

The Roles of Picture Series to Improve Student's Writing Skill at SMP Muhammadiyah 12 Makassar

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ABSTRACT

This study aimed to explore the role of picture series in improving students' writing skills at SMP Muhammadiyah 12 Makassar. Using a qualitative approach with a phenomenological design, the research involved nine eighth-grade students and one English teacher who actively utilized picture series in writing instruction. Data were collected through semi-structured interview and analyzed using the Miles et al (2014) model, including data condensation, display, and conclusion drawing. The findings revealed that picture series play a role in enhancing students' writing through three main aspects: engagement and motivation, organization and structure, and vocabulary and grammar. In terms of engagement and motivation, picture series make writing fun, boost enthusiasm, make the storyline easy to understand, and promote cognitive engagement through challenges. Regarding organization and structure, they help students form coherent text structure and organize the writing. In terms of vocabulary and grammar, picture series support vocabulary development and grammatical awareness by facilitating sentence construction and improving accuracy. From the teacher's perspective, the writing components that improved were content development, paragraph organization, and vocabulary mastery, while language use and mechanics did not show significant progress and require more instructional support. Thus, picture series are effective in enhancing students' motivation, supporting the organization of ideas, and enriching vocabulary mastery. However, since language use and writing mechanics showed limited improvement, it is necessary to complement the use of picture series with explicit grammar instruction, guided writing practice, and continuous feedback. These additional strategies are expected to address the gaps in technical writing skills and promote more balanced progress across all components of writing.

Keywords: *Picture series, Writing skill, Phenomenological research.*

1) INTRODUCTION

In English language teaching, Harmer and Cates emphasize the importance of four skills: reading, writing, listening, and speaking. Among these skills, writing is a fundamental ability that is crucial in both academic contexts and everyday life (Harmer & Cates, 2007). Nevertheless, writing often presents challenges for English learners, as they must organize their ideas coherently while adhering to appropriate grammatical rules and vocabulary (Rayana, 2019). This difficulty is exacerbated by

Paper presented at The 2nd ICONETT, 2025
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linguistic complexity and a lack of practice, which hinder students' progress (Nisa et al., 2024). The quality of instruction also plays a significant role, where ineffective methods and feedback can impede the development of students' writing skills (Roca et al., 2024).

One effective approach to enhancing writing skills is the use of picture sequences. This visual medium helps students better understand narrative flow and organize their thoughts. Hulu assert that a series of images can stimulate creativity and facilitate the coherent expression of ideas (Hulu et al., 2023). Image-based activities have been shown to engage students and enhance their motivation to write (ATE, 2022). Wright identifies five roles of images in writing instruction, including clarifying meaning and facilitating practice, making them valuable tools in the learning process (A. Wright, 1989). The importance of a gradual process in learning to write can be linked to Surah Al-An'am Verse 99:

وَهُوَ الَّذِي أَنْزَلَ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ مَاءً فَأَخْرَجْنَا بِهِ نَبَاتَ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ فَأَخْرَجْنَا مِنْهُ خَضِرًا نُخْرِجُ مِنْهُ حَبًّا مُتَرَاكِبًا وَمِنَ النَّخْلِ مِنْ طَلْعِهَا قِنْوَانٌ دَانِيَةٌ وَجَنَّتٍ مِّنْ أَعْنَابٍ وَالزَّيْتُونَ وَالرُّمَّانَ مُشْتَبِهًا وَغَيْرَ مُتَشَابِهٍ ۚ انْظُرُوا إِلَى ثَمَرِهِ إِذَا أَثْمَرَ وَيَنْعِهِ ۚ إِنَّ فِي ذَٰلِكُمْ لَآيَاتٍ لِّقَوْمٍ يُؤْمِنُونَ

Meaning:

“It is He who sends down water from the sky, and with it, We grow all kinds of plants. So, from it, We bring forth green plants. From it, We bring forth grain that is piled up. From the date palm (unravels) a dangling stalk. (We grow) vineyards. (We also grow) olives and pomegranates, similar and dissimilar. Behold the fruit when it yields and ripens. Surely in such there are signs (of Allah's power) for those who believe.”

