

USING PICTURE CUBE AS A MEDIA IN TEACHING WRITING TO ELEMENTARY SCHOOL STUDENTS

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Abstrak

Dalam makalah ini didiskusikan pengajaran *writing* melalui penggunaan *Picture cube* kepada siswa sekolah dasar. Pada *Picture cube* terdapat enam gambar yang berbeda yang di tempelkan pada *cube* dengan topik *pet animal*. Dalam penggunaannya, *Picture cube* itu di putarkan dari satu siswa ke siswa yang lain dalam satu kelompok yang beranggotakan 6 siswa. *Cube* di putar dalam hitungan 60 detik dan siswa memilih satu gambar untuk kelompok satu dan seterusnya. Apabila kelompok satu mendapatkan gambar tentang *cat*, maka mereka harus mengerjakan *writing activity* yang ada pada *students sheet round 1* tentang *cat*, demikian seterusnya. Setelah selesai dilanjutkan dengan *round 2*, siswa diminta kembali memutar *cube* seperti *activity 1* untuk menentukan topik apa yang akan di buat masing-masing kelompok. Setelah selesai, siswa diminta mengerjakan tugas di *round 3*. Di *round* ini siswa tidak memutar *cube* karena hanya ada satu topik untuk semua siswa dengan tingkat kesulitan yang berbeda dengan *round 1* dan *2*. Setelah selesai, siswa diminta mengumpulkan *student sheet* untuk di koreksi.

Key Words: teaching writing, picture cube, media, elementary school

A. Introduction

In recent years, English has become a subject that must be studied by students at school and has been introduced to all school and educational levels in Indonesia, from the elementary school up to university level. In English, there are four skills that have to be mastered by the students, they are listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Writing as a part of the language skills must be learned maximally by the students.

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Although writing is important, writing is a difficult subject for students. It is because writing is a complex process. As stated by Ghaith (2002), writing is a complex process that allows writers to explore thoughts and ideas, and make them visible and concrete.

The most important factor in teaching and learning in any setting is learner. Young learner has special characteristics which are different from adult learner. If adults can easily be taught by lecturing or just directly reading some books, but young learner needs more attention from the teacher. Elementary school students cannot learn just by given some books to read. They need some special treatment with close distance to the teacher. Young learner need teachers' individual attention as much as possible (Reilly, 2003). So that, the student will get more attention, support and feel closely with the teacher.

Although it seems that students will be easier to teach, teacher should make sure that the activities that have been planned will not make students bored since Cameron (2001:1) also find that it is easy for students to lose their attention to the lesson as it is hard for children to maintain their motivation in a difficult subject. Unless teacher provides the right classroom activity, his / her students will create their own activity that more fun and challenging like chasing each other or playing hide and seek. These other activities created by the students arise due to their overflow energy.

Additionally, Reilly (2003:9) clarify that young learner gain their knowledge by using the five senses or in other word directly experiencing. And also this characteristic which can be called concrete learning, it is important for teacher to provide some activities that will allow students to learn from their five senses beside considering what Reilly (2003:39) states that moving around a lot has been young learners' basic necessity in the classroom and it is impossible to have them sit still in their chair for long time. It is teachers' job to facilitate their special characteristic which Cameron (2001:1) defines as passionate and energetic so these students can have opportunities to move around at the same time they learn something. Moreover, teacher also has to make sure that the young learners' learning experience comes from fun activities that give students possibilities to play in it. This learning by playing characteristic is supported by Peck (2001:140) who explains that children may learn language by playing it.

Writing process is one effective way to teach students to be good writers (Flower, 1981). Students are taught how to share and communicate their ideas through words. In some classrooms, students share their work with peers through writing workshops and peer editing, teaching them to recognize the value of writing and the purpose in creating a solid and substantial work. As a result, students can make a group discussion to share their thought so that, they will be easier to transfer their ideas through written language.

In teaching writing, teacher may use any kind of techniques that can support her/him in teaching writing process. The material is mostly got from the picture books and simplified them according to the students level's. It is easier to motivate them first. After getting a responds about the picture, writing for

example, "animals" from the beginning teacher concentrated on process writing where the students had to activate their brain in order they can write about anything. Process writing allows learners to develop their writing gradually. (Byrne, 1988) (sited in McDonough and Shaw, 2004) suggest some stages of process writing: list idea, make an outline, write a draft, correct and improve, write final version.

