

# Using Mind Mapping Technique for Pre-Writing Activity to Improve the Eighth Grade Students' Participation and Recount Text Writing Achievement at MTs Al-Ihsan Tembelang Jombang

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**Abstract:** This research was intended to improve students' participation and their writing recount text achievement by using mind mapping as the technique for pre-writing activity. The design of this research was classroom action research. The research area, MTs Al-Ihsan Tembelang Jombang and its subjects, the eighth grade students were chosen by using purposive method. The data were collected by observation, writing achievement test, interview, and documentation. The research result showed that 69 % or 25 from 36 students were categorized as active in the first meeting, and 32 or 89% from 36 students were active in the second meeting. In addition, the result of writing test was that there were 28 students or 78% who passed the standard score, and the mean score was 77. This means that using mind mapping as the technique for pre-writing activity could improve the eighth grade students' participation and their writing recount text.

**Keywords:** Mind Mapping Technique, Writing Achievement

As one of the language skills other than listening, speaking, and reading, writing is often considered difficult by most students at junior high schools although the objective of teaching English at the schools is to enable students to communicate in both the spoken and written form of English (Depdiknas: 2006). Nurgiyantoro (2001:296) says that writing is more difficult than the other three skills to be learned even for the L1 (the first language) students. Writing is not as simple as transferring someone's idea into a piece of paper, it needs a process to construct a good composition of writing. Langan (2008:14) states that writing is a process of discovery involving a series of steps, and those steps are not that easy. The process of writing is often like a series of forward and backward steps. The writer should

think first what to write. Then, the writer transfers what is in his/her mind into readable text. However, that is not the end. The writer also should revise the text. It is possible while writing a final draft, the writer find a brilliant idea that far from the previous writing. Langan (2008:25) says that there are three kinds of writing process, they are pre-writing, drafting, and revising and editing.

The result of preliminary study by interviewing the English teacher and observing the classroom activity of writing in VIII C at MTs Al-Ihsan Tembelang Jombang showed that most of the students often got confused in starting their writing because they experienced difficulties in developing ideas. The English teacher also said that almost half of the students did not actively participate in writing classes. Meanwhile, the result of the classroom observation in the preliminary study showed that the teacher never used other teaching techniques or even media. In writing activity, the teacher firstly guided the students' knowledge about the generic structure and the language features of the text. Then, he provided the example of the text in the written form based on the text genre. After that, he asked the students to identify the generic structure of the text. Lastly, he asked the students to compose their writing based on the text genre individually.

The above result of preliminary study suggests that the main problem faced by the VIII C students at the school was their difficulty in developing their idea to start writing. Such a problem can be solved if the process of developing idea and organizing idea is conducted in the pre-writing activity. On this point, Harmer (2004:4) says that before constructing a good composition of writing, an experienced writer firstly plans and decides the idea which is going to write. That is why the pre-writing activity is a crucial step for the writer since pre-writing activity becomes a bridge to start developing ideas and visualize what is inside the brain.

There are some strategies in pre-writing activity (Ogawa: 2015) which can help the writer to attack the blank page syndrome with imaginative thought, analysis, and experimentation. Those strategies are free-writing, brainstorming, clustering, and gathering information (Brandon and Brandon, 2011:33). In this case, clustering strategy also known as mind mapping and diagramming (Langan, 2008:30) can be used to help students in the pre-writing activity. Besides, mind mapping is a radiant thinking or what Swadarma (2003:3) notes as the way of thinking based on the brain activity that is connected each other. .

Buzan (2005b:179), the founder of mind mapping technique says that mind mapping technique is an excellent tool to help writing a well-structured and focussed essay. It is according to Buzan (2005a:4) the best way of coming up with new ideas and planning projects. Therefore, in this research mind mapping technique was chosen to improve the eighth grade students' writing achievement.

Mind map has a very common structure that is the topic in the center, some branches spreading from the center, and some sub-branches spread from the branches. Moreover, all those branches are connected with curved line. Buzan (2005b:9) states that the combination of colors, pictures and curved branches are more visually stimulating than conventional note-taking method, therefore suggests that images and colors should be used. Further, Buzan (2005a:5) asserts that the human brain thinks in colors and pictures. He explains that when someone says the word "house", it might be represented by a picture of house in colors coming up into the mind instead of the word "house" itself on a piece of paper. This means that mind mapping technique is a natural and easy way to bring back human's memory and visualize it into a piece of paper.

