

Improving Descriptive Writing Skill Through Mind Mapping Technique

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Abstract

This is a classroom action research. It is aimed to find out the improvement of descriptive writing skill of 8th years students of MTs Muhammadiyah 1 Cekelan in the academic year of 2013/2014 through mind mapping. Besides that, it is also to describe the process of teaching writing using mind mapping to 8th years students of MTs Muhammadiyah 1 Cekelan. The data is obtained by giving pre-test and post-test in each cycle. The result shows that there are improvements in students' writing skill. It can be seen at the mean of pre-test and post-test. In the cycle I, the mean pre-test and post-test are 57,03 and 65,15. The mean of the pre-test and post-test in cycle II are 64,05 and 73,00. The process of research took place for two weeks, precisely it is four meetings. Students followed the teaching-learning process well. They showed their interest in the lesson. Based on the analysis the writer concludes that the 8th years students of MTs Muhammadiyah 1 Cekelan can improve their writing skill through mind mapping technique.

Keywords: *Mind Mapping, Writing Skill, Classroom Action Research*

Abstrak

Penelitian ini adalah penelitian tindakan kelas. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menemukan peningkatan kemampuan menulis teks *descriptive* siswa kelas VIII MTs Muhammadiyah 1 Cekelan tahun pelajaran

2013/2014 melalui teknik *mind mapping* (peta konsep). Selain itu, penelitian ini juga bertujuan untuk menjelaskan proses mengajar writing menggunakan teknik *mind mapping* pada siswa kelas VIII MTs Muhammadiyah 1 Cekelan. Data diperoleh dengan memberikan pre-test dan post-test di setiap siklus. Hasilnya menunjukkan bahwa terdapat peningkatan pada kemampuan menulis siswa. Ini dapat ditunjukkan dari rata-rata nilai pre-test dan post-test. Di siklus pertama, diperoleh rata-rata pre-test dan post-test sebesar 57,03 dan 65,15. Sedang rata-rata pre-test dan post-test di siklus kedua adalah 64,05 dan 73,00. Proses penelitian dilaksanakan dalam empat kali pertemuan dengan rentang waktu total dua minggu. Para siswa dapat mengikuti proses belajar mengajar dengan baik. Mereka dapat menunjukkan minat mereka pada pelajaran. Berdasarkan hasil analisa, penulis menyimpulkan bahwa siswa kelas VIII MTs Muhammadiyah 1 Cekelan dapat meningkatkan kemampuan menulis mereka melalui teknik *mind mapping* (peta konsep).

Kata Kunci: *Mind Mapping (Peta Konsep), Kemampuan Menulis, Penelitian Tindakan Kelas*

Introduction

Writing is the most difficult language skill. It is also considered as the most complicated language skill to be learned, compared to other language skills. In writing process, students always involve creative thinking skill. It is also supported by tight rules. Endang (2005: 147) claims that “Writing as one of four language skill, writing has always occupied a place in most English language course, and one of the reasons is that more and more people need to learn to write in English for occupational or academic purposes and the most difficult skill to master for foreign language learners.” Mastering vocabularies and tenses become the main key to get a good writing. Students have to choose appropriate vocabularies to arrange words to be a sentence and develop it to be paragraph. Besides that, students also have to use a compatible

tense to express an event in certain time. Writing skill is the one which has to be mastered by students.

Since writing is the most difficult language skill, students face a lot of problem. In this research, the writer will focus on descriptive texts. The students could not describe things, places, and a person in detail because they do not have any ideas when they are asked to describe them. They were lazy and bored if the teachers asked them to write something even it just writes a descriptive text. There were many students that lack of motivation in writing, so there are many of them got bad score in writing. Besides that, some of them did not know what they should write. The other problems which also emerged are choosing the topic, arranging paragraph and using of vocabulary.

The problems above are also faced by students of MTs Muhammadiyah 1 Cekelan in second years. Based on the interview with Mrs. Asri Pamungkas as the English teacher, the writer concluded that the students of MTs Muhammadiyah 1 Cekelan faced serious problem in constructing and arranging sentences as well. They were still confused to determine words to describe something. They used to do mistake when they used simple present tense. Sometimes, they forgot to add “-s / -es” on the verb when they used third personal pronoun as a subject. They usually used pattern of past tense to make a paragraph of descriptive text. Besides that, they were in difficult to express their memory about things which they wanted to describe. In the other case, they wrote similar description with their chair mate. They did not have enough self-confident to make their own sentences.

