

TEACHING WRITING DESCRIPTIVE TEXT BY USING MIND MAP

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Abstract

This paper aims at describing teaching writing descriptive text by using mind map. The teacher should try to use attractive method to attract the students' interest to write actively. One of the method that can be used by the teacher in teaching learning process, especially in writing process is mind map. Writing is a complex ability because it has to express ideas grammatically arranged by combining multiple components of the language itself. Writing requires the rules of English grammar and mechanics such as the use of verbs properly and pronouns, as well as commas and other marks of punctuation. By using mind map in writing process, the students can easily express their ideas, thoughts, and feelings. There are many texts that students learn, one of the them is descriptive text. In this way, the students are expected to be able to learn and practice writing the descriptive text based on the mind map given by their teacher. This activity is better done in group. Before the class activity, teacher divides the students into several groups or asks them to choose their own group, they can be divided into 5 to 6 groups that consists of 6 to 7 persons every group. After that, the teacher asks the students to write or describe mind map (image, diagram etc) that the teacher had show in piece of paper. The mind map activity above helps the students to write. The teacher should select technique or method to make the students interest in teaching and learning process, because it is very important especially in English learning.

Keywords: *Teaching Writing, Descriptive Text, Mind Map*

Introduction

English, an international language, has developed rapidly. It is a subject that features regularly on study timetables all around the world. Every country does not want to be isolated in international communication, so it puts English in curriculum of their education at program. There are four language skills that should

be mastered by language learner. They are listening, speaking, reading, and writing. These skills are relating each others and cannot be separated.

Writing is one of four basic skills such as listening, speaking, reading and it is very important in teaching and learning process. Writing involves some language components such as spelling, grammar, vocabulary and punctuation. Writing is a

skill which is used to communicate indirectly, without face to face interaction. Writing is also a tool of communication to express thinking or feeling.

According to Angelo (1980 : 4), writing can help to think critically. Writing enables us to perceive relationship, to deepen perception, to solve problem and to give further experiences. It means the purposes of writing are to make relationship with other, to solve problem in written form such as send a letter for someone. The last, through writing, someone can express his experiences in a paper or in written form.

Homstad and Thorson (1996 : 15) also say that poor grammar and inadequate vocabulary are the most serious writing problems of second language students. Most of the students have lack of knowledge related to grammar and vocabulary as the parts of the language component.

Based on the explanation above, the teacher should try to use attractive method to attract the students' interest to write actively. One of the methods is using mind map. There are many texts that students learn, one of the text is descriptive text. In this way, the students are expected to be able to learn and practice writing the descriptive text based on the mind map given by their teacher. Because of that, the

writer intended to use mind map to improve students' writing ability and to increase students' motivation.

The Concept of Writing

Writing is an essential form of communication. It is used to communicate indirectly. Writing is an instrument of both communication and self-expression (Pincas, 1982). On the other hand, Hughey (1983) adds that through writing we express our feelings, our hopes, dreams, and joys as well as our fears, angers, and frustration.

According to Pincas (1982), good writing depends on a set of specific writing skill. It does not follow automatically from good grammar and adequate vocabulary. In addition, writing is one of the skills that improve students' language and also stimulates the student's ability in learning English.

According to Laure et al, writing is process by which we make meaning of our experiences. Writing is a process of expressing ideas or thought in words. Byrne (1979 : 1) said that, writing is not just production of the graphic symbols but the symbols have to arrange in a particular order and linked together in certain ways. It means writing is not only a symbol on a piece of paper but it should be arranged

into good sentences or paragraphs with some grammatical rules.

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In addition, Lado in Brown (2001 : 155) explains that when the writer wants to communicate something through his or her written work, he must: 1) have something to say on the same topic; 2) have a point of view and focus; 3) follow accepted conventions of format, and; 4) be effective.

There are many purposes of writing and the following are those stated by Reinking and Hart (1996) :

- a. To express the writer's feeling.
- b. To entertain the readers.
- c. To inform the readers.
- d. To persuade the readers.

Writing is composed of several components that are greatly important to have a good writing. Harris (1979) says that there are five major components of writing namely:

1. Content, the substance of writing or the ideas expressed.
2. Form, the organization of the content.
3. Grammar, the employment of grammatical forms and syntactic patterns.
4. Style, the choice of structure and lexical items to give a particular tone or flavor to the writing.
5. Mechanics, the use of the graphic conventions of the language.