Some previous research findings, such as Forsiana's (2013) in her experimental research proved that there was a significant effect on the eleventh grade students' writing achievement at SMAN 1 Glenmore in 2012/2013 academic year. This is supported by the result of Fajri's (2012) classroom action research at SMAN Boyolali that using mind mapping technique improved the students' writing skill. Similarly, Galih's (2013) research findings at SMA Negeri 1 Susukan Kab. Semarang showed that using mind mapping technique improved the tenth grade students' writing ability.

The above research findings empirically suggest that mind the mapping technique can be used to solve students' problems in writing. Therefore, a further research on using the mind mapping technique for the pre-writing activity to improve the eighth grade students' participation and their recount text writing achievement at MTs Al-Ihsan Tembelang Jombang was conducted.

### **Research Method**

The research design was classroom action research since it was intended to improve the students' participation and their achievement in the recount text writing using the mind mapping technique for pre-writing activity. This is in line with what Fraenkel and Wallen (2006:567) state that the action research is conducted for the purpose of solving some kind of day-to-day problem or obtaining information in order to inform local practice. This research was done collaboratively with the English teacher.

The activities of this research started with the preliminary study to know the students' problem and to gain the document of students' previous score. They included the planning of the action, the implementation of the action, classroom

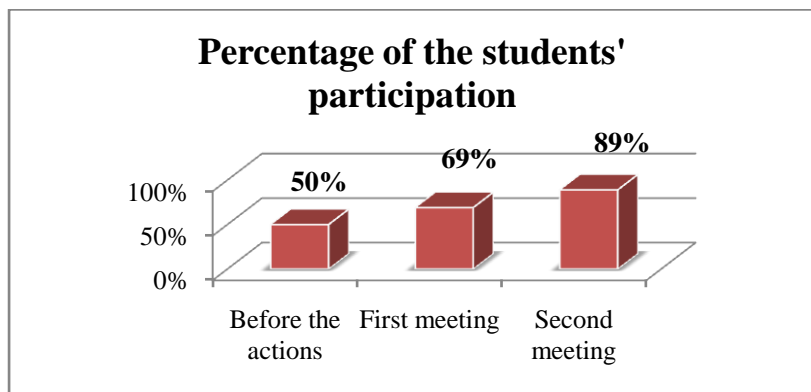
observation, and the evaluation and reflection of the action. The area determination method of this research was purposive method. MTs Al-Ihsan Tembelang Jombang was chosen purposively as the research area because the English teacher of the VIII C grade never applied mind mapping in teaching writing. In addition, as informed in the preliminary study that the VIII C grade students still experienced difficulty in the writing skill.

The classroom action research was done collaboratively in two meetings of the same cycle, and the data were collected by observation, test, interview and documentation. The interview was done at the preliminary study before the research was conducted. The data obtained by both observation checklists and writing achievement test were analyzed by using the following criteria; 1) the result of observation had to show at least 75% of students fulfill three or more indicators stated in the observation checklist, 2) the mean score of the students' writing achievement had to be  $\geq 72$ , 3) 75% of the students who achieved the minimum requirement standard score,  $\geq 72$ .

### **Research Results**

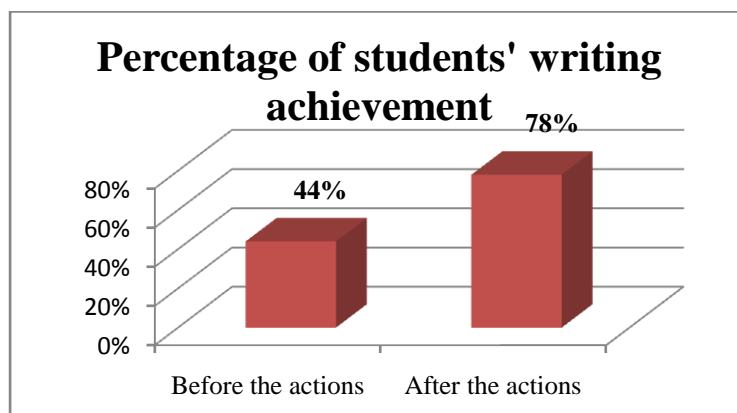
The classroom research action was implemented in one cycle at MTs Al-Ihsan Tembelang Jombang. The actions consisted of three meetings; the first meeting was on April 15<sup>th</sup> 2015, and the second was on April 22<sup>nd</sup> 2015. Meanwhile, it was ended by writing test that was administered on Saturday, April 25<sup>th</sup> 2015. The action of this research was conducted collaboratively with the English teacher. In Meeting 1, the researcher became the teacher and the English teacher observed the student's participation. In Meeting 2, the English teacher was the doer of the action and the researcher observed the students' activity.