MTs Muhammadiyah 1 Cekelan has been decided 70 for their students’ score of minimal passing grade criteria. Though all of them had

to pass the minimum score, they were still in low range in 50 to 65. In order to solve the problems, the researcher tries to apply a teaching model named mind mapping technique. *“Mind Mapping merupakan alat paling hebat yang membantu otak berpikir secara teratur.”* (Mind Mapping is the most excellent tool which helping mind to think regularly.) (Buzan, 2006: 4). This strategy can make students easily to remember things which they want to described. It can be supported with several things such as color pencil, paper, picture, etc. the, it can be connected with lines in order to make their imagination colorful and more interesting toward writing skill.

This research is focusing on the ability in writing descriptive text especially in describing people and animal. The subject of the research is the second years students of MTs Muhammadiyah 1 Cekelan. The researcher concerned on the students' improvement of grammar and vocabulary mastery in writing descriptive texts. It will be known by pre-test and post-test phases.

Mind Mapping

Buzan (2005: 6) claims that a mind map is a powerful graphic technique which provides a universal key to unlock the potential of the brain. It harnesses the full range of cortical skills – word, image, number, logic, rhythm, color, and spatial awareness – in a single, uniquely powerful manner. In so doing, it gives you the freedom to roam the infinite expanses of your brain. The Mind Map can be applied to every aspect of life where improved learning and clearer thinking will enhance human performance. The human brain works to process information

through observation, reading or hearing about something organized as functional relationship between concept and keyword. It is not partially separated from each other and is not in narrative form complete sentences.

The mind mapping strategy can be used to explore almost topics in writing such as narrative, descriptive, recount, persuasive, argumentative, essay, and etc. Students can improve their ideas and lend themselves to discussing ideas in groups. According to Buzan (2006: 31), mind mapping can be used in many activities, such as mind mapping to communicate and do presentation, to plan family activities.

Writing Skill

The term of skill is defined as ability. Concisely, writing ability is the skill to express idea, thought, and feeling to other in writing symbol to make other people or readers understand the idea conveyed. Larry (2003: 121) states that writing is the process of transferring thoughts from mind onto paper to share with readers while readily admitting that composing text to communicate their ideas is tough sledding.

On the other hand, Gelb (1962) explains that writing is clearly a system of human intercommunication by mean of conventional visible mark. Writing began at the time when man learned how to communicate his thought and feeling by means of visible signs, understandable not only to himself but also to all other people more or less initiated into the particular system.

Research Methodology

The research was conducted at MTs Muhammadiyah 1 Cekelan, Boyolali. It was located on small village that rounded by four villages.

The subject of this research was the students of class VIII that consisted of 34 students in the academic year of 2013/2014. They were chosen by the researcher based on the purpose of the research. There are 14 students who graduated from *Madrasah Ibtida'iyah* (Islamic elementary school) and 20 students graduated from Elementary School. Most of their parents are farmer, and some of them work in Jakarta. The students had a less motivation to study. It was supported by the parents' education. Most of them who just stopped in Junior High School, could not take higher education especially in formal education.

This research has been done from September 2013 to October 2013. The researcher acted as the teacher and the learning process was observed by the English teacher of MTs Muhammadiyah 1 Cekelan. The writer arranged it in two cycles, each cycles consist of planning, action, observation and reflection. The classroom action research was applied in VIII class of MTs Muhammadiyah 1 Cekelan.

Discussion

The data was obtained from the teaching learning process and evaluation. The analysis is to measure students writing skill improvement in teaching learning process. It was consisted of two cycles, as follow:

Cycle I

1. Planning

The writer made lesson plans for cycle 1. He planned two topics. The topics were Person and Animal. In deciding them He had discussion with English teacher in MTs Muhammadiyah 1 Cekelan. He planned two meetings in each cycle because of the limitation of time and it was consisted of two cycles. He made one lesson plan for

each cycle. He planned little different activities of each cycle. He planned pre-test and post-test to know their writing improvement after the action. Students were asked to produce descriptive text. It was given in every meeting. In this step, the writer prepared some other preparation. He also prepared materials, students' attendance, teaching aid, sheet for classroom observation sheet and process observation sheet.