The verse illustrates the progression from simple to more advanced stages, mirroring the writing process students undergo, starting with idea generation and moving to organization, drafting, and refinement. Picture series are particularly vital in the early stages of writing, as they provide visual prompts that help students generate ideas, develop storylines, and sequence events logically. This visual support facilitates the transition from abstract thinking to concrete expression, resulting in more structured and coherent writing. Research has indicated that picture sequences enhance students' abilities to organize content and improve narrative flow, thereby elevating overall writing quality. For instance, Syailendra reported similar improvements in descriptive writing among secondary students (Syailendra et al., 2024). This research aims to explore the implementation of picture sequences in writing instruction at SMP Muhammadiyah 12 Makassar, an institution committed to educational enhancement. Preliminary observations indicate the school's use of picture series in teaching,

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prompting an investigation into their specific contributions to students' writing skill development. This study seeks to provide insights into the effectiveness of this learning medium in improving writing skills.

2) METHODS

This study employed qualitative research methods, which involve extensive, in-depth interactions with participants in natural settings to explore both common and unique aspects of individuals and groups (Mack et al., 2005). The qualitative approach aimed to provide a detailed understanding of social events by delving into complex situations and considering participants' perspectives. Specifically, a phenomenological design was used to examine the subjective meanings of individual experiences related to specific phenomena, focusing on how students interpreted their experiences with picture series in enhancing their writing skills (Ridder, 2014). This method facilitated a deeper understanding of how picture series influenced students' writing development by utilizing in-depth interviews and reflections to capture the essence of their experiences (Luthfiandana et al., 2024). Consequently, the study explored students' engagement with picture series, their perceptions of its effectiveness, and the challenges they faced, leading to a more comprehensive understanding of its role in improving writing skills.

This research was conducted at SMP Muhammadiyah 12 Makassar, located at Jl. Bonto Daeng Ngrate No. 22 in the Rappocini District of Makassar City, South Sulawesi, Indonesia. The site was chosen for its strategic relevance to the research objectives. The study involved nine eighth-grade students selected from a total of sixteen, utilizing a purposive sampling technique to determine interview participants. The selection was based on preliminary research that considered the students' academic performance, with English test scores and classroom participation records compared to ensure balanced representation among high, average, and low achievers. Three students from each category were chosen as interview participants, along with one English teacher from the school.

Data collection involved semi-structured interviews with the nine students and the teacher to assess the impact of picture series on English language learning. The interviews used a guide developed from theories by (Raimes, 1983), (T. Wright, 2010), (Bean & Melzer, 2021) and (Jacob 1982) which was validated by a team from Institut Parahikma Indonesia. Students shared their experiences with picture series in writing lessons, while the teacher provided insights on improvements in students'

writing skills, including content, organization, vocabulary, language use, and mechanics. The researcher conducted interviews in both English and Bahasa Indonesia to facilitate comfortable communication, using a mobile phone to record the sessions.

The data collection process began with preliminary research on all eighth-grade students to identify their academic characteristics, which allowed for the purposive selection of nine participants categorized into high, medium, and low achievers based on their English grades and class participation. Semi-structured interviews were then conducted with these students to explore their experiences with picture series and its impact on their writing skills, focusing on engagement, idea development, organization, and language use. The English teacher was also interviewed to assess which components of writing, such as content and mechanics, improved through the use of this instructional tool.

For data condensation, relevant excerpts from the interviews were selected and organized into main themes, with new sub-themes developed for clarity. The researcher utilized ChatGPT to systematically validate these sub-themes. During the data display stage, the findings were presented in narrative form to highlight emerging patterns and themes. Finally, the conclusion drawing stage involved a comprehensive review of the results to ensure the effectiveness of picture series in enhancing writing skills while ensuring the validity and reliability of the findings and providing insights into this teaching strategy.

3) RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

a. The Role of Picture Series to Improve Students' Writing Skill

To find out the impact of picture series on students' writing skills, the researcher interviewed nine students and an English teacher. Based on the research results obtained through these interviews, it was found that the picture series this media had roles on three main aspects of writing, namely engagement and motivation, organization and structure, and vocabulary and grammar

Based on the results of the interviews, it was found that the role of picture series in the theme of engagement and motivation can be categorized into four sub themes: Making writing fun and boosting students' enthusiasm, making the story easy to understand, stimulating students' interest and curiosity, and promoting cognitive engagement through challenge. The following section explains each subtheme. Through interviews with nine students and an English teacher, it was revealed that picture

series not only make writing more enjoyable but also enhance students' enthusiasm for learning. Participants expressed that visual aids fostered a fun learning atmosphere, made storylines easier to understand, and stimulated cognitive engagement, leading to greater motivation in writing tasks.

