



IMPROVING STUDENTS' MOTIVATION IN WRITING DESCRIPTIVE TEXTS BY USING THE MIND MAPPING TECHNIQUE

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Abstract

This study investigated the Mind Mapping Technique in relation to students' motivation in writing descriptive texts. The problem statements are formulated as follows: (1) what are the problems faced by the students in the process of writing descriptive texts? (2) How is the improvement of the students' motivation in writing descriptive texts through the Mind Mapping Technique? (3) To what extent does the teaching learning process by using the Mind Mapping Technique contribute to the improvement of students' skill in writing descriptive texts? The objectives of this study are: (1) To find out the problems faced by the students in the process of writing descriptive texts, (2) To investigate the improvement of the students' motivation in writing descriptive texts through the Mind Mapping Technique in each cycle, (3) To describe the improvement of students' skill in writing descriptive texts after participating in the teaching learning process by using the Mind Mapping Technique. The design of this research was Classroom Action Research. This research ran the four steps: Planning the action, implementing, observing, and reflecting the action. The results of the study concluded that, the implementation of the Mind Mapping Technique in the teaching of writing descriptive text could develop the ability and improve the motivation.

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INTRODUCTION

Nowadays, motivation to study has become the issue for the lectures, especially at college level. According to Winkel (1989: 99), teacher has to try to develop to the students' motivation to study. One common question is that English teachers often ask themselves, "How do we motivate students to learn English?" Students' motivation has continually become a major concern for them, because students' motivation is critical for the effectiveness of English teaching and learning.

Wide spread of English these days influencing people in many countries requires students to learn English at school because it is the most common language used to conduct business. It is estimated that there are 300 million native speakers and 300 million people who use English as a second language and a further 100 million people use it as a foreign language. It is the language of science, aviation, computing, diplomacy, and tourism. It is listed as the official or co-official language of over 45 countries and spoken extensively in other countries where it has no official status. English also plays a part in the cultural, political or economic life. Half of all business deals are conducted in English. Two third of all scientific papers are written in English. Over 70% of all mails are written and addressed in English.

Here in Indonesia, English is one of compulsory subjects for students from secondary to undergraduate school level. Moreover nowadays many schools provide English as their language instruction, such as in international schools, pilot project schools or immersion schools. In some schools they use bilingual language (Indonesian and English) in doing their learning process. It means that people here realize that English is very important. It gets more attention than others foreign languages such as Arabic, Mandarin, Japanese or Dutch. Therefore they have to introduce English as early as they can, in order to prepare being a global people.

As has been mentioned in the background of the study, writing is one of productive skills that should be learned by students. It makes students active and practical. As the result of writing, students are able to arrange the sentence, make paragraph and create composition. Oshima (1997:2) claims that writing is a progressive activity. It means that when you first write something down you have already thinking about what you are going to say and how you are going to say it. In writing activity students not only think about how to express an idea but also organize them into a conventional graphic system with words, sentences and good structures for successful communication.

The students have learned kinds of texts, such as recount, procedure, narrative and descriptive texts. In this stage, they should be able to use their idea and write down into a good paragraph. So, when they have to write in descriptive text, they should not have many difficulties. Based on the writer's observation by conducting preliminary study during teaching and learning writing at the fourth semester students of Language Development Center (PPB) IAIN Syekh Nurjati Cirebon, the writer found that many students had difficulty in writing descriptive paragraphs. The students' difficulties came from the weaknesses of students' ability in generating ideas; therefore they did not have ideas what to write first. Then, the students had difficulties in making the writing relevant with the topic. They also had difficulties in organizing and write down their ideas into paragraphs. Furthermore, the students tend to be bored and low participation in writing class because the process of teaching and learning activities was monotonous. So, to make the students can produce good descriptive paragraphs, there should be an effort to make writing class more interesting.

Those problems of descriptive writing are important for the writers and teachers to solve because it can appear the difficulties for the students to continue the next writing materials. Based on the statement above it is known that

to improve students' ability in writing, there should be a suitable technique, it not only how to write well but how to develop students mind in organizing ideas.

The writer summarizes several problems, such as "What are the problems faced by the students in the process of writing descriptive texts, How is the improvement of the students' motivation in writing descriptive texts through the Mind Mapping Technique, To what extent does the teaching learning process by using the Mind Mapping Technique contribute to the improvement of students' skill in writing descriptive texts".