2. Action

a. First Meeting

The first activity was conducted on Friday, September 20th 2013. Before the writer began the class, he gave pre-test to obtain the data before the students got the treatment. Then, the writer led them to the lesson, he focused on introducing mind mapping and re-teaching descriptive text. He took topic "Describing Person". The students were still confused about materials and the method. In order to the writer/teacher should teach more in next meeting.

b. Second Meeting

The second meeting in cycle 1, on Wednesday, September 25th 2013, the writer continued the lesson in first meeting. In this meeting the writer focused to combine descriptive text and mind mapping. He led the students to practice to make their hand writing using mind mapping. The students could practice well, it was better than first meeting. Before closing the meeting, the writer who took place as the teacher gave post-test to know the students' difference before and after got treatment. The data was gotten as follows:

Table 1
The Students' Scores

No	Name	Pre-test	Post-test	D	D ²
1	AdiSaputra	63	72	9	81
2	AjiPrasetyo	61	64	3	9
3	Anita	62	64	2	4
4	Ari Awan	52	57	5	25
5	AyuNovita S	65	72	7	49
6	ErmanPrasetyo	54	56	2	4
7	Erna Sari	53	61	8	64
8	Erna Yulianti	59	70	11	121
9	Indri Mulyani	54	59	5	25
10	IrwanGunawan	48	58	10	100
11	Iswanto	63	70	7	49
12	LailaNovita Sari	72	81	9	81
13	M. Dandi S	60	72	12	144
14	M. Sholeh F	49	71	22	484
15	M. Ali Mahfud	70	72	2	4
16	MuhFahmi	47	53	6	36
17	MuhMuhajir	43	61	18	324
18	M. Sholeh	45	54	9	81
19	NunungAriyani	64	71	7	49
20	NurLaila	64	72	8	64
21	Reza Aditya PM	66	72	6	36
22	RieinWijayanti	60	70	10	100
23	Rudi Ardiyanto	49	61	12	144
24	SaprilWiji A	75	82	7	49
25	SellyRahayu	60	67	7	49
26	SitiNurHaniah	52	62	10	100
27	Sofimgi	64	70	6	36
28	Sri Wulandari	54	59	5	25
29	Tri Utami	47	58	11	121
30	Tri Wahyuningsih	42	55	13	169
31	Wahyu Anton W	51	61	10	100
32	Wahyu Rio A	47	55	8	64
33	WahyuSusenoAji	54	60	6	36
34	Widiyanti	70	73	3	9
	Σ	1939	2215	276	2836

3. Observation

In the process of observation in cycle 1, the writer got the data presentation from the English teacher (Mrs. Asri) as collaborator. She made the observation more objective and easier. By monitoring the students' activity in this action, we could see that they were enthusiastic although in the fact there were some students who were confused about the material given. It was caused by the first time for them in English class using mind mapping technique. Although, they were confused, they were interested in this lesson. It could be seen in their effort to understand the lesson by asking their friend.

4. Reflection

After analyzing the result of action in cycle 1, the writer and the observer (Mrs. Asri Pamungkas) can conclude that the researcher should give brief explanation about the function of mind mapping to improve writing skill because there were some students cannot practice well. Some students did not understand yet about descriptive well, so that they made mistakes in constructing sentences.

Cycle I also has shown that there were little improvements from students. It can be seen from the average of post-test that shows 65,15. It increased from the test before. Although it was not big improvement but it is better from the pre-test, because the average of pre-test just gets 57,03. Based on the passing grade criteria (KKM) which decided at 70,00, the post-test shows there were 13 students who could pass from *KKM*, it is twofold bigger then pre-test with the result 4 students.

Therefore in the next cycle the researcher should give more motivation to the students in order to they can improve their achievement.

Cycle II

1. Planning

In cycle II, the writer made similar preparations like in cycle I.