In terms of organization and structure, picture series effectively help students comprehend the chronological order of narratives. The visual cues allow learners to identify key elements of a story, such as the beginning, middle, and end, facilitating the logical organization of their ideas. Students reported that these visuals enabled them to construct coherent narratives, avoiding initial confusion and improving the overall structure of their writing.

Moreover, the use of picture series enhances vocabulary and grammar awareness among students. Participants indicated that the visual context provided by the pictures helped them learn new vocabulary and better understand grammatical structures, particularly verb tenses. This visual support not only enriched their vocabulary but also reduced grammar errors in their writing by guiding them in constructing accurate sentences.

Overall, while picture series play a crucial role in the writing process by enhancing engagement, organization, and language skills, the findings suggest that additional methods are necessary to maximize results, particularly in the technical aspects of language like grammar. The integration of visual media into writing instruction proves to be an effective strategy for fostering students' writing abilities.

The results of the above research are summarised systematically in the table below:

Tabel 1: *Summary of Interview Findings by Theme and Sub-Theme: The Roles of Picture Series*

No	Theme	Sub Theme	Descriptions
1	Engagement and Motivation	- Making Writing Fun and Boosting Students' Enthusiasm.	Students felt happier writing with the help of pictures, were more interested in the lesson, and were challenged to think critically.
		- Making the Storyline Easy to Understand.	
		- Promoting Cognitive Engagement through Challenges.	

No	Theme	Sub Theme	Descriptions
2	Organization and Structure	- Helping in informing a coherent text structure. - Helping Students to organise the Writing.	Sequential pictures help students understand the order of the story and organise paragraphs logically and systematically.
3	Vocabulary and Grammar	-Enhancing Vocabulary and Grammatical Awareness. - Facilitating Sentence Construction and Accuracy.	New vocabulary was easier to understand in a visual context, and the use of grammar was improved.

Based on the table above, it can be concluded that the use of picture series has a significant positive impact on improving students' writing skills, especially in the aspects of engagement and motivation, organization and structure, and vocabulary and grammar, based on the students' perspectives.

b. The Components of Writing that can be Improved through Picture Series

To answer the second research question, which focuses on identifying which components of writing improve most through the use of picture series, the findings are organized based on key aspects of writing. According to the results, the five components of writing include content, organization, vocabulary, language use, and mechanics.

The study reveals that the use of picture series significantly enhances students' writing skills, particularly in content development, organization, and vocabulary acquisition. Interviews with an English teacher and students highlighted how visual aids help learners remember storylines, generate relevant ideas, and structure their writing coherently. This not only makes the content of their writing more focused and logical but also allows students to connect their ideas to the narrative flow, creating richer and more meaningful stories.

In terms of organization, picture series help students understand the structure of a text by providing a clear visual sequence that guides them in arranging their thoughts. The teacher noted that students were able to adjust their storylines to fit appropriate paragraph structures, thus improving

the overall coherence of their writing. By using pictures to illustrate the sequence of events, students found it easier to compose their narratives, leading to clearer and more organized compositions.

The study also emphasizes that picture series positively influence vocabulary development. Visual storytelling enables students to connect new words with specific contexts, making vocabulary acquisition more meaningful. By creating glossaries of unfamiliar terms encountered in texts, students not only expand their vocabulary but also learn to understand the usage of these words within the context of their writing.

