

The Effect of Using Pictures in Teaching English Writing Among Mathayom Four Students in Narathiwat

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to investigate the effects of using pictures in teaching English writing among mathayom four students in Narathiwat, Thailand. The participants were 40 mathayom four students from a private high school in Narathiwat. This study was based on the schema theory (Piaget, 1952). The theory claims that background knowledge helps in the processing and organizing of new information for future understanding. The instruments used in this study were 36 items of pre-test and post-test. The students completed a writing task which was giving as a pre-test. It consisted of only guide words to help them complete the task. In the post-test, they were given the writing task which consisted of the same guide words from the pre-test but addition of pictures to help them complete the task. The researcher used paired-sample t-test to analyze data. The findings indicated that using pictures in teaching English writing can improve students' ability in writing skill. This study has crucial perceptions to Ministry of Education, Teacher Training Division and English supervisors as well as English teachers to take consideration on teaching methodologies because serious planning and implementations were required to improve the high school students' English ability in this province.

Keywords: Pictures, Writing, Schema theory, Mathayom four students, Paired- sample t-test



Introduction

English is one of the most important subjects that learnt in almost all schools in every country including Thailand. It is taught as a compulsory subject in Thai schools. One of the important purposes in English teaching and learning process is to mastery of the four language skills. Those skills are listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Writing is regarded as one of the most important skills in language learning because it is included in English examination papers of further education as well as related to the students' future need for occupational purposes and for personal communication.

Writing means filling the gap that exists among the ability to express ideas, feelings, and opinions (Asrifan, 2015). It is widely known that writing is an essential communication that could not be separated from human life. Writing is an instrument of both communication and self-expression. Writing has an important role when a writer wants to deliver a message to a reader for a purpose. Through writing, the writer can explain the ideas and as a result readers can get information by reading the written message. Based on class activity, writing is one activity that the students do most in their study. Through writing assignments, the students can express their ideas, respond to other ideas, tell stories, convey information, and they are expected to be able to compose well-organized writing. Writing ability also can be the signal to better college grades and greater academic achievement (Asrifan, 2015). According to Thai students, English is one of difficult subject for them especially writing skill. Even Thai students have learnt English from primary school but they still face difficulties in mastering the language. To overcome the problem, English teachers have to be more creative in choosing the materials and techniques which can make the writing class more interesting, exciting and enjoyable. It can be done by choosing an appropriate material and technique that students like based on students' level and background of knowledge.

In a conventional classroom, it is mostly use of textbooks or chalk and talk which known as teacher-centred. The learners might be bored if the teacher use this way of teaching as a daily routine (Kaur et al., 2017). This is a significant setback for learning to take place. The English teachers should consider new technique of teaching in order to capture students' attention, at the same time, helping them to learn effectively. There are variety of learning tools available, and it is crucial for teachers to choose the appropriate tool which caters to need and preference of their students. One of them is pictures. With this reason, the researcher chooses writing skill by applying pictures as a topic of study in order to see the effects of integrating pictures in learning English writing among mathayom four students in Narathiwat.

Problem Statement

Narathiwat is one of the provinces located in southern part of Thailand which share a border with Malaysia in the south. Majority of populations are Muslims. The uniqueness of



students in this area is language. Muslim students in this area have to learn four languages; Thai, Malay, English and Arabic. They use the Malay language to communicate among themselves. Among these four languages, they believe that English is less important for them because they do not use in their daily life and they learn English just to pass examination (Jehdo, 2009). Besides, English is one of the difficult subject for them. In relation to this, majority of Thai students are lack of motivation and uninterested in learning English (Hayikaleng, Nair & Krishnasamy, 2016). However, English is very important for Thailand since Thailand becomes a member of ASEAN because the official language of ASEAN is English. There are four skills in English; listening, speaking, reading and writing. Writing is one of the most important skills in language learning. It involves some language components such as spelling, grammar, vocabulary, concordance, punctuation, coherence, and cohesion which the students do not master well. Therefore, the students should have a good mastery in writing to be able to write effectively.

