

Improving writing recount texts through semantic mapping

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Abstract

The research was conducted with the aim of to applying semantic mapping to improve students' ability in writing recount texts of the second grade of SMPN 1 Metro Lampung. This was a classroom action research which was conducted in two cycles. Each cycle consisted four stages: planning, acting, observing, and reflecting. The research subjects were 25 students-nine boy students and sixteen girl students. The data were collected through observations, tests, and questionnaires. The research instruments consisted of observation sheet, tests, and questionnaires. The data from the observations and the learning achievement tests were analyzed using the quantitative technique. The success indicator in this study is that the students' writing skill improves if, in terms of the learning mastery in the writing skill, of the students scored at least 80. This research shows that the use of semantic mapping improves the students' writing ability in grade VIII.1 students of SMPN 1 Metro Lampung. The improvement is seen from the results of observation and students' writing tests. The observation result shows that the students' activeness in cycle I is middle and the students' activeness in cycle II is high. Based on the results of students' writing scores, the mean score of the pretest is 64.08, the mean score of the first cycle is 80.48, and the mean score in cycle 2 is 88.60. From those results, it can be concluded that semantic mapping strategy can improve the students' writing in the recount texts.

Keywords: writing, recount texts, semantic mapping

INTRODUCTION

Language learning is divided into four skill areas i.e. listening, speaking, reading and writing. All the four skills are of great importance in the world of applied linguistics. We use listening and speaking in oral communication, reading and writing in written communication. One who transmits a message uses the spoken or written form in order to communicate his ideas. The receiver of the message utilizes the listening or reading skills to decipher the message. Hence, we can classify these four skills in two categories for better identification and understanding: (1) speaking and writing are active or productive skills, (b) reading and listening are passive or receptive skills.

All the four skills are well integrated and can never exist in isolation. In order to achieve spoken or written fluency, all four skills should be given an equal importance. However, writing skills should be given particular consideration because it is a highly complex activity and regarded as the most difficult language skill to acquire. Moreover, the development of communicative competence in writing is a slow and arduous process. For almost everyone, competent writing comes from plain hard work – from determination, sweat, and head-on battle (Langan, 2001, p.13)

Through writing people can take some benefits. In a simple context writing can function as a written tool which represents a certain message from a writer to a reader. Whereas in a wide context, people use writing for expressing their ideas, thoughts, opinions through written communication, and receive new information. Writing covers many parts of our daily lives, including politics, law, education, business, religion, art, and entertainment. In short, delivering messages to the readers or audience without meeting directly, writing comes to be the best solution to replace.

Writing, for students, is a necessity that serves as one predictor of academic success. As an important tool, students use writing not only to exchange information, but also to refine knowledge as a primary means of demonstrating knowledge. Students can also use as a

learning tool for reflection, discovery, and analysis. To put the story short, writing can also be used as a pedagogical indicator for success in education.

According to the 2006 KTSP for junior high school, the year eight students are expected to have a discourse competence; an ability to write and comprehend spoken and written texts. There are two texts that they have to learn in semester one; recount and descriptive texts. In a stated hierarchy of the four language skills, writing is usually learnt at the last turn after listening, speaking and reading.

Referring to the writing rationale above, however, most of the students in SMPN 1 Metro have terrible difficulty in writing. The students get difficulty in finding ideas, organizing, combining and constructing their ideas to produce the sentence correctly. Most of the students have lack of vocabulary especially in choosing words and arranging the words into good sentences. They feel writing in English is difficult. As soon as they come to the writing activity their mind go blank, they do not know what to write and how to express their ideas. In short, producing a meaningful paragraph is their crucial writing problem to overcome soon.

Connecting with those issues of the teaching writing recount texts, Urawan (2013) conducted an action research showing that the students were afraid of making any mistakes and worried about their ability in producing and arranging words into the correct sentences. Another researcher is Novita (2012) informing that the students found hard to find the ideas and arrange those ideas into a readable paragraph. Their limited stock of vocabulary was their next problem. They often opened the dictionary when they completed their writing task.

When searching for the causes, there are several factors influencing the writing problems. Among others are teachers, method used, classroom management, writing materials, writing assessment and many others.

