

IMPROVING THE 8th GRADERS' WRITING SKILL USING MIND-MAPPING AT SMP NEGERI 2 GENENG

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Abstract

In learning English, the students are expected to be able to speak, write, read, and listen. However, many students consider English as a fear factor in school. They consider English a hard lesson to learn. The most difficult skill in learning language is writing. In this issue, the teacher emphasizes the students to develop their writing skill. This study aims to improve the students' writing skills by applying the mind-mapping method. The research employed classroom action research (CAR). It was conducted at SMP Negeri 2 Geneng in one cycle. The subjects in this study were Class VIII-A which consists of 20 students. This study used writing test to collect the data. The researcher used pretest and posttest. From the results, it can be concluded that the application of mind-mapping method has a positive impact in improving the capability and student learning outcomes in writing descriptive texts. The results show increasing score of each student. In this regard.

Keywords: *class action research, writing skill, descriptive text, mind-mapping method*

INTRODUCTION

Writing is one of productive skills that must be mastered by all the students in learning English. Richard and Renandya (2002) stated that writing is the most difficult skill for second language learners to master. The difficulty lies not only in generating and organizing ideas, but also in translating these ideas into readable text. The importance of mastering English writing skill is to produce articles, journal, and scientific research. Furthermore, writing is wide-reaching to change and sharing human's knowledge for human life improvement.

To achieve English writing skill at junior high school, students should master several text types. One of the text types is descriptive text. The context of the text is the description of particular thing, animal, person, or others. For instance: our pets or a person we know well (Mursyid, 2006). The students must practice their writing to describe surroundings regularly to master the text type. Preferably, a student describes, recognizes, and creates a descriptive text based on generic structure and linguistic features of descriptive; identification, description, simple present tense, conjunction (Hammond in Mursyid, 2006)

Therefore, writing needs more time to finish because writing process has some steps, such as, planning, drafting, and revising (Ahlén and Lundh:2007). Thus, writing is one of language skills that are used for indirect communication. The ability to write clearly will help to communicate ideas effectively and get the desired results in business and personal life.

There are several ways to introduce foreign language writing. One of the ways is by creating mind mapping. Mind mapping is the striking combination of imagery, color and visual-spatial arrangement, which is proven to significantly improve information recall, compared to conventional methods of note taking and learning (Buzan: 2009). This strategy involves and enables the students in learning process.

It gives impression to the students because they do not only listen to what the teacher says, but also enables them to be active. By using mind mapping, it encourages the student's curiosity in learning. It means that in teaching junior high school, the teachers need to be creative in relating the main topic to the real situation and the students can learn the linguistic features at once.

As a matter of fact, the students of 8th grade, where the researcher teaches, do not have good ability in creating descriptive text. It was proven by the students' low mean of pretest score in writing descriptive text. Furthermore, it was supported by the mean of pretest score obtained from the twenty students and conducted on the August 30th 2017. It was not good, which was only 6, 5 or 10 percent. Meanwhile, the required average score is 7, 5 or 85 percent for the completeness of learning.

Based on the previous explanation, the researcher decides to make a classroom action research. The researcher desires to improve the writing skill of the twenty students in VIII-A at SMP Negeri 2 Geneng. The researcher focuses on creating descriptive text based on proper generic structure, proper grammatical function and language feature. In particular, the aims of the study are formulated into the following research question:

1. How does mind-mapping method improve student's writing ability in VIII-A grade at SMP Negeri 2 Geneng?

The findings of the study will help English teacher to improve skill in teaching writing descriptive text for 8th grade student generally. The researcher expects that it gives contributions to the teacher. Furthermore, the study is able to provide an appropriate technique to overcome the problem and the student can easily understand and able to increase their ability in writing.

LITERATURE

Basically, language consists of four skills; they are listening, reading, speaking and writing. Among those skills, writing is considered a difficult skill so that it needs more attention. Writing skill is complicated because the students do not only share their ideas but they are also required to express their thought, concept, feeling, and willingness. Writing is always the product of a dialogue with self and others—a process—coming to animate a particular conception of writing process; the “social turn” seemed to underscore the value of prewriting, drafting, and revising by encouraging students to do these activities together (Vandenberg:2002).

The objective of writing is basically to make the students write well with correct grammar, structure, and vocabulary. Moreover, writing is a language skill used to have an indirect communication, not face to face with other people (Tarigan; 1986).