However, despite these advantages, the effectiveness of picture series is limited when it comes to improving grammatical accuracy and the mechanics of writing, such as punctuation and spelling. The teacher indicated that while picture series can enhance engagement and focus, explicit instruction and targeted practice in grammar and mechanics are still crucial for developing these skills. Thus, while picture series are valuable tools for enhancing content and vocabulary in writing, improving grammar and mechanical aspects requires additional instructional strategies. The results of the above research are summarised systematically in the table below:

Tabel 2: *Analysis of Writing Skills Component Improvement through the Use of Picture Series*

No	Components	Themes	Descriptions
1	Content	Helping Students Remember the Storyline/Plot and Come up With Appropriate Ideas.	Picture series helped students remember the storyline and develop relevant ideas.
2	Organization	- Helping Students in Understanding the Storyline. - Helping Students in Understanding Text Structure - Adjusting the Storyline to the Appropriate Paragraph Structure.	The visualisation of the story makes it easier for students to compose writing in a coherent and structured manner.
3	Vocabulary	Enhancing Vocabulary Development through Picture Series.	Glossaries and visual associations support contextualised vocabulary development.

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No	Components	Themes	Descriptions
4	Language Use	Needing for explicit grammar instruction	Explicit learning and repeated practice are still needed to improve this aspect.
5	Mechanics	Requiring Additional Interventions that Focus More on Technical Language Rules	Picture series do not focus on technical language rules; additional learning interventions are needed.

The table above shows the components of students' writing skills that have improved, as well as the components that have not shown significant development through the use of picture series media. Through the table above, it can be seen that the aspects of content, organization, and vocabulary have improved quite well because they are helped by the visualization of the story. Meanwhile, the language use and mechanics aspects still require additional learning approaches that are more explicit and focused.

Discussion

a. The Role of Picture Series to Improve Students' Writing Skill

The study demonstrates that the use of picture series significantly enhances student engagement and comprehension in writing activities. Visual media effectively boost motivation by transforming abstract ideas into concrete images, which aligns with students' experiences of increased enjoyment and clarity (Maier, 2025). While some literature warns against an overreliance on visuals potentially limiting creativity found that picture series stimulate imagination and idea generation instead. Moreover, caution should be exercised in the design and implementation of visual prompts to maintain creative freedom, as noted by (Raimes, 1983). Overall, the findings suggest that when thoughtfully integrated into instruction, picture series serve as effective tools, especially for young or less confident learners.

Additionally, the study highlights that picture series not only improve comprehension but also foster cognitive engagement by presenting challenges that stimulate higher-order thinking. Students reported feeling intellectually challenged as they analyzed and interpreted the visuals to construct coherent narratives, reflecting critical and creative thinking processes. The overall evidence suggests that integrating picture series into writing instruction is a valuable strategy that boosts engagement, comprehension, and creative thinking in language learning (Erniwati, 2022).

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b. Organization and Structure

The study confirms that picture series play a significant role in helping students understand and create coherent text structures in their writing. By providing a visual sequence, these images enable students to easily identify the beginning, middle, and end of a story, facilitating the organization of logical and cohesive paragraphs. Respondents, such as UIM, INS, and KLS, noted that the presence of pictures greatly aided their ability to structure narratives, allowing them to clearly determine key story components like the opening, conflict, and conclusion. This finding aligns with previous research that highlights the effectiveness of serial images in supporting students' understanding of narrative structure and enhancing their ability to create well-organized texts (Andayani & -, 2018).

Moreover, picture series serve as a concrete initial stimulus that helps students generate ideas more purposefully. As reported by NAS, visuals alleviate confusion when starting to write, providing a clear reference point that guides the development of their narratives. Overall, the evidence supports the conclusion that picture series are a valuable instructional tool for overcoming common challenges in the writing process, particularly for students who may struggle with narrative structure and idea generation.

c. Vocabulary and Grammar

The study highlights the significant role of picture series in enhancing students' vocabulary and grammatical awareness. By providing visual context, these images help students associate new vocabulary with concrete meanings, making it easier for them to remember and use these words correctly. Respondents like UIM and INS noted that they not only grasped the literal meanings but also recognized grammatical forms, such as irregular verb changes (Framesti et al., 2024).

Moreover, picture series facilitate sentence construction and reduce grammatical errors in writing. The clear visual sequences allow students to understand narrative flow, leading to more accurate sentence structures. Respondents such as UIM, PH, and D confirmed that the visuals enriched their vocabulary and guided them in constructing contextually appropriate sentences, particularly regarding verb tenses and word order. This finding is consistent with (Raimes, 1983) and (A. Wright, 1989), who argue that visual media clarify meaning and provide reference points for sentence construction. The sequential nature of picture series helps students logically organize their ideas, reducing common grammatical errors associated with tense usage and sentence structure.