Teachers, furthermore, often failed to allow fluencing students sufficient time for the writing processes, particularly during the important pre-writing stage when students interacted with their teacher and peers to generate ideas and determine their topic, purpose, audience, and organizational scheme. This stage of the writing process also provides opportunities for building vocabulary.

The traditional manner of teaching is quite dull and never changing and varying. Lack of variety in the lessons discourages the students involvement. No conscious attempt is made by the teacher to cheer up the class, neither by generating tasks nor by preparing visuals or other teaching aids. The teaching method for every aspect of a text is the same lecture or grammar translation method without taking into account the manner of teaching and the fact that whether it is a piece of poetry, prose, drama, novel, essay or a short story. The teacher does not attempt to create an interest by now and then questions.

The researcher also noticed that teaching methods were common in teaching and learning writing process in SMPN 1 Metro. Teachers historically provided students with particular topics and asked them to write the content. From his own experiences, teachers focused on spotting the mistakes or errors the students made and asked for corrections, because they believed that was the best way to improve students writing skills.

Based on the conditions of the students' problems in writing mentioned above, there was an indication that the teaching and learning processes were completely dominated by the teacher. The students were rarely told to be actively involved in a language classroom activity. They played as objects of the learning process but not the agents of the learning process. When these conditions were neglected over and over and not searched for the solutions, the learning English specifically learning writing recount texts was not effective and efficient so that this would affect the students' achievement and the expected competence could not be achieved. That's why, the researcher decided to take a classroom action research to overcome those writing problems above.

It is generally believed that writing in a foreign language is a very difficult and a very slower process than learning other language skills. The main reason for this is that the writer is away from the readers in terms of time and space, and so has to work out effective communication with his readers only in his imagination. This requires a big chunk of physical and mental energy on the part of the writer. How the writing skills can be improved? This is the problem and a vital question. There are several techniques and strategies to do this.

These may be pictures, reading authentic texts, using other language skills, practical writing, control writing, organization of ideas, Radio and TV programmes, and semantic mapping.

There are various ways, means and techniques involved in teaching writing. Semantic mapping is one of those but is very interesting, absorbing and motivating. The research in this time chose it as the most effective way for improving writing ability. Besides being as a prewriting technique by drawing a diagram of words using lines, boxes, arrows, circles, words, and phrases to show how new words and ideas are related to the topic, semantic mapping is an extremely engaging way of building up vocabulary knowledge as well as provoking students into retrieving and using what they know. (Harmer (2007, p.236)

Moreover, not only does semantic mapping show facts, but also show the overall structure of a subject and the relative importance of individual parts of it. It helps students to associate ideas, think creatively, and make connections that might not otherwise make (Buzan, 2010, p.80). It can also develop students' creative writing skills and help remove writer's block. With the hope of improving the researcher's teaching practice and enhancing students' writing skills, an action research was undertaken.

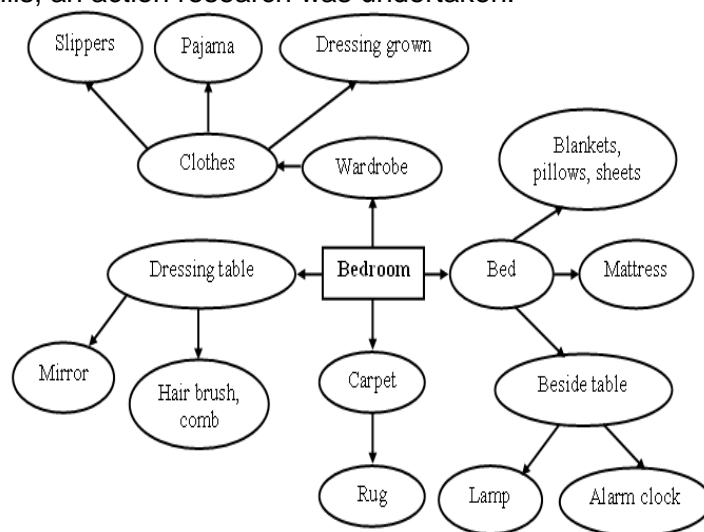


Figure 1. An Example of Semantic Mapping

Referring to some problems found in teaching and learning process, the researcher and the collaborator discussed on the problems to determine which problems should be the focus and what solution would be found. The discussion finally came into a careful conclusion that the researcher and the collaborator would like to delimit the research problem. So, in this research, the researcher focused on improving: (1) the process quality of learning writing recount texts, and (2) the students' competence or ability in writing recount texts.

