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UTILIZING COMIC STRIPS TO ENHANCE STUDENTS' WRITING NARRATIVE SKILL

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Abstract

As a complex skill, writing is not easy to teach since it involves many skills and language aspects such as planning, drafting, and editing, spelling, grammar, punctuation, etc. As well as a narrative text – a true story or fiction appears to be more complex that needs a fascinating way to teach it. Therefore, one of the ways that seems fit to teach it is using an interesting media e.g. comic strips that can facilitate students in the process of writing. Hence, a quantitative study was conducted to find out whether or not using comic strips can enhance students' writing narrative skills. To carry out this study, the writer used students of IX 2 as the subject of this study. By means of the data collected from of pre-test and post-test, the result shows that utilizing comic strips can successfully enhance students' writing narrative skill reflected in the post-test result of their composition covering all language aspects called content, organization, vocabulary, grammar, and mechanics. The significant difference in the findings can be seen in the average score: content increased from 11.8 to 16.2, the organization from 11.8 to 15.8, vocabulary from 9.6 to13, grammar from 7.8 to 11, and mechanics from 9.4 to 12.2 with the improvement for each aspect was 4.4, 4, 3.4, 3.2, and 2.8. Based on these proofs, it can be concluded that utilizing comic strips can successfully enhance students' writing narrative skill. Consequently, finding an attractive way in teaching narrative writing such as using comic strips is required in order to overcome students' writing difficulties.

Keywords: *comic strips, writing skill, narrative text.*

INTRODUCTION

English has been decided as a compulsory subject in high school as it is an international language. Teaching English as a form of language learning always deals with communicative competence. As regulated in curriculum 2013 (Regulation of Indonesia Ministry of Education and Culture, No 68,2013), communicative proficiencies consist of four skills, and they must be mastered by students, for instance, writing skills. In the matter of this skill, the curriculum expects that senior high school students must have an ability to comprehend and create various kinds of short functional and monolog texts and essays in the form of procedure, descriptive, report, and narrative.

Unfortunately, this expectation becomes not easy to achieve since writing is one of the skills considered the most complicated one due to its complexities. Hedge as cited in Jamaris (2013) states that writing is a complex process which is not easy and nor spontaneous for many second language writers. He also clarifies that writing includes several activities namely,

setting goals, generating ideas, organizing information, selecting appropriate language, making a draft, reading and reviewing, revising, and editing. Thus, in writing, one should engage in some activities in order to get good writing.

Such problems become an obstacle in achieving the goal of the curriculum as affirmed in standard competence and basic competence for SMP and SMA in which students are able to express the meaning and rhetorical steps in a short simple essay using written language accurately, fluently, and acceptable in daily life context in the form of mentioned texts included narrative text as the focus of this research. Thus, a creative way is needed to overcome the problems such as using media-comic strips. It is assumed that this media can facilitate students in writing narrative text since comic strips contain pictures and dialog that can ease students to write a narrative story.

According to Al-Jumaily (2015), writing is form of a communication using symbols in the process of expressing ideas. Further explanation of this is clarified by Joko (2013) saying that writing is a way to express ideas coming from minds which then is encrypted in written form based on its purpose and text genre. Therefore, to be able to write good writing, one should have skills, master grammar, vocabulary, and punctuation.

Also, as classified by Rattanawong and Kaenmanee (2020), the process of writing includes: (a) Prewriting where a writer starts to find topics, make plan and organize the content, (b) Composing where a writer begins to draft and generate the ideas completely, (c) Reviewing and editing the composition of the writing including relating ideas/information, grammar used and mechanical errors like spelling, punctuation, and capitalization, and (d) Publishing the writing after passing all the processes.

In short, to obtain effective writing, a writer needs to accomplish all processes elucidated above. The general processes used are prewriting, drafting, revising, and publishing. Considering writing as a complex skill, a writer requires to complete all these stages which are meant to improve her/his composition.

Furthermore, a good writing must have some main components as discussed by Fook & Shindu in Mantra and Widiastuti (2019), they are Language use: referring to the ability to write proper and appropriate grammar and written discourse convention such as punctuation and spelling. What is more, Mantra and Kumara (2018) further state that writing involves not only micro skill like language use and mechanic skills, but also it engages macro skill such as wider areas of writing including communicative purpose of writing, main and supported ideas, the literal and implied meaning of a written form.

In terms of narrative writing text, Nagin in Basuki (2012) defines it as storytelling, whether it tells a true story or fiction which contains action, dialog, elaborate details, and humor played by certain characters. In addition, Rambe (2017) states that the social function of narrative writing is to entertain the readers which is constructed into three or four generic structures as follows: (a) Orientation: Tell the readers about who was involved and where it happened? (b) Complication: What happened and the evaluation of the problem or crisis that contended in the event? (c) Evaluation: What are the evaluations of the people involved in this event? (d) Resolution: How the problem or crisis was settled down and resumed to normal.

What is more, as declared by Kunzle (2013) in the encyclopedia Britanica Inc. that comic strip is a narrative-designed picture series containing simple-cut story (highlight words) to describe what is happening in the images. By reading the images with the highlights, the readers can generate the story chronologically on their own.

