

IMPROVING STUDENTS' WRITING SKILLS THROUGH MIND MAPPING TECHNIQUE INTEGRATED WITH PICTURE SERIES

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Abstract: *The present research aimed at finding out how mind mapping using picture series improved students' writing skills and how it can encourage students' interest in the teaching and learning process. To reach the aims of the research, the present research used classroom action research. There were 17 participants in the research which consisted of 8 females and 9 males of Business Management Study Program Students at Darwan Ali University Unit II. The present research was conducted in two cycles. Cycle I had three meetings and the second II had two meetings. In this classroom action research, the researcher conducted the plan, action, observation, and reflection. The results of the finding showed that (1) The application of mind mapping using picture series can improve students' skills based on the calculation of the percentage, the students who achieved scores 65 and more were 100 %. It was higher than 80%; (b) Mind mapping using picture series made the students interested to learn English writing. Before the actions were conducted, the students were less motivated in the teaching and learning process. After the implementation of the actions, they were more enthusiastic to get involved in the teaching and learning process. They became active and paid attention during the lesson. Besides, the students were autonomous in learning without depending on their friend's work in doing the tasks.*

Keywords: *mind, mapping, picture, series, writing*

INTRODUCTION

language consists of four skills: listening, reading, speaking, and writing, it is obvious that a high level of language skill necessitates mastery of all four skills listed above. In terms of

language input and output, these four skills can be divided into two groups: listening and reading, which belong to input, and speaking and writing, which belong to output. Language output, particularly speaking, can quickly

reveal the users' level of language acquisition; perhaps this is why studies on speaking are increasing.

Unfortunately, in comparison to the emphasis on speaking, writing is always given less attention in the teaching and learning process (Aprilliani, 2019: 3). Individuals can express their ideas and thoughts in written form by engaging in writing activities. Writing, on the other hand, is a difficult skill to master because so many rules must be followed. Writing, particularly academic writing, is difficult, according to Oshima and Hogue (1999: 3), and requires study and practice to master. As a result, students must consider writing to be a habit in their daily lives. Furthermore, Sermsook, Liamnimitr, and Pochakorn (2017) found that EFL students frequently made mistakes with punctuation, articles, subject-verb agreement, spelling, capitalization, and fragments. Rabab'ah (2003) clarified that students were unable to give voice to their thoughts due to a lack of adequate vocabulary. Students frequently make mistakes in constructing phrases and simple sentences and do not understand the intended meaning of the teacher's

instruction, so they do not know what they must write. According to Nunan (2003), "the most difficult task in language learning is to produce a coherent, fluent, extended piece of writing, which is even more difficult for second language students." Furthermore, written products are frequently the result of procedures that require specialized skills, skills that not every speaker naturally develops (Brown, 2001).

It is in line with the difficulties that Darwan Ali University students face when writing, for example, a lack of ideas for using correct vocabulary or frequent inaccuracy in word choice. Students are also finding it difficult to generate ideas for their writing, such as not knowing where to begin or what to write first in their writing. In addition, they frequently produce incoherent coherence and fluency in their writing. These issues can stem from a variety of sources, including the teacher's teaching technique, the media used by the teacher in teaching, the student's motivation in learning English writing, and so on.

As a facilitator and role model, the English lecturer should understand the characteristics of the students and

be able to manage the classroom effectively. Aside from that, several preparations must be made before the teaching-learning process, such as lesson plans, materials to be taught, media related to the materials, and teaching techniques to be implemented.

The present research aimed at finding out how mind mapping using picture series improved students' writing skills and how it can encourage students' interest in the teaching and learning process.

To find a solution, the lecturer planned to use Mind Mapping as a pre-writing activity and picture series media to assist students in writing procedure text. This technique is expected to assist students in creating some simple ways to write a text for their excellent writing scores. Mind mapping is one technique that can help students easily express and organize their ideas.

Mind mapping is a creative note-taking technique in visualization and graphic form that is used to make people feel comfortable entering information into their brains, keeping the information in long-term memory, and easily retrieve it from their brains by engaging imagination and

association (Buzan 2008: 10). The method required to improve their writing skill is a technique that can make the students easy in expressing their ideas and easy in arranging the words to be a good sentence.

The researcher employs the mind mapping technique to teach English writing in the classroom because it helps students grasp complex topics and ideas. Students can grasp concepts more easily when they use mind maps as a study or learning tool because they are integrating themselves into the learning process. It is analogous to studying, repeating, and explaining information to a partner. Students brains are forced to make associations between seemingly disparate pieces of information as they construct a mind map.