In conclusion, while the benefits of using picture series in writing instruction are evident, their effectiveness can be maximized through integration with explicit grammar instruction and guided writing practices. Teachers are encouraged to create activities that combine visual media with targeted grammar exercises, ensuring continuous feedback to enhance students' technical accuracy in writing. Additionally, incorporating peer review sessions can foster collaborative learning, allowing students to learn from each other's strategies while maintaining grammatical precision. This comprehensive approach not only sustains student interest and creativity but also strengthens their overall writing skills.

d. The Components of Writing that can be Improve through Picture Series

The study's findings reveal that picture series significantly enhance several components of students' writing, notably content, organization, and vocabulary. According to teacher interviews, picture series aid students in remembering storylines and generating relevant ideas, leading to more focused and structured writing (NH) (Widiastuti & others, 2025). The chronological arrangement of pictures assists students in organizing story content logically, preventing unfocused or incoherent writing. Furthermore, picture series improve students' focus and understanding of story content, providing clear contextual clues that guide them in structuring narratives effectively.

In terms of organization, picture series enable students to understand text structure by visually representing the opening, conflict, and resolution of a story, making the writing process more focused and enjoyable. Experts reinforce these findings, noting that picture series improve narrative and recount writing skills, expand vocabulary, and encourage active classroom involvement. Additionally, the sequential images in picture series help students organize stories into logical paragraph structures, promoting coherence and cohesion in their writing (Apsari, 2017).

Regarding vocabulary, picture series effectively support students' vocabulary development by introducing new words through pictures, texts, and glossary tasks, helping them understand both literal and contextual meanings. Visual media enhances vocabulary learning by providing direct context for language use, as noted by (Raimes, 1983). Strong vocabulary skills, as defined by (Jacob, 1982), involve choosing precise, varied, and contextually appropriate words, a skill that students in this study demonstrated progress in through the use of picture series.

However, the study also indicates that picture series alone are insufficient for improving language use and mechanics in writing. Teachers noted that grammar and technical writing skills require explicit

instruction and continuous practice. Mastering grammar demands specific strategies like drilling and direct correction, which visual aids alone cannot provide. Similarly, improving writing mechanics requires targeted practice and feedback (Cafe, 2024).

In conclusion, while picture series significantly enhance engagement, motivation, story structure mastery, idea development, and vocabulary acquisition, targeted attention is still needed for language use and mechanics. Picture series facilitate the writing process by making it easier, more enjoyable, and cognitively stimulating, helping students understand and remember storylines and compose coherent paragraphs. Visual representations aid in starting writing, clarifying event sequences, and enriching vocabulary and sentence structure. However, integrating visual media with explicit grammar instruction and targeted practice is essential for comprehensive improvement in students' writing skills (Kitila et al., 2023).

4) CONCLUSIONS

Community service focused on enhancing pupils' English speaking skills through activities. The English speaking class program in Singa Street, Number 2, Bonto Biraeng, Mamajang District, Makassar City, South Sulawesi worked smoothly and received positive comments; the students were excited and engaged in the activities. It is hoped that comparable, or even better, activities will be carried out in the future to aid in attempts to improve students' English language abilities. Students can prepare themselves as a generation ready to tackle the world of work and profession while also achieving personal growth and development. Community service activities, such as developing speaking abilities, can be carried out on a regular basis at many sites to target students who require assistance and lack English fluency. It is also intended that each school will offer specific supplemental lessons to allow kids to grow and focus on their abilities. This ensures that education is equal and fair to all students.

Acknowledgment

On this occasion, the community service implementation team would like to extend our heartfelt gratitude to several individuals. We appreciate the headmaster and teachers of Pondok Pesantren IMMIM Makassar for their support of this program. We also thank Dr. Sitti Nurpahmi, M.Pd., the Head of the English Education Department, and Nur Aliyah Nur, M.Pd., the Secretary of the English

Education Department, for their invaluable assistance in facilitating our community service activities at Pondok Pesantren IMMIM Makassar. May Allah SWT abundantly reward all the support and contributions provided to the implementation team.

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