There are serious problems concerning the standard of English language in Thailand. According to the result of the English Proficiency Index (EPI) 2019 ranked under Education First (EF), Thailand was ranked 74 out of 100 countries (see Table 1).

Table 1

English Proficiency Index 2019

Ranking	Country Names	Proficiency
5	Singapore	Very High
20	Philippines	High
26	Malaysia	High
52	Vietnam	Low
61	Indonesia	Low
74	Thailand	Very low
86	Myanmar	Very low
94	Cambodia	Very low

Source: <https://www.thaipbsworld.com/thailand-falls-to-74th-place-in-ef-english-proficiency-index-2019/>

Table 1 shows the result of the English Proficiency Index 2019 among 100 participating countries. This result showed only eight ASEAN member countries which participated in English Proficiency Index 2019. Thailand was ranked 74 out of the 100 countries which was regarded as very low compared to Singapore, Philippines, Malaysia, Vietnam, and Indonesia.

Due to the importance of English and the countless problems faced in learning and teaching English in Thailand as elaborate above, the researcher found that English should be improved for students in this area. Therefore, the researcher decided to integrate pictures while teaching English writing to help students in gathering their ideas and create critical thinking. This



study aims to investigate the effects of using pictures in teaching English writing among mathayom four students in Narathiwat.

Research Objective

To investigate the effects of using pictures in teaching English writing among mathayom four students in Narathiwat.

Research Questions

1. How do students perform in answering pre-test and post-test?
2. Is there a significant difference in the mean scores between the pre-test and the post-test?

Literature Review

English writing proficiency is highly needed in education field, and the fact that the students' writing ability is still considered low. The researcher proposes several ways to increase students' writing proficiency. One of the ways in increasing the students' writing skills is using pictures. Everyone likes to look at pictures and pictures can provide a stimulating focus on students' attention. Pictures are recognized as one way of representing real situations and they can be serve as visual aids. Many teachers make efforts to make their class interesting with various methods, techniques, and materials in order to stimulate learning of language skills effectively. In the classroom, pictures can help the students to connect their imagination with their real life experience or background knowledge. In relation to this, the researcher chooses the schema theory in order to investigate how the learners would construct their ideas after using pictures.

Piaget (1952) defined schema as an organized pattern of thinking used to define experiences as a scheme. Cognitive scientists use the term schema to explain how prior knowledge is used to understand, establish and store new information in human minds. Everybody has stored information in individual brain and ready to process after getting new information. In regarding to this, the teacher should choose topics or pictures which are familiar with the learners in order to help them construct the ideas easily. This mental framework is constructed based on our daily experiences and routines. Schema theorists postulate that schema or background knowledge helps in the processing and organizing of new information for future understanding. In other words, when learners receive the topics or see the pictures which given by the teacher there will be a process of connecting background knowledge with new information in order to construct or generate the ideas and express through the process of writing. The following figure shows the process of using the schema theory.