Meanwhile, Brown (2001) as cited in Rahmi (2016) stated that mind maps are a technique that specializes in providing an organized and formatted manner of thinking by mapping the person's words and concepts mentally. The researcher combines mind mapping and picture series to increase the student's interest and also to help them achieve their objective of learning English, especially in writing.

Besides, Nunan (2003: 97) explains that mind mapping is a more visual form of brainstorming. When students create mind maps, they begin with an idea at the top center of a blank piece of paper. Then think of related ideas or words and draw relationships with a series of boxes, circles, and arrows.

Furthermore, picture series can help the students create better ideas and construct their knowledge based on some pictures shown, which are related to the topic. It may develop their imagination and open their mind about how to make or produce something. Sadiman (2002: 6) states that media in the teaching and learning process is everything that can be used to convey messages from the sender to the recipient to stimulate the thoughts, feelings, attention, and interests and attention of students in such a way that the learning process occurs.

Harmer (2004: 69) stated that pictures can stimulate students' creativity, especially in writing. The picture works in provoking imagination and creativity so that they can produce a good piece of writing. He also explains that some situations, grammar, and vocabulary works can be presented

by pictures. Furthermore, when they look at the picture, each student will have their imagination inside the picture. Starting from that, they will have something (an idea) to write. Similarly, Brown (2003: 226) argues that the picture offers a non-verbal means to stimulate the writer's response. It means that by giving students a picture, it is easier for them to get ideas.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Previous Research

In the teaching and learning process of writing, various teaching aids can be applied by the teacher. One of them is picture series. They provide the students with a sequence of pictures that can help them to generate, develop, and organize their ideas. Some similar research has been conducted before. Koiriyah (2014:1) searched about implementing the use of mind mapping techniques to improve students writing skills. The study was done in two cycles. The result of the study showed that the students' mean scores improved from the first cycle to the second cycle. In short, it can be concluded that in the last cycle,

students made significant progress. The analyses resulted in the findings that the mind-mapping technique could improve the students writing skills.

Similar to the research conducted by Khoiriyah above, Fitriyani (2014) also researched mind mapping under the title “Improving Students Writing Skills through Mind Mapping in Grade VIII at SMPN 1 Imogiri in the Academic Year of 2014/2015. The research findings showed that the student’s writing skills improved, especially in the aspects of content and organization of the text. This achievement proved that using the mind mapping technique in the teaching and learning process of writing could improve the students’ writing skills significantly.

Furthermore, Ayuningtyas and Wulyani (2012) conducted a study in SMAN 1 Srengat-Blitar. The subjects of their study were eleventh-grade students and they used picture sequences to improve their writing skills. The research findings proved that the sequence of pictures could improve the students’ attitudes and writing skills. The students became more active in the teaching and learning process and the peer review

activity. The result of the questionnaire showed that they gave positive responses to the use of picture sequences where they were interested in using picture sequences to help them produce narrative texts. They also felt that their writing skill was improved. The students’ improvement was also shown in their writing products. Their mean score showed better improvement, especially in terms of vocabulary.

Another research was conducted by Purnomo (2014:7) under the title Improving Descriptive Writing Skill Through Mind Mapping Technique. The result showed that there were improvements in students’ writing skills. Students followed the teaching-learning process well. They showed interest in the lesson. Based on the analysis the writer concluded that the 8th-year students of MTs Muhammadiyah 1 Cekelan could improve their writing skills through mind-mapping techniques.

While an article about the role of picture series in improving students’ writing skills was written by Wenning (2016). This article aimed to review the role of picture series, as one of the instructional mediums, in improving

students' writing skills. The result showed that the picture series was recommended for teaching writing since students were interested.

Desitawardhani (2014) also searched about improving the students' writing skills through picture series. The result of the research showed that the use of picture series and supporting materials improved the students' writing skills.

Based on the previous research above, it can be concluded that this present research has a similar discussion which discussed improving students' writing skills using mind mapping and picture series in the teaching and learning process. Although this present research has a similar discussion with the previous research above, it has also a different discussion. The previous research above was only focused on the media or the technique in the teaching and learning process. Meanwhile, this present research integrated mind-mapping techniques using picture series in the teaching and learning process to improve students' writing skills. Besides, this present research has also a different time, subject, and place of the research.