In addition, Heaton (1989) suggests the components of writing as follows:

1. Language use, that is the ability to write correct and appropriate sentences.
2. Mechanical skills, that is the ability to use correctly those conventions peculiar to the written language such as punctuation and spelling.
3. Treatment of content, that is the ability to think creatively and develop thought, excluding irrelevant information.
4. Stylistic skills, that is the ability to manipulate sentences and paragraph, and use the language effectively.
5. Judgment skills, that is the ability to write in an appropriate manner for a particular audience in mind , together with an ability to select, organize and order relevant information.

Descriptive text

Descriptive text is a text which says what a person or a thing is like. A text that describes the features of someone, something, or a certain place. Its purpose is to describe and reveal a particular person, place, or thing.

Generic Structure of Descriptive Text

Descriptive text has generic structure, there are two generic structures of descriptive text as below:

- Identification : identifying the phenomenon to be described or mention the special participant.
- Description : describing the phenomenon in parts, qualities, or characteristics.

Language Feature of Descriptive Text

- The use of adjectives and compound adjectives.

Adjectives are words that describe or modify another person or thing in the sentence. Adjectives are words that describe nouns or pronouns. They may come before the word they describe (That is a cute puppy) or they may follow the word they describe (That puppy is cute).

e.g. : 1. A five hundred seated football stadium.

2. A beautiful ancient Roman opera house.

- The use of linking verbs /relating verbs.

Verbs that describe or rename the subject are called linking verbs. A linking verb implies a state of being or condition for the subject, not an action. It links the subject to an equivalent word in the sentence.

e.g. : 1. The temple *is* so magnificent.

2. The temple *consists of* five terraces.

- The use of Simple Present Tense.

The simple present tense is used to describe an action that is regular, true or normal (everyday).

e.g. : 1. The museum *houses* hundreds of Greek Statues.

2. The hotel *provides* 450 rooms and a large swimming pool.

- The use of degree of comparison

e.g. : 1. The weather in Jakarta is *hotter than* Bandung .

2. Bogor has *the same* weather as Ungaran.

- The use of attributive has and have

Mind Map

Mind map is a new and effective way of organising one's thoughts. It is often used in business, to record notes at a meeting, to plan a project, or to prepare for a presentation. A Mind Map is a highly effective way of getting information in and out of your brain. It is a creative and logical

means of note taking and note making that literally "maps out" your ideas.

Mind mapping is a way of linking key concepts using images, lines and links. A central concept is linked via lines to other concepts which in turn are linked with other associated ideas. Mind mapping is a great way to brainstorm, make a plan, or turn ideas into the steps needed to make it real. It is similar as a technique to concept mapping and spider diagrams, the difference being that true mind mapping involves constructing a hierarchy of ideas instead of pure random association

Mime is relatively easily to learn to the level of requirement for classroom use. It costs nothing, always available and can be performed by the teachers and students (Long and Castanas, 1980 : 33). They also pointed out the use of mime into two uses: to communicate the meaning and to provide a situation for presentation and practice.

Furthermore, Buzan (2005 : 1) states that a mind map is a powerful graphic technique which provides a universal key to unlock the potential of the brain. It means that it gives people the freedom to roam the infinite expanses of their brain. Therefore, the mind map can be applied to every aspects of life where improved learning and clearer thinking will enhance human performance.

The kind of the stories used for the activity should generally be quite simple (Lauer, 1981 : 19). And Palmberg (1986 : 73) states that mime is ideal for the classroom because it is completely participatory activity.

In addition, Steele (2005 : 1) states that a mind map is, or spider-gram, is strategy for making notes an a topic, prior to writing. It means that it is a sturctured strategy, which shows the (hierarchical) relationship of ideas, as opposed to an unstructured strategy, such as brainstorming: in which students produce notes at random on paper.

Buzan (2005 : 1) states that there are several procedures of how to apply mind map. They are as follows:

1. Turn a large A4 (11.7" x 8.3") or preferably A3 (16.7" x 11.7"), white sheet of paper on its side (landscape), or use a Mind Map.
2. Gather a selection of colored pens, ranging from fine nib to medium and highlighters.
3. Select the topic, problem or subject to be Mind Mapped.
4. Gather any materials or research or additional information.
5. Start in the center with an unframed image-approximately 6cm high and wide for an A4 and 10cm for an A3.