Coulmas (2001) said that at least six meanings of ‘writing’ can be distinguished: (1) a system of recording language by means of visible or tactile marks; (2) the activity of putting such a system to use; (3) the result of such activity, a text; (4) the particular form of such a result, a script style such as block letter writing; (5) artistic composition; (6) a professional occupation. Based on those explanations, the writer concludes that writing is a medium of written communication. We are required to observe the structure of the text which relates to the elements of the article in order to make the reader understand what the text talk about.

Descriptive Text is a kind of text with a purpose to give information. The context of this kind of text is the description of particular thing, animal, person, or others, for instance: our pets or a person we know well (Gerot and Wignell in Mursyid: 2006).

Anderson (1998) says that factual descriptions usually include the following grammatical features: a) verbs in the present tense, b) adjective to describe the features of the subject, and c) topic sentences to begin paragraph and organize the various aspects of the description. Artono (2008) stated that descriptive text is a part of factual genres. Its social function is to describe a particular person, place or thing. Description in writing is the process of creating visual images and sensory impression through words. Moreover, description is a part of another piece of writing and is used to inform an audience about how something or someone look at or to persuade an audience to see something from the writer's point of view.

However, sometimes, it uses past tense if the thing to be described does not exist anymore. It has significant grammatical features such as: focus on specific participants, use of simple present tense, use of descriptive adjectives, use of detailed noun phrase to give information about the subject, use of action verbs 'material processes', use of adverbials to give additional information about behaviour, use of figurative language. As Clouse said (2004) (The Student Writer) “Description adds an important dimension to our lives because it moves our emotion and expands our experience”.

Buzan (1994) said that mind-mapping is also called as “clustering ideas”. It is a way of collecting ideas around a particular topic and defining connections. This can be defined as a “nonlinear brainstorming process akin to free association”. Mind mapping is an effective means to take notes and brainstorm essay topics. A mind map involves writing down a central theme and thinking of new and related ideas which radiate out from the center (The University of Adelaide: 2014).

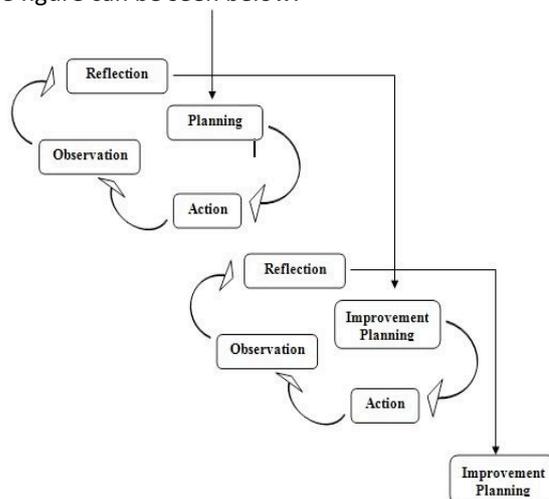
Mind mapping was developed as an effective method for generating ideas by association. In order to create a mind map, you usually start in the middle of the page with the central theme/ main idea and from that point you work outward in all directions to create a growing diagram composed of keywords, phrases, concepts, and facts also figures.

A study by Toi (2009) shows that mind mapping can help children recall words more effectively than using lists, with improvements in memory of up to 32%. Research by D'Antoni and Zipp (2005) found that, from a pool of 14 physical therapy students, 10 out of 14 agreed that the mind map technique enabled them to better organize and integrate the material presented in their course. Using mind mapping for lesson planning can help teachers or trainers identify a logical plan or teaching route and increases recall of the subject matter. It improves teaching confidence and facilitate the smooth running of programs (Boyson: 2009).

Mind mapping offers a powerful system for learning. It harnesses visual appeal through color, symbols and images, and encourages students to make sense out of ideas by constructing them in meaningful ways. The rules are: no criticism of ideas, go for large quantities of ideas, build on ideas, and encourage wild and exaggerated ideas. When these rules are followed, a lot more ideas are created and that a greater quantity of original ideas gives rise to a greater quantity of useful ideas. Goodnough and Long (2002) found that mind mapping is a useful strategy for introducing new concepts, providing a whole-class focus for a large research project, assessing student learning and offering greater choice in how students complete assignments and projects.

METHOD

In this research, the writer uses Classroom Action Research as the research design which is conducted in cyclic activities. According to Kunto (2006), Classroom Action Research is a research which is done by a teacher in a classroom or at school where she or he teaches with emphasizing on completing or improving the process and practice of learning. According to Mulyasa, (2009) consists of four steps, namely, planning, acting, observing, and reflecting. Improvement of the problem in this study is brought about by a series of cycles, but in this case the researcher only use one cycle which covers two meetings. The figure can be seen below:



The pretest data is obtained from the students before the treatment. Then, the students' writing were analyzed we scored by the researcher as a rater 1 and his collaborator as a rater 2 independently to avoid the subjectivity of gained score. Then the percentage of the students doing the activity was gained from the mean of total students doing the activity divided by the students' number of the whole class and multiplied by one hundred.