When talking the objectives of the research, the researcher based them on the focus of the research. The research is aimed at: (1) improving the process quality of learning writing recount texts using semantic mapping at grade VIII.1 students of SMPN 1 Metro, and (2) improving the students' ability in writing recount texts using semantic mapping at grade VIII.1 students of SMPN 1 Metro Lampung.

The procedures of semantic mapping technique are as follows: firstly, write a key word or topic related to classroom work on a sheet of paper, the blackboard, or a transparent slide. Secondly, encourage the students to think of as many words as they can that are related to the selected key word or topic. Thirdly, guide the students to list the words by categories. Then, have students label the categories. After that, discuss the relationships between these words. (Johnson and Pearson, 1984, p.48)

On the basis of the background of the study stated, the research problems were formulated as follows: "can the use of semantic mapping technique improve writing ability of recount texts of eight grade students at SMPN 1 Metro Lampung?, and how can semantic mapping improve the students' ability in writing recount texts ?". based on those research

questions, the aim of this study was aimed at improving the students' writing ability in recount texts at their eight grade students of SMPN 1 Metro.

Weigle (2002, p.4) looks at the writing ability from several perspectives. She views it as a social and cultural phenomenon and as a cognitive activity. All fill the purposes of communicating and bringing messages across. Writers spend a lot of time planning and editing their work for both organization and content, as well as taking the audience into consideration.

Writing is goal directed—we do not write without a purpose. However, writing is also exploratory, as we do not always know exactly what it is that we want to say. (White in Saxenian, 1998, p.30). Everything written carries a purpose and aim in it. Even exploration itself is a purpose. There are so many other purposes for which people write. It may be entertainment, information, persuasion, education or simply exploration of one's own mind and heart.

Writing is an integral skill of successful second language learning. McDonough and Shaw (2004, p.152) defined writing as a vehicle for language practice and further added that it attempts to communicate with the writer's ideas and thought. Students have to go through a structured process of writing. In classroom, writing activities can be done in-group or individually.

Langan (2009, p.86) states that the process of teaching writing consists of four basic stages. They are prewriting, writing the first draft, drafting, revising, and editing and proof reading. For each stage, various learning activities that can support the learning of specific writing skills are suggested.

Pre-writing

Pre-writing, or planning out what is going to be written, is an essential step in the writing process and should account for 70 percent of the writing time (Murray, 1982, p.78). There are five techniques to develop a topic and get words on paper; (a) free writing, (b) questioning, (c) making a list, (d) clustering, and (e) preparing a scratch outline. In line with Langan, Urquhart states that "the importance of prewriting often is underestimated, but its function in the writing process is vital" (Urquhart, 2005, p.78).

Drafting

It is where formal writing begins. Using your prewriting materials as your guide, you start to write. At this point, you don't worry too much about mechanics (spelling, punctuation, *etc.*), style, or organization. It is a kind of activity of "getting their ideas down on the page in a relatively coherent way. Drafting represents the challenging transition from planning, or prewriting, to formulating the words and putting them on paper" (Urquhart & McIver, 2005, p.16).

Revising

The focus of this step is to improve the quality of the message. Students are taught to examine their writing critically and use a variety of strategies to revise their writing effectively. In contrast to the previous writing stages, prewriting, outlining, and drafting, revising means that you write a paragraph or paper, building upon what has already been done in order to make it stronger. (Langan, 2009, p.27. Revising is also the most difficult stage in the writing process, so be patient with yourself. Students will also consider the style of their writing, including sentence structure, paragraphing, and vocabulary, and ensure that they have made the best word choices for their topic and audience.