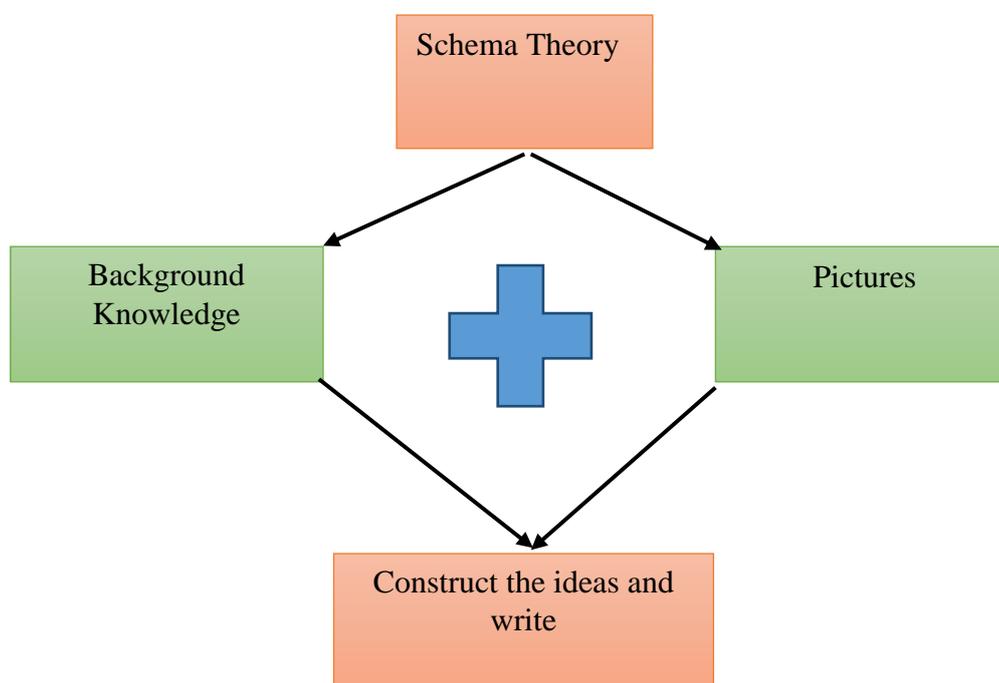


Figure 1. The Schema Theory (Piaget, 1952)

Figure 1 shows the theoretical framework which is used in the study. The schema theorists believe that everybody has stored background knowledge in individual mind. When individual receive new information (pictures) then will connect with background knowledge or schema, later gather ideas and express through writing. In other words, the researcher has applied pictures in teaching English writing which can help to process greater amounts of input to activate schema and these inputs are integrated with existing information within the long term memory to gather ideas.

English language teaching and learning have changed over time, moving from conventional methods to learner-centred approaches. Besides, the teachers also try to find out new technique of teaching to apply into their classes. Using pictures in the writing class is accepted by many previous studies. The teachers believe that by using pictures, the learners are able to gather ideas and build self-confidence in writing process. It motivates students to be involved in all activities prepared by the teachers.

A recent study was conducted by Abdullah and Yunus (2019) on the use of pictures in improving students' writing. The purpose of the study was to investigate the effectiveness of pictures in helping students to write. This research was a quasi-experimental design which involved 34 Year 6 students in a suburban primary school in Seremban. The result showed a positive response from the respondents on the use of pictures in helping them to write. They also agreed that teachers should use pictures more often during the teaching and learning process.

Ali (2014) conducted a study on the effective learning can be done fast through the use of good visual materials which refer to pictures. The results showed that pictures stimulate learners in the process of generating ideas which leads to the construction of sentences. Using pictures is one of the effective technique used by EFL teachers in order to encourage the students to pay more attention on the lesson. Pictures are an excellent stimulus in foreign language learning. He explained that, if the teacher was simply assigned a topic, the learners face the problems of having no idea of how to start writing. In relation to this, pictures may assist the learners in exploration of ideas. Besides, it also motivates them to write effectively (Sesrica & Jismulatif, 2017). The teachers must be able to create situation that provides opportunities and stimulates the students especially to be interested in the writing process.

Asrifan (2015) carried out a study on the use of pictures story in improving students' ability to write narrative composition. The samples of the study were 78 first year students of SMA Negeri 3 Parepare in 2013/2014 academic years. The purpose of the study was to find out whether or not the use of pictures story can improve the students' writing ability in terms of content, organization, vocabulary, language use, and mechanics to narrative composition. The result revealed that teaching writing by using pictures increased the students' ability to write narrative composition at SMA Negeri 3 Parepare.