The researcher used quantitative data procedures for data analysis. To find out the activity of the students during the teaching and learning process, the researcher analysed and presented the data descriptively. The answer was obtained by analysing the data from writing test. Furthermore, to find out the students' writing improvement, the researcher used quantitative data from the pre-test and post-test utilizing the analytical scoring rubric.

In addition, the result of the analysis was next presented by interpreting the number of percentage gained, and the data-gathered through field notes were analyzed and then presented descriptively by presenting the description of the teaching and learning process. The result of this reflection was used then to draw a conclusion whether the action sufficed or needed improving, if the action met the criteria of the success, it will be stopped. Otherwise the drawbacks were identified for further revised plan to be implemented it in the next meeting, but before you can begin to

write your essay paper, you must first understand and determine what the 'main' idea of your writing will be. *What is the central theme/main idea or controlling point that you are trying to convey to your reader?* Whatever the topic, it is always a good idea to think about the issues that surround that topic and mind mapping is an excellent form of brainstorming (The University of Adelaide: 2014).

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

A. Findings from Pretest

Based on the analysis in pretest of students' composition, the result shows that only 10 % met the criterion of success. The criterion is reached if $\geq 75\%$ students of the class achieved the score greater than or equal to 7.5 of the range. From the explanation above, it was found that the students' achievement in writing descriptive essay was not significant, because most of the students still could not yet produce a good descriptive text. They still cannot understand how to express their ideas in the descriptive text. They still made some mistakes in their writings in terms of content, organization and grammar.

In the pretest, the students were assigned to write descriptive paragraph consisting of ten sentences in 35 minutes. As a result there were only two students or 10% of the students who got the score equal the Minimum Mastery Criterion- *Kriteria Ketuntasan Minimal (KKM)*, meanwhile the other 18 students were below that criterion, and it was still far from the researcher's target. After analyzing the result of preliminary study, it could be concluded that most of the students at the VIII-A of SMP Negeri 2 Geneng had difficulty in writing skill.

Therefore, it needs to find out the solution to overcome this problem. The writer used mind mapping in teaching writing as an innovation in teaching learning process. The action is needed to improve the students' ability in writing. The action research conducted in one cycle.

Table 1. The Result of Analysis on the Pretest on the Descriptive Text

No.	Students	Students' Pre-test Score
1	AD	6.5
2	AF	6.5
3	AN	6.0
4	CH	7.0
5	DI	6.0
6	DO	6.5
7	FA	6.5
8	FA	7.0
9	GU	6.5
10	HA	6.0
11	LU	7.5*
12	ME	7.5*
13	MU	6.0
14	NI	6.5
15	NO	7.0
16	NU	7.0
17	RA	6.0
18	RE	6.0
19	SI	6.0
20	TR	6.0
	AVERAGE	6.5

Note *) Students who passed the Minimum Mastery Criterion (KKM) (7.5)

The score taken by the average of rater 1 and rater 2

The pre-test conducted in August 30th 2017

B. Findings from Cycle I

Some modifications for the following action had to be made. It was centred on the procedures of implementing the action in order to find the proper model procedures of mind-mapping strategy which were applicable in the writing class. The first cycle was carried out to solve the problem found in the pre-test in which students were still having difficult to produce sentences and organizing their ideas into a good descriptive paragraph.

Based on the analysis and the data gained from the observation in cycle I, it concludes that in average the student activities were significantly improving. The result was better than before because it showed 55% or eleven students benefit from the implementation of mind mapping strategy.

These findings, suggest that students' achievement in writing a descriptive text in cycle I enhanced and met the first criterion of success. There were eleven students or 55% of the students who got the score above the Minimum Mastery Criterion- *Kriteria Ketuntasan Minimal (KKM)*. Meanwhile about 45% the other nine students were below that criterion. It implied that the first criterion has started to be fulfilled.

The material still related to descriptive writing but it is focused on describing a thing, for example "My Pet". The first cycle was carried out to solve the problem found in the pre-test in which students were still having difficulty to produce the sentences and organizing their ideas into a good descriptive paragraph.

In the implementation of this phase, the writer conducted the teaching learning process in the first cycle to get better result that was significant in improving writing ability using mind-mapping technique. Even though the students' achievement in writing enhanced, there remain some mistakes. Students making some mistakes were those who were categorized as the students lacking of English.