2. Action

a. First Meeting

As cycle I, the writer gave students pretest to obtain the second data. In this cycle the writer focused on practice to produce text using mind mapping method.

b. Second Meeting

It was last meeting; the students could show good improvement. They could practice the method well. Although, they could show good improvement, but there were three students who cannot pass the passing grade criteria. In order to close meeting, the writer gave last test, it was post-test. It was obtained data as follows:

Table 2
The Students' Score

No	Name	Pre-test	Post-test	D	D ²
1	AdiSaputra	66	74	8	64
2	AjiPrasetyo	64	71	7	49
3	Anita	64	73	9	81
4	Ari Awan	58	71	13	169
5	AyuNovita S	64	75	11	121
6	ErmanPrasetyo	52	71	19	361
7	Erna Sari	63	71	8	64

8	Erna Yulianti	69	76	7	49
9	Indri Mulyani	65	71	6	36
10	IrwanGunawan	61	70	9	81
11	Iswanto	66	77	11	121
12	LailaNovita Sari	75	86	11	121
13	M. Dandi S	59	75	16	256
14	M. Sholeh F	56	63	7	49
15	M. Ali Mahfud	70	80	10	100
16	MuhFahmi	58	65	7	49
17	MuhMuhajir	50	70	20	400
18	M. Sholeh	59	70	11	121
19	NunungAriyani	71	73	2	4
20	NurLaila	67	72	5	25
21	Reza Aditya PM	71	73	2	4
22	RieinWijayanti	71	74	3	9
23	Rudi Ardiyanto	53	72	19	361
24	SaprilWiji A	80	88	8	64
25	SellyRahayu	71	72	1	1
26	SitiNurHaniah	62	72	10	100
27	Sofimgi	71	76	5	25
28	Sri Wulandari	63	74	11	121
29	Tri Utami	64	71	7	49
30	Tri Wahyuningsih	59	60	1	1
31	Wahyu Anton W	63	70	7	49
32	Wahyu Rio A	57	72	15	225
33	WahyuSusenoAji	58	71	13	169
34	Widiyanti	78	83	5	25
	Σ	2178	2482	304	3524

3. *Observation*

In the end of the meeting, the teacher asked the students about what they had learned. Some students answered, “Descriptive text using mind mapping”, but there were students that just kept silent. Then, the writer concluded what they learned. He also asked whether they were happy with all learning activity today. Almost all students said that they were happy, but some others just kept silent. Then, he closed the teaching learning process by saying good bye to them.

4. Reflection

Cycle II showed the significant differences than cycle I. Almost of the students can pass the Passing Grade Criteria (KKM). There are 31 students have passed KKM and 3 students have not passed yet.

After analyzing the result of cycle I and cycle II it can be concluded that the research got good result from activities of teaching descriptive text using mind mapping. It can make students easier in understanding the lesson. They also become more active to answer teacher's questions.

Table 3
Observation Sheet

No	Activity	Distribution		
		Excellent	Good	Fair
1.	Pre-teaching			
	a. Opening			
	➤ Greeting T : <i>"Assalamu'alaikumWr.Wb"</i> S : <i>"Wa'alaikumsamWr.Wb"</i> T : <i>"Good morning"</i> S : <i>"Morning sir"</i>		✓	
	➤ Asking Condition T : <i>"How are you today?"</i> S : <i>"I am fine, and you?"</i> T : <i>"Very well, Thanks"</i>		✓	
	➤ Attendance T : <i>"How is absent today"</i> S : <i>"None sir"</i>	✓		
	b. Motivation T : <i>"Now day, English is very important, everything use English. So it is important for you to learn it"</i>		✓	
	c. Apperceptions T : <i>"Anybody knows what is this picture?"</i>	✓		

	<p><i>S : "Pasha Ungu Sir,"</i> <i>T : "Can you tell me who is he and what does he look like?"</i> <i>S : "He is singer, Vocalist of Ungu Band and he has white skin...."</i></p>			
2.	Whit Teaching			
	a. Explanation			
	<p>➤ Teaching Descriptive Text <i>T : "Now, we will learn about descriptive text. . ."</i></p>		✓	
	<p>➤ Introducing Mind Mapping <i>T : "is there who ever heard mind mapping. . ."</i></p>		✓	
	<p>➤ Combining Descriptive Text and Mind Mapping <i>T : "We have learned about descriptive text and mind mapping. Now let's combine them."</i> <i>S : "does it make descriptive text with mind mapping sir?"</i> <i>T : "Yupp, I will explain, so please pay attention"</i></p>	✓		
	b. Practice			
	<p>➤ Dividing into some groups <i>T : "to practice it. I will divide you into 6 groups. Please count 1 until 6 started from front of left corner and ended in back right corner"</i></p>		✓	
	<p>➤ Describing the topic <i>T : "I have given a topic to each group, please describe your topic using method which have been learned"</i> <i>S : "Yes sir"</i></p>		✓	
	<p>➤ Writing on the whiteboard <i>T : "Please write your result on the whiteboard."</i></p>	✓		
3.	Post-teaching			
	a. Concluding			
	<p><i>T : "Mind mapping makes us easier to describe something in particularly. You can develop it again. Any question before I close our meeting?"</i> <i>S : "No sir"</i></p>		✓	