Editing and proofreading

The next process of writing is editing and proofreading. At this point, the writer focuses formally on mechanical correctness. This is the point in the process when copy editing occurs. Grammar, usage, punctuation, spelling, and minor changes in wording are the only work the paper should need at this point. To proofreading means to read the text carefully to find and correct errors or to make changes so that the writing sounds better. All good writers

proofread their work one or two times before submitting it. Some mistakes are difficult to catch, but a sentence without a verb is easy to spot, for example.

Hyland (2003, p.29) defines the term recount as a kind of genre whose aim is to retell events for the purpose of informing or entertaining. Events usually are arranged in a temporal sequence. Recount are mostly found in personal letters or oral and written histories, insurance claims and excursion "write-up." The generic structure of recount covers three parts (Hyland, 2003, p.135). They are: orientation: providing the setting and producing participants. It provides information about 'who', 'where', and 'when'. It, particularly, provides the information about the situation of the participants (Johnson, 2008, p.20).

Students should be able to produce a very simple recount paragraph. In simple recounts the orientation stage needs only be a sentence. (Knapp & Watkins, 2005, p.223). Record of events: telling what happened, presenting event in temporal sequence. It is usually recounted in chronological order. Personal comments and/or evaluative remarks, which are interspersed throughout the record of events. Johnson (2008, p. 20) adds that this part tells about what happens to these participants. Re-orientation: this part is an optional stage which brings the listener/reader back into the present. It is 'round off' the sequence of events.

Writing assessment

Assessment is perhaps one of most difficult and important parts of our jobs as teachers. Ideally, it should be seen as a means to help us guide students on their road to learning. No single procedure can meet the needs of all learners and situations. In this research, the researcher used a test to measure achievement and proficiency in language learning. The students were asked to write a recount text. It was then scored based on Jacobs et al. (1981, as cited in Weigle, 2002). In Jacobs et al. scale each paper was rated on five aspects of writing: content, organization, vocabulary, language use, and mechanics. The five aspects have different weights according to their emphasis: Content (30 points), language use (25 points), organization and vocabulary weighted equally (20 points) and mechanics receiving very little emphasis (5 points).

Table 1. Scoring Manual for writing

Score intervals	Qualification
90,0 - 99,9	Very good
80,0 - 89,9	Good
70,0 - 70,9	Fair
60,0 - 69,9	Poor
Below 50,0	Very poor

METHOD

The type of this research is a classroom action research. This research is designed as a classroom action research since it aims at improving a certain condition by involving all participants where the research is done in planning, implementing, evaluating, and making reflection of the actions that are implemented. In this research, some actions were implemented to improve writing ability. According to Burns (2010, p.2) the central idea of the *action* part of action research is to intervene in a deliberate way in the problematic situation in order to bring about changes and, even better, improvements in practice.

According to Kemmis and McTaggart (1988) in Burns (2010, p.7), action research typically involves four broad phases in a cycle of research. The first cycle may become a continuing, or *iterative*, spiral of cycles which recur until the action researcher has achieved a satisfactory outcome and feels it is time to stop.

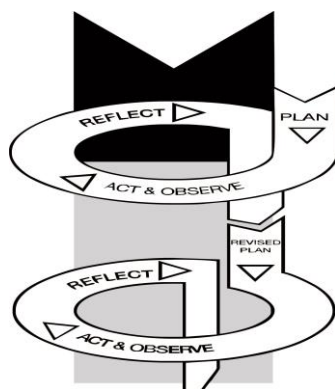


Figure 2. Kemmis and McTaggart Cyclical Action Research Model Research Time

This action research was held in the first semester in the academic year of 2013/2014 from October to December 2013. It was started by doing a preliminary study to obtain the clear description with its problems. Then, the action research was conducted and the report making was completed.

The subjects of the research were the students of grade VIII of SMP Negeri 1 Metro Lampung. This grade consisted of twenty five students-nine boy students and sixteen girl students. The writing ability of this grade students was the lowest among others. Most of the students of grade VIII.1 had less motivation and showed less interested in learning writing. Despite having joined the additional course, the students kept showing less enthusiastic in language learning particularly writing. Those were the main reasons which the researcher considered to choose this class as the researched class.