Related Theory

The Nature of English Writing

Spratt, Pulvernes, Williams (2005: 26) state that writing is one of the productive language skills that deals with conveying messages with the use of graphic symbols. According to them, writing is an activity to communicate one's idea by using letters, words, phrases, and clauses to form a series of related sentences. This definition shows that writing is conveying a message through a written text. In other words, writing is communication between a writer and a reader with the use of printed symbols. Besides, Byrne (1997) states that writing is an act of forming graphic symbols or making marks on a flat surface of some kind. Graphic symbols here include letters or combinations of letters that relate to the sound people make when they speak.

As the main function of writing is communication (Langan, 2005:14), one as a writer should be able to make his/her readers understand the message it conveys. Thus, to express ideas, thoughts, and feelings clearly and effectively, an understanding of the graphic system is not enough. The writer requires knowledge of grammar

and the art of using rhetoric such as arranging words, phrases, sentences, and paragraphs to produce a well-written text. In writing, the writer must also master the rules of vocabulary, spelling, grammar, morphology, and syntax. Therefore, many students think that writing is difficult.

In support of the above statement, Richard and Renandya (2002:303) state that writing is the most difficult skill for foreign language students. The difficulties not only in generating and organizing ideas but also in translating these ideas into readable text. Therefore, the students have to practice their writing as many as possible to produce a well-written text. The students need some processes to produce a well-written text. Brown (2000:335) states the process of composing a written text is the result of thinking, drafting, and revising that required specialized skills. Firstly, students have to think of the topic or theme that they are going to write about. Next, they can generate ideas by making a draft for their writing, and finally, students can organize and make revisions for the final product. There are several definitions of writing stated by some experts, one of which is by

Harmer (2004: 86) who states that writing is a process and that what we write is often heavily influenced by the constraints of genres, then these elements have to be present in learning activities. It means that writing cannot be separated from genres, especially in teaching-learning activities of writing. In this case, writing activities can be present in the classroom.

The Nature of Mind Mapping

Mind mapping is a technique that helps the teacher in teaching students with the grammar, vocabulary, the gender of the text (in organizing social function, generic structure, and language features), and also in organizing their idea or opinions. It helps students organize the topic so they can use it for writing narrative text. Based on Eppler (2006), Mind mapping is a teaching technique that requires students to draw a diagram used to outline information represented by pictures and color. The concept of this strategy is putting one word in the center which is a general idea from the mind of the researcher. Then, there are other words surrounding this one word that is intended to specify the general idea. This enables students to write down many words as it is to specify the

previous words. The visualization of this concept is like spider diagrams or mind webs. The advantage of using this strategy is enabling students to think about what to write by having word visualization as their reference. Word visualization that is written in mapping gives the students an idea of what to write.

Busan (1993: 53) states that there are five essential characteristics of mind mapping. They are:

- a. The main idea, subject, or focus is crystallized in a central image;
- b. The main themes radiate from the central image as 'branches';
- c. The branches comprise a key image or keyword drawn or printed on its associated line;
- d. The topic of lesser importance are represented as 'things' of the relevant branch; and
- e. The branches form a connected nodal structure.

The Nature of Picture Series

Harmer (2004:67) also states some ways to have pictures as media to teach writing. They are describing pictures, write postcards, do story tasks, and so on. In this research, the researcher will use one of them, which is story tasks to be used as media in

teaching writing. Furthermore, Harmer (2004:69) proposes several activities of story tasks that the students can have. They are dramatic pictures, a series of pictures of random objects, a series of pictures in sequence, and a headline or caption. However, in the present research, the researcher used picture series as the media for teaching writing.

According to Harmer (2004: 69), a picture can stimulate students' creativity, especially in writing. A picture works in provoking imagination and creativity so that it can produce a good piece of writing. Similarly, Brown (2003: 226) argues that a picture offers a non-verbal means to stimulate the writer's response. It means that by giving students a picture, it is easier for them to get ideas. Furthermore, Wright (1989:17) explains the use of pictures as media can help to attract students' interest, and encourage their motivation in learning, making them want to pay attention. and want to take part. Pictures make the students have a sense of the context of the language. They bring the world into the classroom. Pictures can be a specific reference point or stimulus to the students. Next, pictures can also be described as objectively or interpreted

or responded to subjectively by students.

METHODOLOGY OF STUDY

To reach the goals of the research, the present research used classroom action research as the design of the research. Kemmis and McTaggart (1988) in Burns (2010) state that action research involves four phases. These are planning, action, observation, and reflection which are considered a cycle of research.

