THE USE OF MIND MAPPING TECHNIQUE IN IMPROVING STUDENTS’ WRITING SKILL

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Abstract

This study aims at examining if the use of mind mapping technique can improve students' ability in writing skill at grade XI of SMA Labschool Unsyiah, Banda Aceh. It focused on how the students are able to organize idea and write a good analytical exposition text as one of text types taught in senior high school within Indonesian EFL context. To cope with the difficulties encountered by the students in writing the text, pre experimental study of one group pretest-posttest design employed by using simple random sampling. In order to collect the data in this study, the researchers administrated the test in the form of written test to elicit the data related to students’ writing ability. The collected data were analyzed by using descriptive statistic to depict the attained data and inferential statistic to prove the research hypothesis. From the results of data reveal that the mean score of posttest is higher than the mean score of pretest (53.8>26.9) as well as the value of t-test is higher than t-value (10.92>1.721). It obviously means that the use of mind mapping technique has given a significant impact to improve pupils’ writing skill in writing analytical exposition text.

Keywords: Mind Mapping Technique, writing skill.

INTRODUCTION
Research Background
The mastery of writing for most students in EFL/ESL context still considered as not an easy thing since there are several aspects that the writers has to know such as organization, content, vocabulary, grammar, and mechanics. In line with, Swales and Feak (1994, p.34, cited in Mandayani 2014, p.1) argued that selecting the
appropriate grammar and vocabulary, thinking about the purpose of the text to be composed, and choosing a suitable style are some matters for EFL/ESL learners. Bitchener and Basturkmen (2006, p. 15) and Dalsky and Tajino (2007, p. 47) alluded that organizing ideas and arguments, using appropriate styles of writing, and expressing thoughts in English are some hardships faced by students.

In relation to the difficulties faced by students in writing skill, based on the first author’s experience during her internship and her result of interview with students at Laboratorium Senior High School of Unsyiah (Labschool Unsyiah), she found that the first difficulty grappled by the students was lack of vocabulary. The second difficulty faced by students was they did not know how to firstly start writing as they did not know how to generate their ideas. The third difficulty perceived by the students in EFL students was writing sorts of English texts namely analytical exposition since they did not know how to organize ideas into a good paragraph and present them with cogent arguments. Moreover, the English teacher, teaching English in the class, where the first researcher conducted her internship, she found that the students who are in the class still had low performance in writing competence because there were still many students who could not achieve the maximum adequacy grade (KKM) as decided by the school, by 78.

From distinct difficulties of writing faced by the students, it acknowledges that there is a discrepancy between the reality and the expectation in terms of being competent to write cogent arguments in writing; while English curriculum expects them to be able to write a variant of English texts. In relation to this, based on the School Based Curriculum (KTSP 2006) the purpose of teaching writing Indonesia EFL/ESL context is how the students are capable of writing distinct simple English texts such as spoof, narrative, analytical exposition, and so forth in the context of students' daily life.

In fact, in order to cope with varied problems of writing English, In terms of this, McGriff (2000, p. 9) said mind maps is an excellent way to help learners organize knowledge. It presents convincing arguments in writing analytical text exposition as well. Al Naqbi (2011) proved that the study was focused on how the students planned their ideas and organized them into a good paragraph. Furthermore, Purnomo (2014) proved that there was a significant enhancement on students' writing competence after the researcher implemented mind mapping technique in his teaching writing class. The other study conducted by Nurjanah (2012) revealed that mind mapping technique helped her students in organizing and composing writing.

Grounded from the above theories, incongruity of analysis and previous research findings, therefore in this study, the researchers are interested to carry out the use of mind mapping technique in improving students' writing skill at Senior High School of Labschool in Banda Aceh). The authors further formulated the hypotheses of this research as follows:

- Alternative Hypothesis (Ha): The use of mind mapping can improve the ability of students of Labschool Unsyiah in writing analytical exposition text.
- Null Hypothesis (H0): The use of mind mapping cannot improve the ability of students of Labschool Unsyiah in writing analytical exposition text.
Research Problem

From the explanation above, the researchers formulate the problem of study as follows: “Can the use of mind mapping technique improve the ability of students of Lab School Unsyiah in writing analytical exposition text?”