Furthermore, their essay was well organized and generally coherent but their writing still contained some grammatical errors, but thus their descriptive text was already understandable and readable. It could be seen from the table above that the numbers of students who passed the Minimum Master Criterion- *Kriteria Ketuntasan Minimal (KKM)* also increases from preliminary study and each cycle.

Table 2. The Result of Analysis on the Students' Composition in Cycle I

No.	Students	Students' Cycle I Score
1	AD	6.5
2	AF	7.0
3	AN	6.5
4	CH	7.0
5	DI	6.5
6	DO	7.0
7	FA	7.5*
8	FA	7.5*
9	GU	6.0
10	HA	7.5*
11	LU	7.5*
12	ME	8.0*
13	MU	6.0
14	NI	6.5
15	NO	7.5*
16	NU	7.5*
17	RA	8.0*
18	RE	7.5*
19	SI	7.5*
20	TR	7.5*
	AVERAGE	7.1

Note *) Students who passed the Minimum Mastery Criterion (*KKM*) (7.5)

The score taken by the average of rater 1 and rater 2

The Cycle I conducted on September 13th 2017

C. Findings from Post-test

Based on the result of the analysis on the data gained from post-test and observation, the researcher concludes that he was extremely proud, because it was found that the average gone up which can be seen that 85% or seventeen students met a demand of succeeding the criterion gaining the score above the Minimum Mastery Criterion- *Kriteria Ketuntasan Minimal (KKM)*.

It means that the students' involvement in the writing activities was categorized as very good and met the researcher's target. It was stated that the criterion was reached if the students' involvement in the writing activities was categorized as very good if more than half reached the mark above or equal 7.5. In the post-test, the writer found that is, the students' progress in writing was better than in the first cycle. In the last meeting of this cycle, the writer held a post-test that was taken from the students' final draft. In the students assigned to write descriptive paragraph consisting of ten sentences in 35 minutes, using mind-mapping, they are assigned to revise and recheck.

Table 3. The Result of Analysis on the Students' Composition in Post-test

No.	Students	Students' Post-test Score
1	AD	6.5
2	AF	7.5*
3	AN	7.5*
4	CH	8.0*
5	DI	7.0
6	DO	7.5*
7	FA	7.5*
8	FA	8.0*
9	GU	7.5*
10	HA	7.5*
11	LU	8.0*
12	ME	8.0*
13	MU	7.0
14	NI	7.5*
15	NO	7.5*
16	NU	7.5*
17	RA	8.0*
18	RE	7.5*
19	SI	8.0*
20	TR	7.5*
	AVERAGE	7.6

Note *) Students who passed the Minimum Mastery Criterion (KKM) (7.5)

The score taken by the average of rater 1 and rater 2

The Post-Test conducted on September 20th 2017

D. Discussions

The Procedures employed in implementing Mind-Mapping

Based on the research findings, the implementation of mind mapping strategy can enrich the students' skill in writing a descriptive text. Although all of the students have not achieved the maximum result, most of their writing skills have improved as shown in the result of assessment in cycle and post-test.

All of the result revealed the good results from implementing mind-mapping technique in descriptive writing. The students admitted that they were interested this technique. They felt easier in writing descriptive text. The students looked motivated and confident in writing.

Considering the explanation above, the writer concludes that the research was successful and the technique of mind-mapping can improve students' writing ability on a descriptive text. The use of Mind-mapping method in teaching writing can overcome the research problem that is how to improve students' ability in writing descriptive text. The students also have a positive response to the implementation of teaching descriptive writing using mind-mapping method.

The improvement of students' ability in writing descriptive text was supported by the improvement of students' score.

Table 4. Analytical Scoring Rubric Adapted from Weigle

Component of Writing	Score	Indicators
Content	4	Relevant to the topic and easy to understand
	3	Rather relevant to the topic and easy to understand
	2	Relevant to the topic but is not quite easy to understand
	1	Quite relevant to the topic but is not quite easy to understand
Organization	4	Most of the sentences are related to the main idea
	3	Some sentences are related to the main idea
	2	Few sentences related to the main idea
	1	The sentences are unrelated to each other
Vocabulary and Mechanic	4	A few errors in choice of words, spelling and punctuation
	3	Some errors in choice of words, spelling and punctuation
	2	Occasional errors in choice of words, spelling and punctuation
	1	Frequent errors in choice of words, spelling and punctuation
Grammar	4	A few grammatical inaccuracies
	3	Some grammatical inaccuracies
	2	Numerous grammatical inaccuracies
	1	Frequent grammatical inaccuracies