6. Use dimension, expression and at least three colors in the central image in order to attract attention and aid memory.
7. Make the branches closest to the center thicker, attached to the image and 'navy' (organic). Place the Basic Ordering Ideas (BOIs) or the chapter 'heading' equivalents on the branches.
8. Branch thinner lines off the end of the appropriate BOIs to hold supporting data (most important closest).
9. Use images wherever possible.
10. The image or word should always sit on a line of the same length.
11. Use colors as your own special code to show people, topics, themes or dates and to make the Mind Map more beautiful.
12. Capture all ideas (your own or others'), then edit, re-organize, make more beautiful, elaborate or clarify as a second stage of thinking.

The steps involved in creating a mind map may be summarized as follows:

- **Step 1**– Determine your central image or concept.
- **Step 2**– Create the basic structure for organizing your ideas: these are the main branches and are known as the Basic Organizing Ideas (BOIs), and are represented by branches radiating outwards from the main concept.

- **Step 3**– Put down keywords associated with the BOIs, which should sit on smaller branches connected to the main branch.

- **Step 4**– Revisit your mind map, putting things in order, and numbering the branches. If necessary, revise it on another piece of paper.

The five essential characteristics of Mind Mapping:

1. The main idea, subject or focus is crystallized in a central image.
2. The main themes *radiate* from the central image as 'branches'.
3. The branches comprise a key image or key word drawn or printed on its associated line.
4. Topics of lesser importance are represented as 'twigs' of the relevant branch.
5. The branches form a connected nodal structure.

Advantages of Mind Map

There are many advantages of mind map in teaching writing. They are as follows:

1. They help people to focus on key words and concepts which often become hidden in linear notes.
2. They will help people to store related facts together.

3. They will help people to be aware of hierarchies.
4. Mind maps can help in decision making because they allow people to look at all the complex and inter-related information people need to consider.
5. They help people to recognize and plan their objectives for a meeting, presentation or project, etc.
6. They encourage creative thinking.
7. They can be created by both individuals and groups.
8. They can help in problem solving because they encourage people to think of all possible aspects of a problem and various potential solution.

B. Procedures of Teaching Writing Descriptive Text by Using Mind Map

Preparation

There are many things that teacher has to do in teaching writing descriptive text by using mind map. They are as follows:

- a. Selecting the teaching material.

There are three kinds of descriptive text such as description of place, person and things. It is very important for the teacher to select the material that will be used or taught for the students. The selected material will

help the teacher to achieve the teaching learning goal.

- b. Learning the material

The teacher has to read and comprehend the material before using them in teaching writing. The teacher should understand the material, more over the teacher know how to teach the material to the students.

- c. Preparing the teaching material

To make the teaching learning process easy, it is better for the teacher to use their teaching material such as mind map, and the teacher should prepare or show diagram of mind map. Mind map can make the students interesting in teaching learning process.

Pre- Teaching Activities

The purpose of pre-teaching is to help the students focus their mind on the topic by narrowing down the things that the students expect to write and activate relevant prior knowledge that is already known. The processes in pre-teaching activity as follows:

- Before the lesson start, the teacher persuade the students to pray According to their belief.
- The teacher checks students' attendance and prepare the students according to physical and

psychological point of view to follow the lesson.

- Introduce the topic, where the teacher announces the topic to the students by writing it on the board.
- Brainstorming.
- The teacher asks the students to think ideas that might be related to the topic. In this step, the teacher asks her students some questions to take students' background knowledge, which is related to the topic.

Whilst- Teaching Activities

The whilst teaching activity helps the students find their ways through the writing and build upon the expectation raised by pre-teaching activities. In this case, mind map activity has to be designed to become interesting and fun in order that the students are motivated and get pleasure to write. The controlling of the teacher is needed in order the students do not get the difficulties in writing. This stage is composed of several steps as follows:

- a. The teacher asks the students to imagine or describe about someone or something and asks them to write on white board. After that, the teacher asks some questions to students about their writing.
- b. Then, the teacher shows mind map (image, diagram, or graphic) and the

teacher asks some question about that for the student.

- c. Students look at the image, diagram or graphic and answer the question based on the material that the teacher shows then asks the students to write on white board.
- d. The teacher explores the student's knowledge about material that they discuss and the student pay attention and listen to their teacher.
- e. Then, the teacher shows an example of descriptive text based on map that had show and asks for students to read and find generic structure and language feature it.
- f. After all of the students understand about material that discuss by teacher, the teacher gives exercises and shows other example of mind map(image, diagram, graphic,etc) then asks the student to write or describe someone or something through map had the teacher shows in piece of paper.
- g. The teacher asks the students to do it in group. This case is easy the student to do it.
- h. The teacher gives twenty minutes for students to do their task and asks one of remember every their group to write in front of the class.
- i. The teacher gives a point to the students' performance if the word, grammar,

spelling, vocabulary and punctuation are correct.