According to curriculum 2006 is also known as the Kurikulum Tingkat Satuan Pendidikan (KTSP). The KTSP is designed in order that every school can develop the teaching and learning process according to the student's character and the situation of school. English as stated in standard of content (PERMENDIKNAS No.22, 2006) learned at elementary two hours in a week (as local content or MULOK) for classes IV, V, and VI at junior and senior high schools four hours in a week except for language program in SMA-five hours in a week. Students are expected to be able to interact in English to support class and school activity.

In Kurikulum Bahasa Inggris (KTSP 2006), it is states that there are two learning objectivities; to develop students' communicating competence in oral form in school context and build the students' awareness about the essence of English and the significance of learning English to improve the nations' competitiveness in the global society. The teaching of English in the elementary school is meant to develop the language ability that is used to accompany actions. English is used to interact and having the characteristic of "here and now". The topic is select around things on situation context (Kurikulum Bahasa Inggris, KTSP 2006:2).

Furthermore, it is also found in the 2006 curriculum there are four aspects: listening, speaking, reading and writing. Focusing on the writing skill, there are two basic competencies that VI grade students have to master in the first semester with the competency standard; spelling and writing simple sentence in English in school context. Students are spelling simple sentence corectly in English with correct punctuations that involves word, phrasa, and simple sentence.

Based on the discussion above, the writer found that there are some complexities in writing activity. One of them is students' are lack of vocabulary. Another problem, students are lack of idea. And the last, students are still in cognitive skill development.

Based on the problem above, the writer suggests to use picture cube as a media in teaching writing Elementary School Students. Picture cube is a media found on web http://www.ferr.org/studentsactivities/c_006a.pdf. The purpose of this media means that teacher take advantage of a certain cube to support the teaching process. It is the teachers' decision when to use and how to use media. One of the cubes that can be used in teaching writing to elementary school students is the Picture cube.

Pictures are the most commonly used media in a classroom instruction. Picture gives a lot of contribution because it is interesting for the students and they have something to look at while teaching and learning process is happening.

Shores (1996) defines picture as an image or likeness of an object, person, place, thing, or idea on flat surface by means of drawing, painting, or photography.

Furthermore, Brown (2001) states that “pictures are `old-fashioned` but those are very helpful as media in an instruction”. Although pictures are `old-fashioned`, we definitely cannot underestimate the effectiveness of using picture in the classroom. Picture specifically can get students` attention by the first time they see it.

Actually, there are two kinds of pictures; they are single pictures (situational pictures) and picture series (picture sequences). Byrne (1997) says that single pictures might show either one main event or scene with a considerable amount of details, and perhaps a number of events taking place. According to him, this type of pictures is appropriate for some particular writing activities, for example, describing picture or finding similarities and differences. However, picture series, according to Byrne (1997), is pictures range from four to eight pictures and usually tell a sort of story or can be used to depict a process, for example how to make something. It is kind of pictures which show some actions or events in chronological order.

From the definitions above, we can conclude that *Picture cube* is usually range from four to six pictures and can make students` interest when they are looking it for the first time. Eventhough by using picture it seems old style but it is a good media to make students feel real life and easily to teach them by using picture cube.

B. Discussion

Picture cubes as a media in teaching writing to elementary school students is very interesting and it can be made by the teachers. Teacher can put or stick picture on all of part of the cube. There are six part of cube that can stick with picture according to theme that have been choosen by the teacher. In material of teaching writing for students at elementary school, especially for grade 6, there are some theme that can be used. For example, *pet animal friends, family, environment, fruits and so on*. In this paper, teacher may use animal as the theme.

A. Preparation

After the theme have been choosen, teacher should collect the picture about animals. The picture itself can be gotten everywhere, for example in a book, a newspaper, or find it on the internet. So, the teacher can search and collect many pictures based on the situation that have been choosen above on the internet. Stick picture on cube by using glue. The cube and card is made by cardboard. And for the card is better to leminating to safe it. The cube size is about 30 x 30 cm (one side of cube), and the card size is about 15 x 15 cm. And also, teacher complete the cube with some cards for every animals to help students in writing, as the following example.