The objectives of the study are to find out the problems faced by the students in the process of writing descriptive texts, to investigate the improvement of the students' motivation in writing descriptive texts through the Mind Mapping Technique in each cycle, to describe the improvement of students' skill in writing descriptive texts after participating in the teaching learning process by using the Mind Mapping Technique.

According to Buzan (2000:1), Mind Mapping is a powerful graphic technique which provides a universal key to unlock the potential of brain. Mind Mapping Technique imitates the thinking process. According to explanation above, the writer assume that students need appropriate method as prewriting activity to make students easier in organize their idea. The technique that the writer used in this research is Mind Mapping for writing descriptive texts. It

the word means 'the same level', the same point of view, and the other same things. Since it is a Classroom Action Research, only one class was used. This research was pedagogically significant for language education especially on how to employ as a source of learning and how to conduct Mind Mapping Technique to enhance students' motivation in writing.

METHOD

The writer used Classroom Action Research (CAR) method. Here, the writer conducted some elements of the concept of CAR, design of CAR, and the reasons, and why the writer used classroom action research in the study. CAR (Classroom Action Research is a method of finding out what works best in a class in order to improve student learning. CAR is more systematic and uses database rather than personal reflection, but is more informal and personal than formal research. Furthermore, he states that some steps in the Classroom Action Research includes: (1) asking a question or identify a problem; (2) reviewing the literature; (3) planning a research strategy; (4) gathering data; (5) making sense of data; (6) making decisions about teaching strategies; and (7) sharing finding.

In addition, design of Classroom Action Research presented by Kemmis and Taggart (1988) in Hopkins (1993: 48) has five steps: (1) planning; (2) action; (3) observing; (4) reflecting; (5) revising of planning.