- j. The teacher and student gives respons for group that had presented in their task.

The mind map activity above helps the students to write. Since it makes the students think that writing is not as hard as they think. In writing activity, the students of the other groups are asked to write down the story through mind map in their groups. Not only groups take notes in their own paper, but also every student of each group has to take notes in their own paper. This aim is the students will not only be passive one, but can participate in this writing activity.

Post- Teaching Activities

Post teaching is intended to review the material they have got in whilst teaching. So, in this activity the teacher can test students by giving some questions, which measures the students' ability to tell the topic that they have learned. In post-teaching activities, it can be followed the next steps:

1. The teacher gives opportunities for the students to ask question if they still cannot understand
2. The teacher reviews again about the lesson for the students.

3. The teacher leads the students to conclude the lesson

Evaluation is something important to do because by evaluating students' work, the teacher knows how far the students understood about the topic given. Before evaluating the students' work, the teacher may give exercise. And the students can finish their work through mind map method related on the topic given. For example, the teacher asks the students to mention a story or describe a person. While the activity is going on, the teacher evaluates the students' explanation about the topic. And also, the teacher should give reward to the students for their effort. It is very important because it can motivate the students to learn English as a foreign language.

C. Conclusions

There are four language skills that should be mastered by language learner. They are listening, speaking, reading, and writing. These skills are relating each others and cannot be separated.

Writing is one of four basic skills, it is very important in teaching and learning process. Writing involves some language components such as spelling, grammar, vocabulary and punctuation. Writing is a skill which is used to communicate indirectly, without face to face interaction.

Writing is a process of expressing ideas, feeling or thought in words.

In this case, to make writing process easy, the teacher can use a technique or method that can make the student's interest in learning process. There are many methods that can be used, one of them is mind map. Mind map is a new and effective way of organizing one's thoughts or a highly effective way of getting information in and out of your brain. It is a creative and logical means of note taking and note making that literally "maps out" your ideas. By using mind map as teaching method, the teacher can ask the students to describe someone based on the mind map or method that has been give by teacher.

There are several suggestions for the teacher to use mind map as a method for teaching writing descriptive text. First, the teacher should select technique or method to make the students interest in teaching and learning process. Second, the teacher should try to show the mind map or other method for all students in teaching writing. Third, the teacher should determine the methods are appropriate in relation to the student needs. Fourth, The teacher should be able to measure the students' background knowledge and experiences with optimum.

Acknowledgment

Alhamdulillah *rabbi' alamin*, in the name of Allah is the most gracious and the most merciful. Who has given her the healthy and all of things in accomplishing this paper. Writing this paper aims at fulfilling one of the requirements to finish her study for strata one degree at English Department, The Faculty of Teacher Training and Education, Bung Hatta University. And do not forget to say *Shalawat and salam* to the most honorable prophet Muhammad SAW, messengers, and his followers.

Having finished this paper, so the writer would like to express her sincere gratitude and great thanks to her advisor, Dra. Ernati, M.Pd, who gave her time in guiding and supporting her in writing this paper and also as her chairperson of English Department.

The writer would like to express her sincere gratitude and great thanks to the Dean (Dr. MarsisM, Pd) of The Faculty of Teacher Training and Education, Bung Hatta University and Drs. Khairui HarhaM, Sc as Vice Dean. Then her gratitude is addressed to her lectures that had taught her during study at FKIP Bung Hatta.

Then, her special gratitude is expressed to her beloved parents (my father "HusenDani" and my mother "Nelita"), my brothers and sister (Nando, Akbar, Legi),

all of her friends in English education section who have helps, supports, and inspirations that have encouraged her to have good spirit in studying and in accomplishing this paper.

Finally, the writer honestly admits that the paper is not perfect. Thus, the suggestions, constructive critics, and meaningful advices from the readers are highly appreciated for improvement of this paper. And at least, the writer hopes this paper will be useful for readers. However, any mistakes and errors that might be found in this paper remain of the writer.

The writer hopes Allah SWT always bless all of the goodness and sacrifice that have been given to the writer.

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