This collaborative classroom research was carried out in several stages. Those stages are as follows:

Stage I: Preliminary Study

It was an early study before implementing the semantic mapping. In this preliminary study, the researcher did a pre-tets whose aim was to see the early condition of the students' writing habit. The result, then, became the basic consideration to plan the action. This preliminary study was also used to know how far the students' writing competence was.

Stage II: The research implementation

This action research was conducted starting at the second week of October 2013. The researcher was assisted by a collaborator. In this study, the researcher became the teacher. It was done for two cycles. Every cycle consisted of four stages mainly planning, acting, observing, and reflecting.

Planning

It is the first step in every activity. The researcher and his collaborator in this step prepare all necessary relating to the smoothness of the action research implementation. The activities done in this stage covered developing the research which was started by making the learning order, making the lesson plan, preparing the observation sheet, the test instrument, and the learning media. The next activities were, then, continued by: (a) discussing with the class teacher about the semantic mapping and its steps; (b) discussing with the teacher about its uses; (c) making the research schedule from the preliminary study up to the report making; (d) making the lesson plan, students worksheets, observation sheets, and the test.

Acting

In this stage, the researcher became the teacher who taught the students during the research conducted whereas his friend was as his collaborator whose main aim was to observe during his teaching. Using observation guide, the collaborator observed on the the

seriousness of the students during the learning process, the enthusiasm of the students in doing the writing tasks, and the students' participation in the group.

Observing

Observing was done by the collaborator by recording what the students and the researcher were doing during the teaching and learning were in progress. The observation covered the strategy the researcher used in his teaching while the students' sides included the students' activeness during the process of learning writing, the students' participation in their work group. All were recorded in the observation guides.

Reflecting

It is an action for analyzing and evaluating toward the results of planning, acting, and observing. They were aimed at knowing which part still needed improving and which one needed repairing for the following cycle. This also aimed at doing some changes and completeness to the data obtained in the previous actions. The result was admitted as the main references in taking the next actions. The actions could be: (1) steps of learning and teaching, (2) obstacles experienced by the students during the process of learning, and (3) the students' writing competence (their product).

The techniques used to collect the data were observation and writing tests. To see more about how those data collecting technique were used, the researcher explained as follows:

The collaborator did this task when the teaching and learning writing were in progress. The aim of conducting observation was to investigate the activities of the researcher's teaching and students' involvement in learning writing recount texts using semantic mapping strategy. The aspects observed included the seriousness of the students during the learning process, the enthusiasm of the students in doing the writing tasks, and the students' participation in the group.

The students took these tasks at the end of every cycle. So, there were three times the students had to take. The first was at the preliminary study, at the end of cycle 1, and at the end of cycle 2. The writing task was aimed at seeing the improvement on students' competence in writing recount texts.

The questionnaire aimed at measuring the students' perceptions towards semantic mapping technique after the research. The questionnaire could help the researcher collect more detailed data on the students' perceptions and interests that could not be noted by the tests. In addition, the questionnaire provided anonymity which helped provide reliable large amounts of responses. Actually, Wilson and McLean (1994, cited in Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2000, p.215) suggested that "the questionnaire is a widely used and useful instrument to collect survey information research".

The research instrument for collecting the data in this research were test and non-tests. The test covered a written test. The students were told to make a recount text containing at least three paragraph; orientation, record of events, and re-orientation. The non-test instrument covered the observation sheets referring to the teacher's activities when teaching and the students' activities in learning writing using semantic mapping. This instrument was then used as the manual for observing the data needed. The sheet contained three aspects of observation; the seriousness during the learning, the participation level in work group, and the students' activeness.

The test was used to measure the students' learning result of writing recount texts using semantic mapping. It was carried out for three times; at the preliminary study (pretest), at the end of every cycle.

Validity instrument is the appropriateness of it should measure through the items used in the instrument. (Yen, 1979, p.95). The content validity was the most appropriate validity in this research. The content validity on the learning aspect focused on the teacher's activities during his teaching, lesson plans, and the writing tests. Whereas the content validity for the aspects of students' activities focused on the three aspects mentioned in the previous part.

The analysis of data used in this research was quantitative descriptive analysis for both observation and students' activities. The data are in numerical forms and calculated based on the right formula, then the results were described and taken into precise conclusion.