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	<p>b. Post-test <i>T : "I will give you post test to check your understanding, there is improvement or not. . . ."</i></p>		✓	
	<p>c. Closing <i>T : "if you have cleared I will close this meeting. If there are mistakes please forgive me. Thank for your attention. Wassalamu'alaikumWr. Wb."</i> <i>S : "Wassalamu'alaikumWr. Wb"</i> <i>T : "See you"</i> <i>S : "See you too"</i></p>		✓	

Table 4
Process Observation Sheet

No	Process	Distribution		
		Excellent	Good	Fair
1.	Teacher prepares the material		✓	
2.	Students describe picture which shown by teacher		✓	
3.	Teacher clarifies the students' answers		✓	
4.	Students pay attention teacher's explanation		✓	
5.	Teacher explains about descriptive text		✓	
6.	Teacher introduces mind mapping to students		✓	
7.	Teacher combines descriptive text and mind mapping	✓		
8.	Teacher asks the students' difficulties		✓	
9.	Students understand the teacher's explanation		✓	
10.	Students practice to make descriptive text using mind mapping		✓	
11.	Students write their result on the whiteboard		✓	
12.	The students become active in the class		✓	
13.	Teacher corrects the students' answer	✓		
14.	Students are brave to ask and answer		✓	
15.	Students feel happy and enjoy during the lesson		✓	

Discussion

Most of students have good attitude and understanding. They can follow the teaching learning process well. It can be concluded that they are interested in this method.

The researcher analyzed the students' improvement based on the result of analyzing in cycle I and cycle II. The improvement as follow:

1. The mean of the pre-test in cycle I is 57,03 and increase to be 65.15 in the post-test.
2. The mean of pre-test in cycle II is 64,05 and increase to be 73,00 in the post-test.

From the explanation above shows that by applying mind mapping method students can improve their writing skill. Moreover the result of t-test shows that there is significant influence between pre-test and post-test mean. The results of post-tests (cycle I and cycle II) are greater than pre-tests (cycle I and cycle II). It means that students' achievement in English has improved. It can be concluded that most of students of MTs Muh 1 Cekelan were enjoy to study with something that can express their creativity.

Table 5
The Scores Percentage of Cycle I and Cycle II

No	Graduation	Cycle I		Cycle II	
		Percentage	Students	Percentage	Students
1.	Passing Grade	38%	13	92%	31
2.	Un-passing Grade	62%	21	8%	3

Based on table above, we can see that in cycle I the students who can pass criteria minimum grade (KKM) just 38% or 13 students. Mostly the students cannot pass the *KKM*, it is about 62% or 21 students cannot get the goal. However, in cycle II there are improvements of the students.

31 students or 31% can pass the *KKM*. Although, there are 3 students in cycle I who cannot get *KKM* yet.

Conclusion

Based on the data above, the writer explains the conclusion of this research as the follow:

1. Based on the data of research, the students' writing skill can improve through mind mapping method. The data shows that improvement of students' writing skill is significant after the students got writing practice using mind mapping. The mean of pre-test and post-test in cycle I are 57,03 and 65,15 and the mean of pre-test and post-test in cycle II are 64,05 and 73,00. Besides that, It can be seen the comparison between T-calculation of all the score of cycle I and cycle II. In the cycle I the T-calculation is 11,11 and cycle II is 10,51. In addition, the Mean improves I every cycle. The mean of post-test in cycle I is 65,15 that is different from the mean of pre-test in cycle I is 57,03. The mean of pre-test cycle II is 64,05 which improves in the post-test becomes 73,00.
2. The process of teaching and learning descriptive writing using *mind mapping* method is going smoothly. Most of the students are enthusiastic to make hand writing in mind mapping that collaborated with colors pen. It can be seen on the result of observation in the class that is most of the students feel enjoy and happy in the teaching and learning process. It also can be proven of the students are active to answer some questions and create their own hand writing using mind mapping. The implementation of mind mapping method in writing descriptive of the second year students of MTs Muh 1

Cekelan can be done effectively. The students can make their own writing project using their creativity.

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