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Additionally, Lavery (2011) verifies that comic strips make students friendly in any activity in learning a language as comic strips: (1) Tell a complex story in a few images. (2) Provide comments and provoke thought on events and issues in the news. (3) Give an example of vocabulary related to the current issue. (4) Give the illustration of idioms and expressions. (5) Stimulate dialog to inject humor into a class session. (6) Provide basic oral discourse and writing activities. (7) Show culture and values in action with the ways that men or women are behaving and are expected to behave.

It can be interpreted that by means of comic strips, all skills mentioned above can be trained and enhanced since they permit teachers and students to explore language creatively.

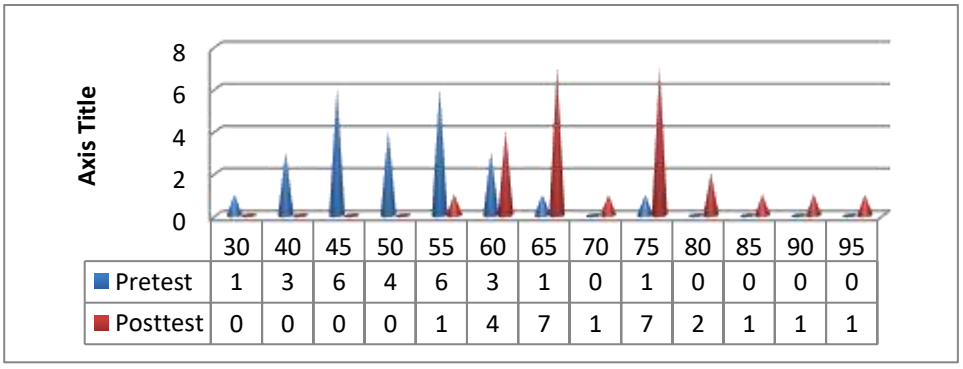
METHODS

This study was investigated by using pre-experimental quantitative research called one group pretest and posttest design. This involves only one group of students (where the researcher experiments the study) without any control group. Ary, et al (2006) add that this design encompasses three steps, namely administering a pre-test or measuring the dependent variable, applying the experimental treatment or showing the independent variable, and running a post-test to measure the dependent variable. The most common instrument of quantitative research to gain data is through a test following pretest, treatment, and post-test.

This research was conducted at SMPS Muslimat Samalanga, which is located at Jl. Kampong Putoh, Samalanga, Bireuen. There are 15 classes in total, 5 classes for every grade. The population of this research was all of the third graders of SMP Swasta Muslimat Samalanga. Since this is the one-group pre-test-post-test design, the sample chosen was one class (IX.2) and it was selected by using the purposive sampling technique.

FINDING AND DISCUSSIONS

From the calculation of the mean score, it was found that the pre-test's mean score was 52, indicating that this score was too far from the standard score (65). It might happen due to the problems or difficulties faced by the students in which their knowledge of narrative writing text was too low including a lack of understanding of the aspects involved. While for the post-test mean score, it shows a different outcome if it is compared to the pretest result. It can be seen that the mean score reaches 71 and it means the students' skills increase somehow and achieve the passing grade. The result of pre-test and post-test is presented in the chart 1 below.



	30	40	45	50	55	60	65	70	75	80	85	90	95
Pretest	1	3	6	4	6	3	1	0	1	0	0	0	0
Posttest	0	0	0	0	1	4	7	1	7	2	1	1	1

Chart 1 The Students' Pretest and Posttest Score

The chart 1 displays the scale of students' scores in pretest and posttest. It can be witnessed that there was a significant difference in what students achieve before and after they learn narrative writing text using comic strips. In the pretest, almost all respondents got scores

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under 60 which could not reach a passing grade. But, in the post-test, their score made a considerable improvement where the scores were mostly above 60 and reached the standard grade.

Furthermore, after both pretest and posttest were calculated and analyzed using the formula of the excel program, all of the results are noted as follows: the standard deviation was 4.7871, and the $t_{\text{-score}}$ was 19.84. These outcomes are useful to do further analysis. To see the detailed information on how the students' achievement in the narrative text writing, the writer presents the enlightenment below.

Table 1. Score Details on Aspects; Content, Organization, Vocabulary, Grammar, and Mechanics