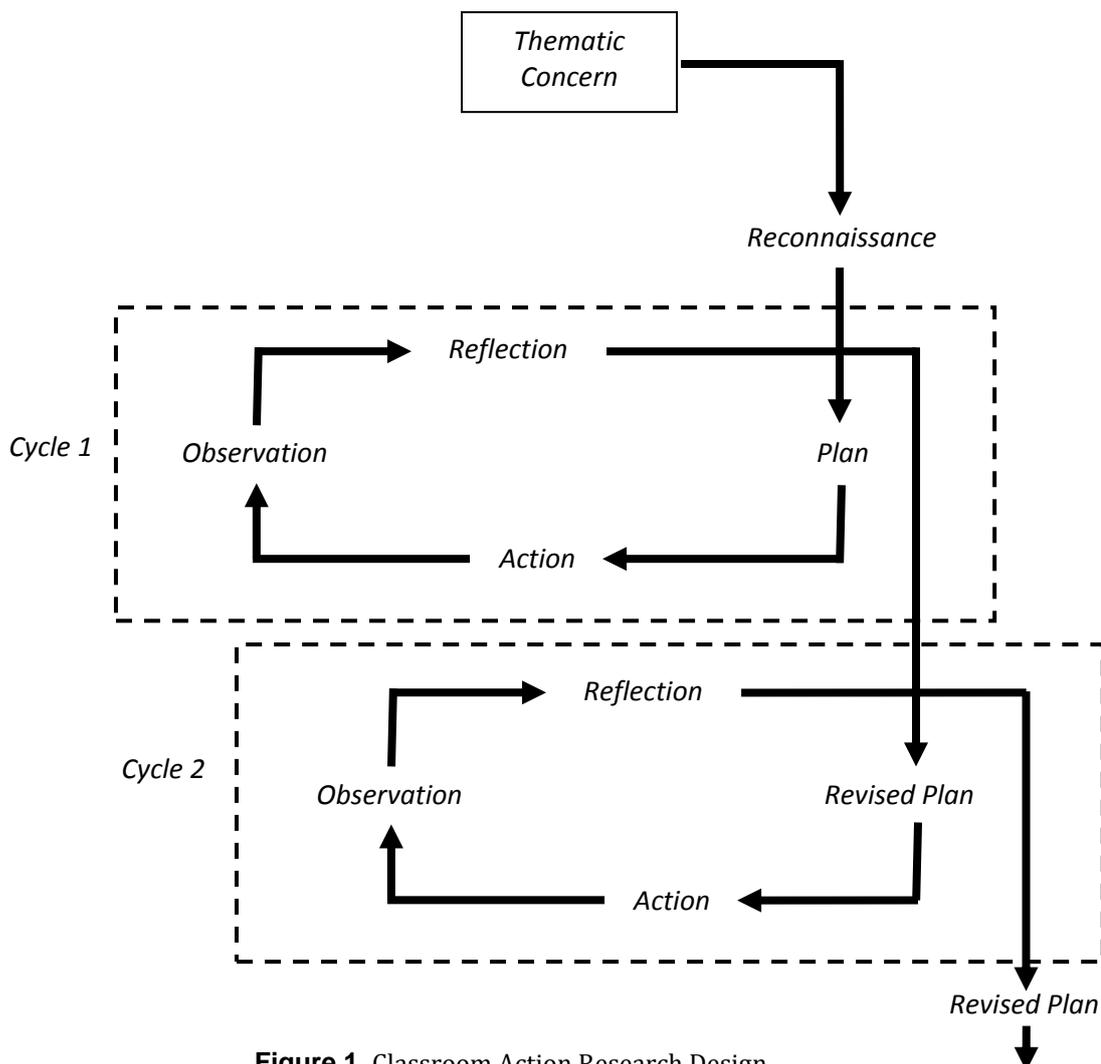


Figure 1. Classroom Action Research Design

Here the writer conducted three cycles in the research: the first cycle covered two meetings to solve the problems in the preliminary research. The second cycle covered two meetings to solve the problem which is recommended from the first cycle. The third cycle covered two meetings to solve the problem which is recommended from the second cycle.

There are some reasons why the writer uses the Classroom Action Research in this study. The writer uses this method because he tried to find the solution of the problems finding preliminary research significantly. He wanted to

change the practice in teaching learning in the classroom, as long as the writer taught in Language Development Center (PPB) IAIN Syekh Nurjati Cirebon. English lecture has never used the Mind Mapping Technique as a technique in teaching English. Here, the writer considered the solutions when it was applied might not be going as planned, but he tried to do it effectively, so the solution might give a better and more functional solution.

The subjects of the study were the fourth semester students of the Development Language Center (PPB) IAIN Syekh Nurjati Cirebon in the academic year 2013/2014. The

class had 35 students. It was chosen because they had high scored in the lessons, but had low motivation to study English especially in text writing. The fourth semester students of the Development Language Center (PPB) IAIN Syekh Nurjati where the writer taught English. The Mind Mapping Technique was class where the writer taught English. The Mind Mapping Technique was implemented the fourth semester students of Development Language Center (PPB) IAIN Syekh Nurjati. According to the preliminary research, the students of Language Development Center (PPB) IAIN Syekh Nurjati were classified as average, and high achievers. In this case the writer chooses the fourth semester students in Language Development Center (PPB) IAIN Syekh Nurjati Cirebon due the problem covered in that class, namely the writing problem.

The writer assumed that they got many difficulties in writing such as generating idea, arranging a sentence, lack of vocabulary, knowing coherence, and organizing the sentences. Beside that they lacked self confidence in writing text. Due to many problems it was why the writer conducted that classroom action research in order to solve the problems. The writer here is as a lecturer and an observer. In addition, in conducting this study, a collaborator helped the writer to do this research.

The writer identified the problems as follows:

1. Learning Problems: The learning problems of the students were writing. There were some indications which showed the poor ability in

writing. Firstly, they had difficulties in writing description texts which were shown in the average score of their test in preliminary research in the amount of 68.75. Secondly, they had difficulties in finding the topics or ideas. Thirdly, they had problems in recalling vocabulary items. Finally there were frequent capitalization, punctuations, and grammatical errors.

2. Class management problem: The students had problems of motivation. They were not active and creative in classroom during the learning process. In writing session, they became passive and were lost of interest. Some students even gave up and did not try to solve their tasks. They often had not finished their homework on time.

In the study, the writer used written product of the process of writing to measure the students' motivation in promoting their writing capability. The writer administered a pretest and posttest to find out the students' writing capability before and after teaching writing using the Mind Mapping Technique. Its aim was to know whether the students' writing capability improved or not.

The writer applied the analytic method in which components of writing were scored separately based on the scoring purpose of compositions such as ideas or contents, organizations, grammar, and mechanics as indicator of the scoring rubric of writing descriptive texts of the analytic method, which covered four levels for each item. The target of the writer was that the students achieved the fourth level as the indicator of success.