Muhibbudin, (2017) conducted a study on the application of picture series to improve writing skills. The objective of the study was to investigate the effect of teaching writing by using the picture series technique with second grade students of MTsN Kuta Baro, Aceh Besar. The participants were two classes selected randomly as the sample of the study, namely the experimental (EG) and the control group (CG). The EG consisted of 26 students whereas, the CG consisted of 24 students. The findings showed that the students taught by using the picture series technique gave a significantly better in writing performance than those who were taught by the traditional technique.

Wening, Cahyono and Iragiliati (2017) carried out their study on effect of using picture series on the Indonesian EFL students' writing ability across learning styles. The purpose of the study was to investigate the effect of using picture series on Indonesian EFL students' writing ability across learning styles. The subjects of this study were 2 classes of students of the Junior High School 2 at Kawunganten, Cilacap, Central Java. The findings showed that the students who were taught using picture series had better writing ability than those who were taught without using picture series. The findings also presented that the students had positive opinion towards the use of picture series.

A recent study was conducted by Wilson (2019) on the effectiveness of the use of picture in series in narrative writing. The aim of the study was to explore the impact of picture series where a class of Form 4 students engaged into narrative writing process. The samples of the study were students in Sekolah Menengah Kebangsaan Methodist (ACS) Kampar, Perak for a duration of

6 weeks. The findings showed that majority of the Form 4 students able to improve their writing skill after giving pictures.

Methodology

This section provides details on participants, instruments, procedures employed in current research to answer the research question.

Participants

This is a quantitative study using descriptive research design. The participants of the study consist of 40 of mathayom four students from one private high school in Narathiwat province, southern part of Thailand. The researcher had to use purposive sampling since participants have certain key characteristics connected to the purpose of the investigation (Dornyei, 2007).

Instruments

The instruments used in this study were pre-test and post-test. The instruments were six reading comprehension passages. Each passage consists of six multiple choice questions, all together were 36 items. The pre-test and post-test questions in this study were adapted from Bloom's Critical Thinking Cue Questions. However, all passages were adapted from YouTube, of approximately 150-170 word length for each passage. The number of words and questions followed the pattern of Vocational National Educational Test (V-NET). This study also adopted the Schema Theory (Piaget, 1952). The reason of choosing this theory because the schema theorists believe that everybody has stored background knowledge in individual mind. When individual receive new information (pictures) then will connect with background knowledge or schema, later gather ideas and express through writing.

Data Collection and Analysis

In the first day, students were given a pre-test consisting of 36 items adapted from Bloom's Critical Thinking Cue Questions. Prior to that, the two English teachers from one private high school in Narathiwat province who have more than five years of experience in teaching English were asked to verify and make sure that the questions and the passages are suitable for the students. First, all the students completed a writing task, which was giving as a pre-test. It consisted of only guide words to help them complete the task. The next day, they were given the post-test writing task which consisted of the same guide words from the pre-test but addition of pictures to help them complete the task. After marking both the tasks, the teacher analyzed the marks and presented the differences in the scores of the pre and post-test in a table. The students took 100 minutes to fulfil all the questions. All questions were analyzed with the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) Version 22.0. Scores for the pre-test was analyzed using the paired sample t-test to determine the comprehension scores. Subsequently the post-test scores was analyzed using the paired sample t-test to examine the effects of using pictures.



Results and Discussion

This part reports the finding from data collection based on research questions.

Research question 1. How do students perform in answering pre-test and post-test?

Table 2.

Statistics

	Pre-test	Post-test
N Valid	40	40
Missing	0	0
Mean	24.1250	31.6000
Std. Deviation	0.9111	1.0573

The results show students' mean score for pre-test is 24.1250 (SD 0.9111) which is at a lower level compared to post-test. While students' mean score for post-test is 31.6000 (SD 1.0573). The findings indicated that students are able to answer pre-test but at lower level compared to the post-test as given in Table 2. It happens because after pre-test the teacher gave pictures to attract the students to pay more attention on the lesson. Looking at the pictures given by the teacher help students to gather ideas and understand the questions better. As a result, it can improve students' ability in answering the questions. The study is in line with Ali (2014) who mentioned that the students would pay more attention while learning using pictures.