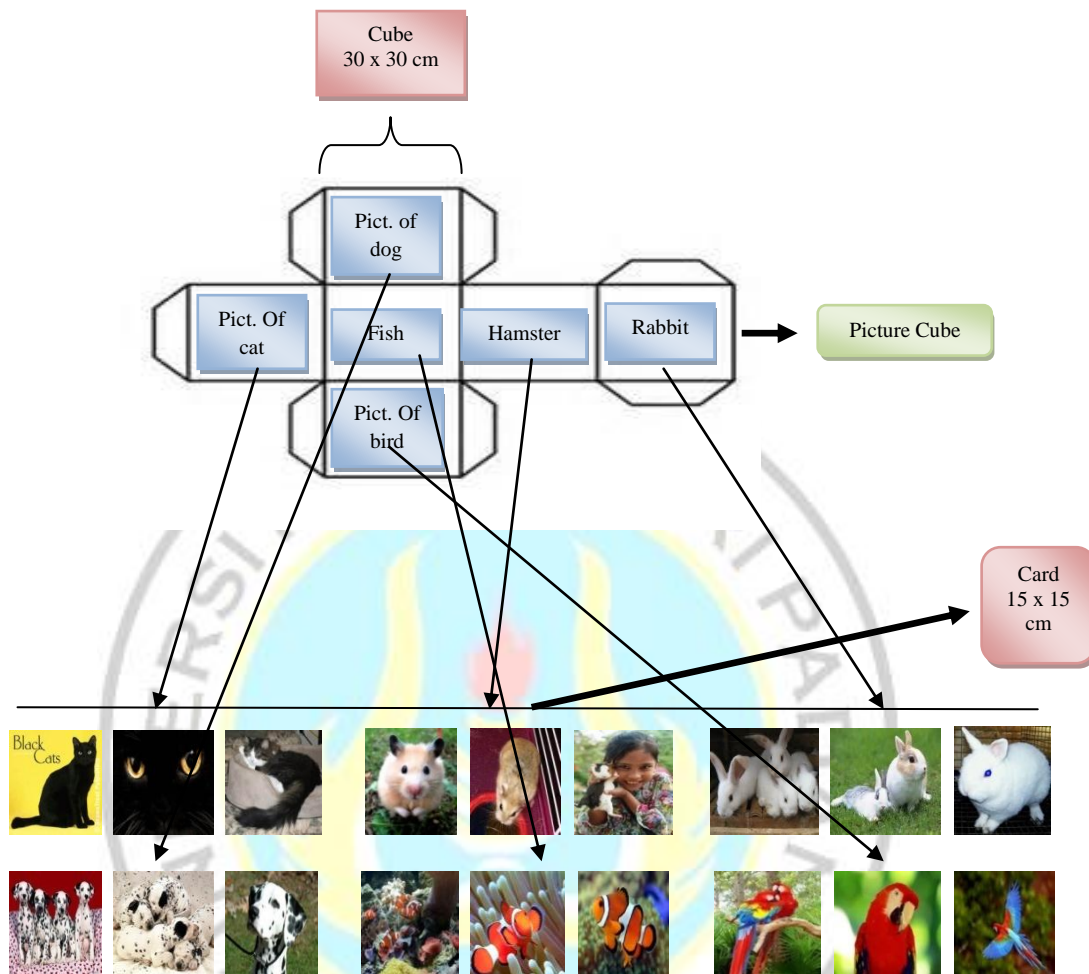


Figure. 1

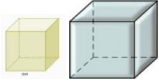
B. Using Picture Cube in the Classroom

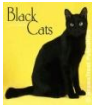
There are six parts of the cards which consist of six animals. For each animal, there are some cards to help students easier in writing process. If students have already understood, now the teacher will divide students into groups. There are six groups which consist of six members or students. If all of the students have a group, they should make a circle for each group. There are some cards for each group to help them in the learning process, and also students' sheets that will be used for writing activity.

Actually, there are 3 rounds that must be done by students. Why is it so? Because in every round, the level's of the difficulties are different. In *round 1*, students only write down the sentences based on sentence and picture.


Round 1 Activity (example)

Name _____


Picture cube 



Card 1



Card 2



Card 3

Writing activity (write down the sentences based on the cards above.)

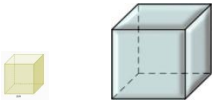
1. My cat is black
.....
2. His eyes are yellow
.....
3. His tail is long
.....

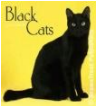
Figure. 2

Round 2, students have to complete the sentences by filling the blank. They need to complete the sentences based on their knowledge and lesson that they have got previously. It is more difficult than in round 1.


Round 2 Activity (example)

Name _____


Picture cube 



Card 1



Card 2



Card 3

Writing activity (complete the sentences based on the picture above)

1. is black.
2. His eyes are
3. The cat sleeps in the

And round 3, students have to arrange the sentence into good sentences. They need to think it seriously to make the correct sentences because in this round it is difficult than in round 2 and 3.


Round 3 Activity (example)


Name _____


Picture cube



Arrange the sentences in a good sentences based on the picture.