The result of classroom observation in the first meeting showed that there were 25 from 36 students who were categorized as active and 11 from 36 students who were categorized as passive. The percentage of total students who actively participated in the teaching and learning process improved from 50% before the action to 69%. In Meeting 2, there were 32 of 36 students who were active in the teaching and learning process and 4 of 36 students were passive in the teaching and learning process of writing. Thus, the percentage of the total students who were categorized as active was 89%. This means that the students' participation in Cycle 1 was successful because the target percentage (75%) required in this research was fulfilled. Therefore, the students' participation in the teaching and learning process of the recount text writing by using mind mapping as the technique for pre-writing activity achieved the target. The following chart is the improvement of the percentage of students' participation:



Further, there were 36 students who joined the writing achievement test, and the result showed that there were 28 or 78% of 36 students who got the score 72 or higher. While, there were 8 students or 22% got less than 72 in that writing test. The average of students' score of the recount text writing also achieved the success criteria (77). This means that the use of mind mapping as the technique for pre-writing activity could improve the VIII C grade students' participation and their

writing recount text achievement. The improvement of students' writing test result is presented in the following chart:



## Discussion

The implementation of the action in this research was teaching writing skill by using mind mapping. The actions were conducted by applying the lesson plans that had been made and consulted to the English teacher. Both in the first and the second meeting, the students were asked to organize and develop their idea by creating mind map based on the topic given as their pre-writing activity. The English teacher and the researcher observed their activity during creating mind map. After that, the students were asked to write some sentences based on their mind map. At the end, they were asked to rewrite the sentences into recount text consists of three paragraphs.

During the implementation of the action, the students mostly followed what the researcher and the English teacher asked. Most of them were very enthusiastic in creating mind map in the pre-writing activity. They also cooperated well with their partner when the teacher asked to do the task with their partner. That condition

proved that mind mapping can motivate students to be more fun and active in teaching and learning process as Hofland's (2007:5) statements that by using mind mapping technique, the students used their both parts of brain. It means that besides used their rational and logical thinking, they also used their creative thinking. In addition, that creative thinking can enhance motivation.

Not only can motivate the students' participation in writing recount text, mind mapping as the technique for pre-writing activity also can improve their writing recount text achievement. The students' products of writing after the actions given were better in some aspects of writing. Based on the result of scoring in every aspect of writing, it showed that there was a good progress especially dealing with content and organization. However, there were also the weaknesses of using mind mapping as the technique for pre-writing activity of recount text. Using mind mapping technique is time consuming at the beginning. The researcher and the English teacher had to explain how to create mind map of recount text because it was the first experience for the students. In addition, the students also must have a broad knowledge especially in vocabulary. As the result, the students should bring the dictionary to help them translating the word they do not know in order not to spend more time if they asked to the teacher continuously.

## **Conclusion**

Based on the result of data analysis and discussion, it can be seen that using mind mapping as the technique for pre-writing activity could improve the eighth grade students' participation and their recount text writing at MTs Al-Ihsan Tembelang Jombang in the 2014/2015 academic year.



Due to the fact that mind mapping as the technique for pre-writing activity can improve the VIII C grade students' participation and their recount text writing achievement, it is suggested to the English teacher to use mind mapping technique for pre-writing activity in teaching writing not only for recount text, but also the other genre of text. Besides that, it is also suggested to the English teacher to try teaching some other English skills and components by using mind mapping technique.

The students of VIII C grade at MTs Al-Ihsan are suggested to practice mind mapping technique for pre-writing activity either in English or Bahasa Indonesia. Mind mapping technique also can be practiced to the other subject even for daily life, because by using mind mapping technique, the students can visualize their thinking into a piece of paper easily.

The result of this research can be a source or information for the future researcher who wants to conduct a research deals with the use of mind mapping as the technique for pre-writing activity by using different research design. In addition, for those who want to conduct a classroom action research by using mind mapping technique in writing skill, it is suggested to conduct the action in two cycles to make more sure that the result of the research is consistent.

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