based on their relevance to students' daily lives to ensure they were easily understood and could stimulate imagination. After the images were displayed, students were asked to observe each panel sequentially and identify story elements such as characters, setting, and plot. This activity was followed by guided discussion, during which the teacher encouraged students to interpret the content of the images and develop various possible narratives based on the visual storyline.

The next step required students to construct a story outline, comprising orientation, complication, climax, and resolution. In this process, the teacher provided both individual and group guidance to help students organize their ideas systematically. Once the outline was completed, students proceeded to write the full narrative text with the teacher's assistance, particularly in choosing appropriate vocabulary, using effective sentences, and applying correct punctuation. In the final stage, selected students were invited to read their stories aloud in front of the class. This activity not only trained public speaking skills but also served as a medium for reflection and feedback from both the teacher and classmates. Based on the feedback, students were given the opportunity to revise and improve their stories.

The data obtained from observations, documentation, and interviews were analyzed thematically to identify emerging patterns within the learning process. This analysis covered the effectiveness of the method, challenges encountered by teachers and students, and the overall efficacy of picture series in stimulating students' imagination and narrative writing skills.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Observations of the implementation of narrative writing instruction using picture series revealed that this method had a positive impact on both student engagement and writing ability among sixth-grade students. During the learning process, students showed enthusiasm in participating in each stage of the activity. The use of engaging and contextual images helped students understand the storyline more easily and supported the development of their imagination during writing. Students who were initially passive or struggled to express ideas became more active after receiving clear visual stimuli.

Based on an analysis of students' written products, there was a noticeable improvement in the quality of writing in terms of narrative structure, vocabulary, and punctuation usage. Most student texts included key story elements such as orientation, complication, and resolution. For instance, one student wrote a story that began with a clear description of characters and setting, followed by a logically developed conflict, and concluded with a resolution consistent with the plot. Previously, when given a free-writing assignment without visual aids, most students produced short, incoherent paragraphs lacking narrative structure.

The teacher noted that picture series made it easier for students to comprehend the story flow, as they were not required to imagine everything from scratch. Visual media acted as a bridge between ideas and written language. This aligns with *Suparno and Yunus (2019)*, who argue that visual aids can strengthen imagination and clarify abstract concepts in the writing process. Furthermore, through images, students could establish connections between their personal experiences and the stories they developed, making their writing more vivid and authentic.

Nevertheless, not all students were able to produce quality writing immediately. Some still faced challenges in constructing effective sentences and choosing appropriate vocabulary. This indicates that, although visual media is highly beneficial, the teacher's role in providing linguistic guidance remains crucial. Another challenge encountered was the variation in students' writing abilities. While high-achieving students could elaborate complex narratives, others with limited vocabulary required more scaffolding and support.

These findings are consistent with previous research. *Setyaningsih and Zulela (2020)* found that the use of visual media significantly improved students' writing quality, particularly in terms of textual cohesion and coherence. Similarly, *Sari and Fauziah (2022)* reported that picture series encouraged students to think narratively in a structured and creative manner. Therefore, writing instruction supported by visual media should be integrated as a routine strategy in elementary-level Indonesian language learning.

From a theoretical perspective, this approach is supported by Vygotsky's constructivist theory, which emphasizes the role of mediation in the learning process. Picture series function as tools that place students within their zone of proximal development (ZPD), where they can perform more complex tasks with the help of their learning environment. In this context, images are not only visual aids but also serve as narrative thinking frameworks that assist students in constructing coherent texts.

Overall, the findings of this study suggest that narrative writing instruction using picture series is an effective strategy for enhancing elementary students' narrative writing abilities. The success of this method depends on the appropriate use of media, creative teaching strategies, and consistent support from the teacher. As such, teachers should receive further training in designing educational and contextually relevant visual media, as well as in applying adaptive guidance techniques tailored to the diverse needs of their students.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Based on the results of the study, it can be concluded that the use of picture series as a medium in narrative writing instruction for sixth-grade elementary school students has proven effective in improving the quality of students' writing. Picture series help students construct clear narrative structures, enrich their vocabulary, and enhance the cohesion and coherence of their texts. In addition, this medium stimulates students' imagination and transforms the writing process into a more enjoyable and meaningful activity. The enthusiasm demonstrated by students throughout the learning process also indicates that this approach holds great potential for increasing learning motivation, especially in writing skills, which many students often find challenging.

The success of this method cannot be separated from the role of the teacher as an active facilitator who guides and supports students through every stage of the learning process. Teachers who are able to utilize media effectively and implement participatory teaching strategies are more likely to create a conducive learning environment for developing students' literacy skills. However, several challenges remain, such as variations in students' ability to develop stories and limited vocabulary among some students. These issues highlight the importance of individualized support and the implementation of differentiated instruction strategies in heterogeneous classroom settings.

Based on these findings, several recommendations can be made. First, teachers are encouraged to intensively and routinely use picture series media as part of the writing instruction process, particularly within curricula that emphasize the strengthening of students' competence and creativity. Second, schools and educational policymakers should provide teachers with training on the effective use of visual media, including the development of contextual and engaging teaching materials. Third, there is a need to develop integrated instructional models that combine visual and linguistic elements, so that writing instruction not only focuses on the form of written text, but also fosters deeper narrative thinking processes.

Finally, this study has several limitations, particularly in terms of the scope, which was limited to a single class at one school. Therefore, further research with a broader scope and a quantitative-comparative design is recommended to more objectively measure the effectiveness of the picture series method. Additionally, the exploration of other visual media—such as educational comics, short animations, or digital storyboards—could serve as alternative tools worthy of further investigation in the context of elementary student literacy.

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