In the planning phase, the researcher designed the learning strategy, prepared the lesson plans, designed the instruments, and set up the success criteria of classroom action research. In this action phase, the researcher conducted the CAR in two cycles which cycle I have three meetings and cycle II has two meetings. In the meeting of the cycle, the researcher conducted the classroom action research by teaching using mind mapping and picture series. To know the students' improvement, the researcher always gave an exercise to write text in the last meeting of the cycle.

In the observation phase, the researcher and the observer observed

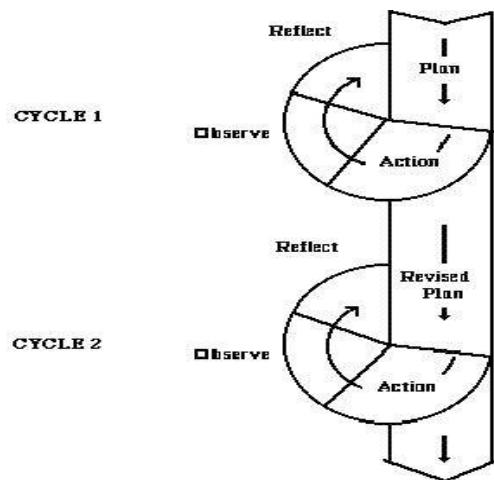
the students and also the teaching-learning process. The result of the observation was written on field notes in each meeting. The data obtained were analyzed as soon as possible to help the researcher get the data accurately for the next cycle.

In the reflection phase, the researcher considered things that had been conducted well or not, in other words, the researcher was doing self-evaluation based on the four steps in action research as the components to form a cycle.

Those were sequence circle activity of cycle I that comes back to the first step. The first cycle was from planning design to reflection or evaluation. Action research is never singular activity, but it must always be the sequence of activities that come back to the first step. It is called a cycle. The time of the first cycle depends on the material. The material is taught only one main material. Reflection can be done if the researcher has felt enough to get experience. It means that the researcher has got information to improve the way that has been tried.

The first cycle was continuing which recurs until the researcher is satisfied with the result of the research.

In other words, the researcher terminated the cycle if there are changes and improvements in the teaching and learning process. The following figure represents the cyclical model by Kemmis and McTaggart (1988):



This present research used the phases stated by Kemmis and McTaggart (1988) in Burns (2010). They are planning, action, observation, and reflection which were considered as a cycle of research.

To decide the success criteria of the action research, the researcher took the theory of Arikunto (2010). The success criteria of classroom action research in this present research is if the score of percentage reaches 80% or \geq higher than 80%. The formula is used to determine the percentage of classical criteria, as follows :

$$KB (\%) = \frac{S \geq 65}{N} \times 100\%$$

Note:

- KB (%) = Mastery of learning
- $S \geq 65$ = Number of students who achieve a score 65 or \geq higher than 65
- N = Number of students
- $KB (\%) = \frac{17}{17} \times 100\% = 100\%$

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Finding out how mind mapping using picture series improved students' writing skills

Based on the observation of the research finding, there were some improvements in students' writing skills from the beginning to the end of the meeting such as the content or the ideas of the student's writing which means that the students could develop the writing topic better with effective sentences. Not only that, but the researcher also found that students could explore new vocabulary by receiving new ideas so that they can write fluently.

In the present research, the second cycle was conducted for two meetings. After doing a writing exercise on procedure text, 17 students achieved the lowest score of 75 and the highest score of 90. It meant that all students' writing products of cycle II were also categorized successfully

because there was not even a single student who got a score lower than 65. The cycle II result showed an improvement in which the students who got a score of 65 increased to 75. It is because the students have had good experiences in using mind mapping and picture series before and the researcher changed the topics of what they wrote. The topics of the writing were based on students' backgrounds in which their focus of the study is on a plantation.

Based on the research finding, the application of mind mapping using picture series can improve students' writing skills.

The application of mind mapping using picture series can improve students' skills in writing English because the mind mapping technique helped the students to generate their ideas when they started writing. The picture series helped them to finish their writing because by giving students a picture series, they were helped by giving a clue to write so they can imagine what they were going to write. This finding is similar to Koiriyah's finding (2014:1) who searched about implementing the use of mind mapping techniques to improve students writing skills. The result of the

study shows that the students' mean scores improved from the first cycle to the second cycle. In short, it can be concluded that in the last cycle, students made significant progress. The analyses resulted in the findings that the mind-mapping technique could improve the students writing skills. Fitriyani (2014) also searched mind mapping and the result showed that the research findings showed that the student's writing skills improved, especially in the aspects of content and organization of the text. This achievement proved that using the mind mapping technique in the teaching and learning process of writing could improve the students' writing skills significantly. Furthermore, Purnomo (2014:7) also found that mind mapping can improve students' writing skills. It helped students to generate their ideas in pre-writing.