- 

1. has – The – mustache – rabbit – eyes – blue - and
.....
- 

2. kind – is – pet – of- Clown fish - animal - a
.....
- 

3. has – feathers – it – beautiful – colored
.....
- 

4. are – There – dalmations – four
.....
- 

5. hamster's face – The – so – cute – is
.....
- 

6. eyes – yellow – The – are – cat
.....

C. Step to Use Picture Cube

Teacher begins the activity by asking the groups who want to become as volunteer to do the activity, while the others pay attention. In one group which is consist of six mamber that will be act the activity. If one group is ready to play, teacher invite them to perform in front of the class. They make a circle and start to roll the cube. Teacher help students by giving instructions to roll the picture cube around 60 second. The teacher count until 60 second and stop rolling the cube. Students who take the cube while the time was over should show and choose one picture to another students. For example, the group choose one picture about cat for students in group 1, so that group 1 will be focus to write about cat. Students continue to roll the cube to get second picture for group 2. If they take same picture with group 1, so students need to roll the cube again to get the different picture. Do it until all of group get the different picture. After that, teacher ask students to do activity in round 1. They have to write down the sentences in students sheet.

And then, continue to round 2. Teacher ask students to roll the cube again and choose first picture for group 1 just like in round 1 until all of groups get diffrent picture. Then, teacher ask students to complete the sentences in round 2 on students sheet.

And the last, teacher ask students to arrange a sentence in a good sentences in round 3. In this round, students do not need to roll the cube because all of students have same material in writing activity. Teacher gives time about 5 minutes for each group to discuss and arrange into a good sentences. After finish, each groups should check and collect it to the teacher.

After the students finish their work, the teacher give exercise with another theme. The exercise given on students sheet that have been distributed by teacher for every students. They will do the exercise individually. If it is done, teacher ask students to collect it and then correct students work.

D. Advantages of Using Picture Cube As A Media in Teaching Writing to Elementary School Students

Using *Picture cube* as a media supports the teacher in reaching the learning objectives. Below is the summary of the advantages using *Picture cube* as a media in teaching writing to elementary school students:

Teaching writing by using picture cube has some advantages. *First*, *picture cube* create the enjoyment in the writing process. It is an interesting way for the students because teaching writing by using *picture cube* provides motivation for students to write. *Picture cube* can be used as device to create students' enjoy feeling in the writing process. If the student's environment is fun, they will be easier to arrange the words and write the sentence completely.

Second, *picture cube* develop students' creativity in writing. Pictures can develop students' creative thinking skill. Students can develop their writing based on picture that they see freely. This activity leads them to think about what they have never thought before. Students have to create their own writing

by using another pictures or theme. In this case, students can learn how to make writing in complete sentences based on the picture in cubes. After finish, students have to write the complete sentence that they have made in students sheets.

Finally, picture series can increase students' vocabulary. Picture series are suitable to introduce new English vocabulary to the students. In writing activity, the biggest problem for the students is their limited vocabulary. It is because of learning English is a foreign language and they have never learn in before. It is hard for them to read or complete the sentence. By using picture series, students learn how to use their new vocabulary in writing and also the picture can help them for arranging a simple sentence. When the students have more vocabulary, their ideas in arrange the sentence will be easier to be developed.

In short, there are many advantages of using *Picture cube* as a media in teaching writing to elementary school students that will ease the teacher in reaching the learning objectives.

C. Conclusions and Suggestions

The *Picture cube* is easy and ready to use in teaching writing to elementary school students. Teacher can start using it from the beginning and use the cube to read the word by word in cube that will be followed by the students. Beside, teacher should provide some picture for students. In using *picture cube*, there are 3 round that must be done by students. Activity in round 1, students only write down the sentences based on the sentence on students sheet. Round 2, students have to complete the sentences by filling the blank. They need to complete the sentences based on their knowledge and lesson that they have got previously. It is more difficult than round 1. And round 3, students have to arrange word by word into a good sentences. They need to think it seriously to make the correct sentences because in this round, it is difficult than in round 1 and 2.

In using *Picture cube* in writing activities, teacher gets the difficulties in making the cube with the big size by using cardboard. Teacher have to make the pattern 30x30cm. The pattern must be draw in cardboard by using pencil to give mark. So that, teacher easily cut it based on mark that they have been made before. Then, teacher cut and stick it by using glue to make a good cube. And after that, teacher stick picture that they have been chosen to all of part of the cube. Teacher also needs to add some pictures familiar with students for example, snake, cow, chicken, duck and so forth, to make students more understand with the topic.

Note: this article was written based on the writer's paper with advisor Dra. An Fauzia R. Syafei, M.A

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