Note:

Number of students 20

Scale: 1 (bad) : 0% - 25% students complete the criterion (0-5 students) * fail
 2 (good) : 26% - 50% students complete the criterion (6-10 students) * fail
 3 (better) : 51%-75% students complete the criterion (11-15 students) *
 succeed
 4 (best) : 76%-100% students complete the criterion (16-20 students) *

succeed

- In **Pre-test**, the average percentage of the students doing the activity is 10 %, categorized as fail (bad).
- In **Cycle I**, the average percentage of the students doing the activity is 55 %, categorized as succeed (better).
- In **Post-test**, the average percentage of the students doing the activity is 85 %, categorized as succeed (best).

Those activities are related to the procedures employed in writing a descriptive text. The treatment enriches their writing skill. The proper model procedures of the implementation of mind mapping developed by the lecturer for the writing activity involves the application of the writing stages.

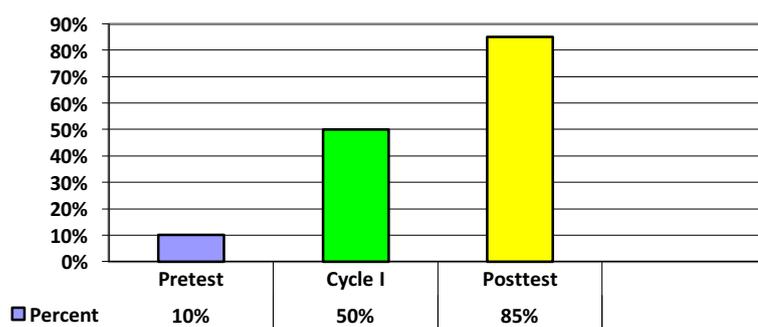
All the findings, suggest Junior High School students will be more interested and motivated in learning English if the learning situation is attractive. Moreover, if many students do not have their self-motivation, they need to be motivated by the condition around them. Therefore, the result of finding above shows that attractive model in teaching learning process has very important role in teaching English, especially writing for Junior High School students.

The findings about the implementation of mind mapping are very attractive method for the VIII-A SMPN 2 Geneng. The students have a good understanding and determination in the purpose and generic structure of descriptive text because of mind mapping. The findings show that mind mapping made the students more active, it did not make them bored, and the class becomes more fun.

The result of the post-test showed that only three of the students got the score below the Minimum Mastery Criterion-*Kriteria Ketuntasan Minimal (KKM)*. Thus, it has met the first criterion of success that 85% of the students must get the score above the *KKM*. As a result, the writer and the collaborator decided to stop the action.

The enhancement of the students' writing skill

The implementation of Mind-Mapping with the proper model procedures can develop the students' skill in writing descriptive text. The students' achievement in writing a descriptive text improved as shown in the enhancement of the percentage of the students' achieving the score greater than or equal to 7.5 in the range that lies from 0-100 in pre-test. It can be seen in figure below.



From the figure it was shown that the percentage of the students' achievement in pretest were significantly improving. All of the results of instruments after accomplishing the classroom action research revealed the good results from implementing mind-mapping technique in descriptive writing. The students admitted that they were interested in this technique. They felt easier in writing a descriptive text. The students looked motivated and confident in writing.

The improvement of students' ability in writing descriptive text can be demonstrated by the improvement of their score. The result of pre-test, cycle I and post-test showed a significant upgrade. The use of mind-mapping technique in teaching writing can overcome the research problem that is how to improve students' ability in writing a descriptive text. The students also have a positive response to the implementation of teaching descriptive writing using mind-mapping technique. The students' writing ability improved through mind-mapping technique.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

Teaching method or teaching model was not left out in the implementation of teaching and learning activities. There are many kinds of teaching method or teaching model that can be used in teaching and learning activities, one of them is using mind mapping.

The observation result of implementing mind mapping on cycle I gave a good result because the students started to be able to create a description correctly.

At the post-test, the researcher used mind mapping and asked the student to draw it by their own. With this more direct method, it is proved that it has taken effect by increasing their understanding about the text structure. The improvement of students' ability in writing descriptive text could be seen from the increasing of students' mean in writing score from 6.5 in the pre-test, and 7.1 in the first cycle to 7.6 in the post-test. The observation and interviews conducted by the writer during the action showed that the students were motivated and interested to participate and actively in writing activity. The teacher's response about the implementation of mind-mapping technique was positive and it would be an alternative technique in teaching writing.

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