Student	Content		Organization		Vocabulary		Grammar		Mechanics	
	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post
1	10	10	5	10	5	10	5	15	5	10
2	10	15	10	15	5	10	10	10	5	10
3	10	15	10	15	10	15	5	15	5	10
4	10	15	10	15	5	10	10	10	10	10
5	10	15	10	15	10	10	5	10	5	10
6	10	15	10	20	10	15	10	10	5	5
7	10	15	10	15	10	15	5	10	10	10
8	15	15	10	15	10	15	5	10	10	10
9	15	15	10	15	10	10	10	10	10	10
10	15	15	15	15	10	15	5	15	10	15
11	15	20	10	15	10	15	10	15	10	10
12	10	15	15	15	10	15	10	15	10	15
13	15	15	15	15	10	15	10	15	10	15
14	15	20	10	15	15	15	10	15	10	15
15	10	15	15	15	5	10	5	10	10	15
16	10	20	15	20	10	15	5	10	10	15
17	10	20	15	20	10	15	5	10	10	10
18	15	20	10	15	5	10	5	10	5	10
19	10	15	15	15	5	15	10	10	10	10
20	15	15	15	15	10	15	10	15	15	15
21	15	15	15	20	15	20	15	20	15	20
22	10	20	10	15	15	20	10	15	15	20
23	10	15	10	15	15	20	10	10	10	15
24	10	15	10	15	10	15	5	10	10	10
25	10	20	15	20	10	15	10	15	10	15
Sum	**295**	**405**	**295**	**395**	**240**	**325**	**110**	**140**	**115**	**305**
Average	**11.8**	**16.2**	**11.8**	**15.8**	**9.6**	**13**	**7.8**	**11**	**9.4**	**12.2**
improvement	**4.4**		**4**		**3.4**		**3.2**		**2.8**	

The table illustrates that the average score after the students learned narrative writing text through comic strips increased a lot for each aspect. Content as the first aspect increased from

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11.8 to 16.2 with the degree of improvement is 4.4. In the organization aspect, the score raised from 11.8 to 15.8 with the enhancement is 4 indicating that the students become aware of how to state ideas clearly in their writing though somewhat choppy. For vocabulary, it increased from 9.6 to 13 with the improvement is 3.4. In the grammar aspect, the score enhances from 7.8 to 11 with the degree of improvement is 3.2. The last aspect –mechanics increases from 9.4 to 12.2 with the enhancement is 2.8. The preview of these results is depicted in the following chart.

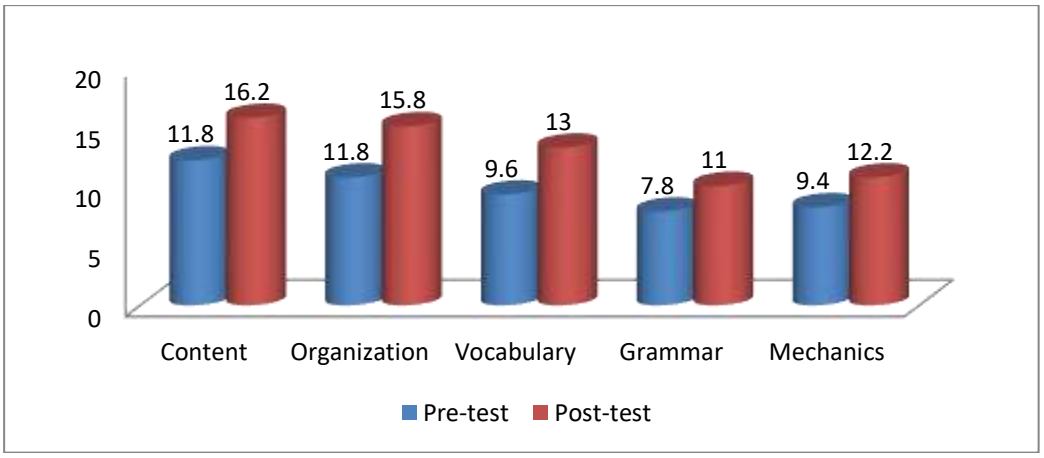


Chart 2 Average Score for content, organization, vocabulary, grammar, and mechanics

Based on the comparison of the pre-test and post-test result above, it indicates that comic strips is efficient to enhance students understanding of each aspect of narrative writing covering content, organization, vocabulary, grammar, and mechanics.

As had been found from the calculation before the $t_{\text{-score}}$ of this research result is 19.84, while the $t_{\text{-table}}$ is 2.160. It can be inferred that from both scores $t_{\text{-score}}$ is higher than $t_{\text{he t-table}}$ ($t_{\text{-score}}$ 19.84 > $t_{\text{-table}}$ 2.160) and it confirms that the alternative hypothesis is accepted and the null hypothesis is rejected. As a result, as the accepted hypothesis says that comic strips successfully improves students' ability in writing narrative text. In other words, it can be said that utilizing comic strips overcomes students' difficulties in writing narrative text and improves their ability in writing the text.

CONCLUSION

Based on the result found, the conclusion regarding the focus of this research is concluded here. As have been mentioned before that due to the acceptance of alternative hypothesis, it can be inferred that utilizing comic strips in teaching narrative text writing successfully improves the writing skill of the third-grade students of SMP Muslimat Samalanga covering the lack of idea to write and organize the ideas, lack of vocabulary, lack understanding of grammar. The improvement can be acknowledged from the result of post-test which is higher than the pre-test. It covers all of the writing components such as the content of the story they developed, the organization of the text, vocabulary usage, grammar use, and mechanic. These all components got improved as students were facilitated with comic strips since they helped the students in developing each step of the story. Furthermore, the activity also promoted interesting atmosphere for the students where they were given a media with pictures and clue words story that could bring them develop their imagination. All in all, it is really important to facilitate students with media that can stimulate their progress rather than asking them to achieve a goal

without something to rely on.

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