While the finding of the picture series is similar to Wenning (2016) who searched about the role of picture series, as one of the instructional media in improving students' writing skills. The result showed that the picture series was recommended for teaching writing since students were interested.

Desitawardhani (2014) also found a similar finding in which the use of picture series and supporting materials improved the students' writing skills. The students could develop their ideas to produce an explanatory text with better vocabulary, sentence structure, punctuation, and capitalization. They also enthusiastically joined the teaching and learning activities. Furthermore, their involvement in writing improved because the series of pictures could attract the students' attention.

Harmer (2004: 69), pictures can stimulate students' creativity, especially in writing. Pictures work in provoking imagination and creativity so that they can produce a good piece of writing. He also explains that some situations, grammar, and vocabulary works can be presented by pictures. Furthermore, when they look at the picture, each student will have their imagination inside the picture.

Starting from that, they will have something (an idea) to write. Similarly, Brown (2003: 226) argues that pictures offer a non-verbal means to stimulate a writer's response. It means that by giving students pictures, it is easier for them to get ideas.

Finding out how mind mapping using picture series improved students' writing skills

Based on the result, students were motivated to learn English writing of procedure text by applying mind mapping using picture series. Before conducting the action, the students were not motivated and interested to study English writing. It was because they did not have ideas to write. It was like learning nothing for them. But after conducting the action, they were motivated to study English writing. Mind mapping made the students more creative and motivated them to write. It was because the students can easily generate their ideas in writing.

This finding is similar to Buzan (2008) who stated that mind mapping is a creative note-taking technique in visualization and graphic form that is used to make people feel easy in entering information into their brains, keep the information in long-term memory, and take it out from their brains easily by engaging imagination and association. Besides, Nunan (2003: 97) explains that mind mapping is a more visual form of brainstorming. When students create mind maps, they begin with an idea at the top center of a blank piece of paper. Then think of

related ideas or words and draw relationships with a series of boxes, circles, and arrows. It can help students to write. So they can be interested in writing.

Based on the student's responses, the students felt happy to use picture series in the teaching and learning process. They felt like they were helped by the picture series. This finding is similar to Harmer (2004: 69) who stated that pictures can stimulate students' creativity, especially in writing. The picture works in provoking imagination and creativity so that they can produce a good piece of writing. He also explains that some situations, grammar, and vocabulary works can be presented by pictures. Furthermore, when they look at the picture, each student will have their imagination inside the picture. Starting from that, they will have something (an idea) to write. Similarly, Brown (2003: 226) also argues that the picture offers a non-verbal means to stimulate the writer's response. It means that by giving students a picture, it is easier for them to get ideas.

Before the actions were conducted, the students were less motivated in the teaching and learning

process. It could be seen from their class participation. When the teacher asked them to write down their answers in front of the class, few students wanted to do it. Furthermore, when the teacher explained the materials taught, some of the students talked to their friends and did another activity like doing their homework. After the implementation of the actions, they were more enthusiastic to get involved in the teaching and learning process. They became active and paid attention during the lesson. Besides, the students were autonomous in learning without depending on their friend's work in doing the tasks. In conclusion, the use of picture series motivated the students in the teaching and learning process of writing.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

Conclusions

The present research concluded that (1) The application of mind mapping using picture series can improve students' skills based on the calculation of the percentage, the students who achieved scores 65 and more were 100 %. It was higher than 80%; (b) Mind mapping using picture

series made the students interested to learn English writing. Before the actions were conducted, the students were less motivated in the teaching and learning process. After the implementation of the actions, they were more enthusiastic to get involved in the teaching and learning process. They became active and paid attention during the lesson. Besides, the students were autonomous in learning without depending on their friend's work in doing the tasks.

Suggestion

It is suggested that the English teachers or lecturers can apply and explore more deeply the application of picture series in improving the student's writing skills by managing the time for students to make their mind mapping based on the topic given by the teachers, giving needed vocabulary for students so they can memorize the given vocabulary before the teaching and learning process, finding the materials based on the student's background to let students fluent in writing procedure text that they are going to write.

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