Based on the research question above, this study aims at examining whether the use of mind mapping technique can improve students’ ability of Labschool Unsyiah in writing analytical exposition text.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Teaching Writing in EFL/ESL Context

As one of productive skills in teaching English, teaching writing for EFL/ESL students is immensely essential. In terms of this, Rao (2007, p. 51, cited by Ahmed, 2010, p. 212) stated that teaching writing in EFL/ESL context encourage students to think, organize and develop their ideas in target language. Moreover, Leki and Carson (1997, p.64, cited by Hinkel, 2004, p.5) emphasized that teaching writing in ESL context provides students with linguistic skills.

The Purpose of Teaching Writing in Indonesian EFL Context

As stipulated on School Based Curriculum (KTSP, 2006), the intention of teaching writing skill in the context of teaching English in Indonesia is the students are expected to be able to write a simple short essay such as, narrative, spoof, and analytical exposition in the context of daily life. It means that teaching writing in Indonesia intents to how the students could write and produce various different kinds of English text types. Pertaining to the text type, analytical exposition is one of text taught to EFL learners in Indonesian.

Analytical Exposition Text

According to Grace and Sudarwati (2006, p. 15) an analytical exposition is a genre of spoken or written text intended to persuade the listener or reader about a discussed case. In order to make a stronger persuasion, the speaker or writers provides fervent arguments. Besides, Grace and Sudarwati (2006, p. 116) explain that generic structure of analytical exposition text consists of three parts, namely thesis, argument, and reiteration.

Mind Mapping

Mind mapping was popularized by an author and consultant, Tony Buzan. According to Tony Buzan (2005, p.12) mind map is a really great system of access and retrieval of data for a giant library which people can get the information in and out of brain. Thus, that mind map eases people to organize and group the point that people want to write. He also said that mind map is a visual diagram used to record and organize information in a way which the brain finds captivating and easy to process. While, according to Alamsyah (2009, p.34, cited in Riswanto & Putra P.P, 2012 :12, p. 60) mind mapping is a beneficial technique which assists students to learn more effectively, change the way students record knowledge and enhance creative problem solving. Meanwhile, McGriff (2007, cited by Al Naqbi, 2008, p. 12)
argued mind mapping is a powerful tool to help students to overcome problems with the organization of their ideas and thoughts.

Furthermore, Young (2008, p. 10) asserted mind mapping is an alternative strategy to write a formal outline, it forms of brainstorming that allows people to get ideas down in a quick and spontaneous way. In contrast, Budd said that (2004, cited by Al-Jarf, 2009, p. 1) mind map is a graphic organizer in which the major categories radiate from a central image and lesser categories are portrayed as branches of larger branches. In addition, mapping is a technique giving instructors the freedom to express ideas and show interrelationship between concepts and content in a very visual and nonlinear structure that benefits the students (Ruffini, 2008, cited in Al-Jarf, 2009, p. 1).

METHODOLOGY

Research Method

The research design used in this study is experimental study with quantitative approach. In relation to the design type of experimental study, this research used pre-experimental study of one group pretest + posttest design type without control group design.

Population and Sample

The population of research in this study was the second grade students of SMA Labschool Banda Aceh which consist of six classrooms. While the sample of this study was XI3 class which consists 22 students in this class. It was selected by using purposive sampling. In relation to sample selection, they were two considerations why this class was chosen as the sample of this study, (1) from the result of interview that the researchers conducted with the English teacher who teaches in this class; she said that the students' writing ability in this class was still low; (2) Based on the interview that researchers carried out with the students; they said that they still faced the difficulties in writing English text. From the above two considerations, the researchers chose the XI3 class as the sample of this study.

Research Instrument

Concerning to the content validity of the test, the learning materials and the sample of the test in this study were taken from students' text book, entitled “Look Ahead 2” written by Sudarwati and Grace (2005).

Technique of Data Collection

According to Ary, Jacobs, Razavieh and Sorensen (2006, p. 327) this design involves three steps namely (1) administering a pretest measuring the dependent variable, (2) applying the experimental treatment X to the subjects, and (3) administering the posttest measuring the dependent variable. The treatments are made in order to find out the effect of the given treatment by comparing the pretest and posttest scores. Figure 1 shows the design of this study (Selinger & Shohamy, 1989, p. 139).
Pretest  Experiment Treatment  Posttest
O1 →  X →  O2

Figure 1. Experimental study with quantitative approach.

Technique of Data Analysis

To analyze the data regarding the result of students' ability in writing analytical exposition text, the researchers assessed them by using some criteria proposed by Brown (2004, p.244). According to Brown (ibid) there are five criteria in assessing students' writing, (1) organization, (2) content, (3) grammar, (4) vocabulary, and (5) mechanics. Each criterion is given 20 as the maximum score and 1 as the minimum score. Therefore, if a student gets 20 for each criterion, so the total score that he/she will get is 100.