The process of data analysis used in this research is based on the Miles and Huberman model (Sugiyono, 2007, pp.337-345), including the three steps of analysis. Those three steps consisted of data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. The further explanation is as follows: (1) data reduction covers the processes of selecting, choosing, simplifying, and categorizing of data obtained in the fields. It was intended for making the data easy in organizing, analyzing, and in conclusion drawing. (2) data display covers collecting information taken from data reducing. The details of learning activities using semantic mapping and the test result are the forms of data display. The displayed data were evaluated and translated to find the decision in the next step. The evaluation can be in the forms of (a) the difference between planning and acting, (b) teacher's perception, the researcher's perception, and the observer's perception about the the researcher's activities during his teaching and the students' activities during their learning writing, (c) the decision for the next actions, and (d) the problems and their solutions; (3) the conclusion drawing covers the actions of translating and evaluating the data display of the research. The last conclusion in this research can be seen from the results in implementing semantic mapping in learning writing recount texts.

The success of this research can be seen from two aspects, the process quality of teaching and the product quality of students' writing. To see more, it will be explained as follows: (1) process quality of teaching is categorized successful when there is an improvement in teacher's teaching. Quantitatively, there at least 80% of the teaching and learning steps using semantic mapping have been met (2) the product quality of students' writing is categorized successful when there is an improvement in learning writing and in producing the good recount text. Quantitatively, the minimum score of their writing get 80. And the number of the students who get that score more than 90% of the total students.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Findings

To get the early writing data, the researcher conducted a preliminary study. It was used mainly to see the students' writing ability. The main source of collecting the data, he carried out a writing test. The student was told to write a recount text based on their own experience. They wrote whatever they experienced. During their writing, they were allowed to open their language learning aids such as dictionaries, alfa links, other electronical media.

In assessing the students' writing product, the researcher assessed using analytical model. The aspects that were assessed in terms of content, organization, language use /grammar, vocabulary, and mechanics. The score distributions were as follows: content (30), organization (20), language use (25), vocabulary (20), and mechanics (5). To see the result of the result, the next part will show it.

Table 2. The Result of the Writing Pretest.

No.	Score intervals	Freq.	%	Qual.
1.	90 - 99,9	1	4%	Very good
2.	80 - 89	8	32%	good
3.	70 - 79,9	1	4%	Fair
4.	60 - 69,9	4	16%	Poor
5.	below 59,9	7	28%	Very poor

As clearly seen from figure 1, the result of the pre-test did not show satisfying result since there were only nine students (36%) who met the minimum passing grade. It is necessary to show that the minimal score is 80. It means that the rest students who got below eighty reached sixteen (more than 60 %). The writing components assessed as previously stated included content, organization, language use, vocabulary and mechanics.

About sixteen students (64%) failed to get the minimum score. To know which writing components the students got failure, the following figure is presented.

Table 3. The Result of Pretest Based on Components of Writing

Writing Compts.	Ideal score	Average Scores.	%
Organization	30	18,16	60,53%
Content	30	13,32	66,60%
Grammar	25	16,2	64,80%
Vocabulary.	20	12,56	62,80%
Mechanics	5	3,84	76,80%

Table 2 shows us that no aspects of writing had met the standard criteria. As previously noted that the minimum criterion was at least 80% while from the data exposed all was below the standard criteria. The focus to discuss did not go to all the areas but was based on the rank. The lowest percentage would be the first teaching focus and the highest would be focused less. Referring to the figure so the hierarchy would be content (58.67%) as the first and biggest concern, then followed by the organization (60.40%), after that vocabulary posted number three with 60.60%. Though between grammar and mechanics were almost the same in percentage but mechanics area was better.

In the first meeting in cycle 1, the researcher planned his teaching activities by preparing the lesson plan, providing electronical media, and providing a student worksheet for the students to learn. Beginning the lesson, the researcher conveyed the learning objectives and facilitated interesting media to give the students' attention and to facilitate the students in achieving the learning objectives.

In acting phase in cycle 1, the students learnt a recount text from the paper the researcher provided. It was taken from one of the topic in their printed book. Students answered the questions followed in a group of three. They also learnt the main concept of the recount text. Those concepts included the social purpose, the generic structure, the lexico grammatical features step by step tasks starting from the easy and simple tasks to the more complex ones.