Research question 2. Is there a significant difference in the mean scores between the pre-test and the post-test?

Table 3. Paired sample t-test comparing pre-test and post-test

Questions	N	Mean	SD	Mean Different	t-value	df	p-value
Pre-test		24.1250	0.9111				
	40			-7.4750	-40.186	39	.000
Post-test		31.6000	1.0573				

Level of significance is at $p < 0.05$

The findings in Table 3 showed that there is a significant difference in the mean score between pre-test and post-test ($t = -40.186$, mean difference = -7.4750 , $df = 39$, $p = .000$). The results also reveal that the students' mean score for post-test is significantly higher than pre-test. To be good in gathering the ideas the students need to use pictures in order to understand the questions and later on able to answer the questions easily. The findings of study are in line with Abdullah and Yunus (2019), Ali (2014), Asrifan (2015), Muhibbudin (2017), Wening, Cahyono and



Iragiliati (2017), and Wilson (2019) who stressed that the use of pictures in teaching English writing help students to improve the writing process. As a result, the students are able to answer the English writing questions better.

Discussion

Current study has revealed that the use of pictures is one way to enhance students' writing ability. Pictures integration can fully support this education system. In relation to the writing class, pictures provide authentic phenomenon that deals with the real life situations, which is the key to promote critical thinking skills. Moreover, picture can make it easy for students to understand the lesson and build self-confidence. It motivates students to be involved class activities designed by the teachers. Therefore, it is vital to examine the effects of applying pictures on teaching and learning writing skill. The obtained results provide a way for English teachers to designing their lesson plan more appropriately. In this study, the picture is seen as an instrument which provides more information needed by students to help them construct the meaning. Through the pictures, students were able to visualize how the whole process can be performed. The information (schemata) which students gathered through pictures enabled them to express their ideas through writing properly.

Conclusion

The study which is carried out at one private high school in Narathiwat by the researcher to investigate the effects of using pictures in teaching English writing among mathayom four students in Narathiwat. The results clearly showed that by integrating pictures in teaching English writing can help students to improve their ability of writing. Teaching using pictures is very suitable to be applied to the students of senior high school as a teaching tool in writing and also very helpful for the students in generating and organizing their ideas in writing through picture. Picture speaks thousands of words, it can be very effective way of teaching and learning English language especially in teaching writing skill. It is not only used as the basic materials for students' composition but also it is effectively stimulates students' imaginative power. So that pictures can be very effective way of teaching and learning the English Language especially writing skill.

Implications

The results of this study has implications on the teaching and learning English. Using pictures in teaching English writing should be considered as one of the teaching methodologies in teaching English. Picture is a visual material which offers an attractive and stimulating framework for writing practice and has great potential as an encouragement to develop critical thinking skills. The findings of this study also serve as a guide to the Ministry of Education, in particular to the Teacher Training Division, English supervisors and English teachers to use different ways of teaching as an important pedagogies for the teaching of English language in educational institutions. This



study also supports the schema theory by Piaget (1952) which stresses that student's comprehension can be enhanced when their schema or prior knowledge is activated. Integrating picture is helpful and provides substantial benefits to enhance the process of learning English writing.

Suggestion

In this study, the researcher used only a small sample of 40 students. Future research should engage larger samples which include other high schools from different provinces in Thailand to obtain more conclusive findings which can resemble a larger population. In relation to this, the researcher might use both qualitative and quantitative methods in order to get more information regarding teaching and learning English subject among mathayom four students. In relation to this, the Thai English teachers in the three southern provinces of Thailand might use various types of methodologies such as textbook, pictures in order to develop writing skill in the future.

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