After the results of students' writing were assessed, then the researchers classified them based on the score that they obtained from the result of pretest and posttest. The following table is the classification of students' ability in writing that is divided into five categories as proposed by Masidjo (1995, p.180).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Score</th>
<th>Value</th>
<th>Category</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>90-100</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>Excellent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>80-89</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>Very good</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>65-79</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>Good</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>55-64</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>Enough</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>0-54</td>
<td>E</td>
<td>Bad</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1. Classification of students’ ability in writing.

RESEARCH RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The results of students' posttest and pretest scores are as in Figure 1 and Figure 2, which the X axis represents the students' score range; whereas, the Y axis represents the number of students' frequency who gets the score among that score range. The mean scores of pretest is 26.9 and posttest is 53.8.
The use of Mind Mapping Technique in improving students’ writing skill by Anna Hasanah, Bustami Usman & Hendra Heriansyah

After assessing and calculating the result of students' writing, it was found that the highest score of pretest achieved by the students in this study was 60 and the lowest score that they obtained on pretest was 10. Meanwhile, 81 was the highest score, while, 35 was the lowest score that the students attained from the result of posttest.

The Mean Score of Each Writing Aspect

Regarding the mean score for each writing aspect from the result of pretest and posttest can be seen on the Table 2 and Table 3 in this below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 2. The mean score of each writing aspect on pretest.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aspects of Writing Score</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vocabulary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grammar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mechanics</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 3. The mean score of each writing aspect on posttest.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aspects of Writing Score</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organization</td>
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<tr>
<td>Vocabulary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grammar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mechanics</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Having presented the data related to the result of students’ pretest and posttest score and the mean score of each aspect writing on both pretest and posttest in the form of graphic and table, the following table will be presented the classification of students’ writing ability based on the score that the students obtained by means of the result of both pretest and posttest as proposed by Masidjo (1995, p.180).
The Classification of Students' Writing Ability

From Table 4, it can be obviously seen there is the difference of score between before and after treatment given. It can be seen the result of pretest for students shows that from 22 students, 21 students are grouped into bad category (0-54 score), only 1 student included into enough category.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No</th>
<th>Score</th>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Pretest</th>
<th>Posttest</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>90-100</td>
<td>Excellent</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>80-89</td>
<td>Very good</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>65-79</td>
<td>Good</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>55-64</td>
<td>Enough</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>0-54</td>
<td>Bad</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Meanwhile, the result of posttest reveals that 1 student is classified into very good category, 2 students classified into good category and 6 students classified into enough categories, yet there are 13 students classified into bad category.

DISCUSSION

From the result of data shows that the highest score on pretest in this study is 60 and the lowest score is 10, while, the mean score of students' writing ability on this test is 26.9. It means that the ability of students' writing skill is still low before the experimental treatments implemented to students.

However, having implemented the experimental treatments through the use of mind mapping technique, there is a significant increase on students' ability in writing analytical exposition text. Based on the result of data reveal that the highest score on posttest is 81 and the lowest score is 35, meanwhile, the mean score of students' writing ability on this test is 53.8. It can be concluded that there is a significant improvement on students' writing ability after the experimental treatments made.

Regarding the classification of students' writing ability as proposed by Masidjo (1995), on the pretest students' ability in writing can be grouped into bad category before the experimental treatments given students. Nevertheless, after the mind mapping technique implemented the classification of bad categories decreased from 21 to 13.

Furthermore, the use of mind mapping technique in teaching writing skill has increased student’s ability in organizing their ideas. It can be seen on the table 1 and table 2 in which organization is one of writing aspects that its mean score increases. It shows that the implementation of mind mapping has helped students in organizing their ideas in writing analytical exposition text.

CONCLUSION

After assessing of the result of students' writings and calculating them in the form of score by using some statistical formula, the researchers concludes that the use of mind mapping technique can improve students’ ability of Lab School Unsyiah in writing analytical exposition text as stated on research objective of this study. It is
shown with the mean score of posttest is higher than the mean score of pretest by 53.8>26.9. In addition, it indicates that the experimental treatment has given the positive effect in improving students' writing ability particularly in writing analytical exposition text. This matter agrees with the research design of this study that has mentioned if the posttest score is higher than pretest score, it means that the influence of the given treatments has contributed positively towards the improvement of students' learning outcome.

REFERENCES