Table 1. Rubric for descriptive Evaluation

Component of Writing	Score	Indicator
Content	4	The content is relevant to the topic and easy to understand
	3	The content is almost relevant to the topic and easy to understand
	2	The content is relevant to the topic but it is not easy to understand
	1	The content is irrelevant to the topic and incomprehensible
Organization	4	Most of the ideas are logically ordered
	3	Some ideas are logically ordered
	2	Few ideas are logically ordered
	1	The ideas are unrelated each other
Grammar	4	Almost all grammatical accuracy
	3	Numerous grammatical accuracy
	2	Some grammatical accuracy
	1	A few grammatical accuracy
Mechanics	4	Almost all of spellings, punctuation, and capitalization are correct
	3	There are some mistakes in spelling, punctuation, and capitalization
	2	Mistakes in spelling, punctuation, and capitalization and sometimes interfere with understanding
	1	Mistakes in spelling, punctuation, and capitalization and severely interfere with understanding

Adapted from J. B Heaton, (1990: 111) with some modification

FINDINGS

The first part focuses on the findings of three cycles. The findings are about the students' ability in writing descriptive texts when the implementation of Mind Mapping Technique, Students' activities in writing Class, and the students' motivation in joining the writing activities by using Mind Mapping Technique. The second part contains discussions of the findings in three cycles. The discussions of the finding in each cycle were presented after the findings were described elaborately.

The situation in the classroom during the teaching learning process before the use of Mind Mapping Technique in writing descriptive text was boring. It happened in the intensive English one. Students had low motivation; they did not have any positive attitude, feeling or

even their thought. Almost all students looked confused with what they had to study. Particularly when they had to construct a descriptive text, they had to work hard since they only had some pictures or diagrams to be developed although lecturers had explained how to construct descriptive text from pre-activities, whilst-activities, and post-activities.

The implementation of Mind Mapping Technique in the teaching of writing paragraphs could develop the ability and improve the motivation of the first year students of IAIN *Syekh Nurjati* Cirebon in writing descriptive texts, the application of the procedures of Mind Mapping Technique in the teaching of writing paragraphs was able to encourage the students to be more active, the use of the technique made the students enjoy writing activities. Based on the finding in this study, the result of the students' motivation from the pre-cycle to cycle 1 increased 9.42%, from cycle 1 to cycle 2

increased 5.68%, and from cycle 2 to cycle 3 increased 10.58%. It means that the implementation of the Mind Mapping Technique could improve the students' motivation.

The implementation of Mind Mapping Technique could develop the students' writing ability and improve their motivation. The development of the students' motivation in writing paragraphs from cycle I to cycle III achieved a good progress. In the first cycle, the improvement of the students' motivation in writing paragraphs achieved a little progress compared to their motivation before Mind Mapping Technique was implemented. In the cycle, each student was able to answer the diagram Mind Mapping given. They were able to arrange their answers into understandable sentences and to arrange their sentence into a paragraph. However, the paragraphs they made contained some mistakes in grammar, mechanic, and vocabulary. Each student made at least five mistakes in grammar, mechanics, and vocabulary. In the second cycle, the motivation of the students had achieved a good progress. Although the paragraphs they made in this cycle still contained some mistakes in grammar, mechanics, and vocabulary. In the third cycle, the students already made many improvements in writing paragraphs. It means that the students were able to reach a very good progress in writing through Mind Mapping Technique.

The application of the procedures of Mind Mapping Technique in the teaching of writing paragraphs encouraged the students to be more active, especially the students which had low motivation. Based on the findings, their motivation has shown a significant result. The Mind Mapping Technique is one of the methods which can improve highly students's motivation in writing descriptive texts. The students were active in doing all the writing activities from pre-writing activities to the post-writing activities. In other words, the students did all procedures of the Mind Mapping Technique in the writing class. Based on the finding of this study, the result of the students' writing from

the pre-cycle to cycle 1 increased 2.96% from cycle 1 to cycle 2 increased 3.95%, and from cycle 2 to cycle 3 increased 5.26%, it means that from the initial condition to the third cycle had the significant results.

CONCLUSION

The use of Mind Mapping Technique was able to make the students enjoy the writing activities. The students felt happy when joined the writing activities because the technique gave much contribution towards the improvement of the students' motivation. Besides that, the implementation of the technique was interesting and helped the students' in expressing their ideas, thoughts, and feelings on paper.

The students could use Mind Mapping in learning descriptive writing. They could organize their idea and arrange it into a paragraph. Moreover, it could improve students' interaction, knowledge, and the most important thing is Mind Mapping can increase students' descriptive writing ability.

The application of the procedures of Mind Mapping Technique in the teaching of writing paragraphs was able to encourage the students to be more active, especially the students which have low motivation. According to the finding, their motivation has shown significant result.

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