Besides giving clear concept of the recount texts, the researcher also explained the semantic mapping procedure. The procedure was as follows: the researcher briefly introduced theme or concept, then wrote the target word on the board, a transparency, or chart paper (or display it on a Smart Board or in a Power Point slide. Then he instructed students to identify related words and phrases that stroke them. As students began their own lists, they shared their recorded words with the teacher. As teacher records students' suggestions on the emerging diagram, students record new additions in their own lists.

Research finding of Cycle 1

The Learning Process Quality

In the beginning process (planning), the resercher focused on the problems faced by the students, particularly in the recount text writing. The students' problem of recount text writing here was on the ability to find the ideas to write, which covered the generic structure as orientation, sequence of events and reorientation. Based on this problem, the writer planned a classroom action research with cycle of research using semantic mapping.

After having some identification on the students' problems of the recount text writing, the researcher then designed the lesson plan as the guidance in teaching and learning process. In lesson plan of CAR, the lesson plan was aimed at achieving the objectives of learning. They were the students were e able to construct the ideas to write a recount text and the students were able to write a recount text paragraph based on generic structure.

Furthermore, the researcher also completed the material of teaching aid, he provided the students' worksheet and some charts, which were designed to support the technique used. Besides, the evaluation form that was made was related to the students' aspects of recount text writing where the students were asked to write a recount text based on the

themes/topics given (they could select one). To take the data of research, the writer also used observation checklist.

In the acting stage, the researcher conducted one meeting of cycle 1, which was scheduled on Wednesday, 27 October 2013. From the results of this research, the researcher tried to apply the semantic mapping in helping the students get the ideas of writing. As what happened in the teaching process, the students in the first time seemed hard to understand the way to elaborate the semantic mapping to the writing.

Referring to the result of this research, the researcher concerned to drill the students' understanding in order to develop their recount text writing and it was proved that in the teaching and learning activity, the students were given more practice of writing using semantic mapping.

In observing stage, the researcher roled as a teacher. To complete the data of the observation, the researcher used the observation checklist. In the process of observation, he was assisted by another teacher as his collaborator. As a result of observation in cycle I.

Based on the observation sheet, it shows us that the students seriousness during learning process is classified into middle level since the two aspects are middle. The middle level here means that only a half number of the students participated while the ideal one is more than half number of students were involved in the learning process. The students' enthusiasm was also categorized middle. Most of them did not show any significant progress. The discussion with friends in their group were done by not more than half number of students in the class.

The Students' Writing Product

The use of semantic mapping in cycle 1 started to apply. This was done since the most crucial problem as mentioned in the previous part was being difficult in finding ideas and organizing them into an integrated recount paragraph. To see more details, the result will be shown in the following table.

Table 5. The result of Writing Test in Cycle 1

No.	Score intervals	Freq.	%	Qual.
1.	90 - 99,9	1	4%	Very good
2.	80 - 89	12	48%	good
3.	70 - 79,9	12	48%	Fair
4.	60 - 69,9	0	16%	Poor
5.	> 59,9	0	28%	Very poor

Table 5 shows us that the students who got scores under the minimum standard reached twelve students (48%). Luckily, that the number of students who got the minimum standard got more. It reached 13 students (52%). 60,0 was not found any more (0%). Of the total 25 students, the comparison scores between below the minimum passing grade and above the passing grade is rather small. It means that the next cycle was mainly focused to improve those students who got the below minimum scores without neglecting those who had reached the minimum scores.

Table 6 Difference Writing Scores between Pre test and Cycle 1

No.	Score intervals	Freq. in cycle	Pre. Cyc. 1	Qual.
1.	90 - 99,9	1	1	Very good
2.	80 - 89	8	12	good
3.	70 - 79,9	1	12	Fair
4.	60 - 69,9	2	0	Poor
5.	> 59,9	12	0	Very poor

Table 6 shows us that there is a high decrease number of students who got below passing grade average (PGA). As clearly stated in the figure, it shows that in the pre-test there were sixteen students (64%) getting below the minimum standard score but at the cycle 1 the number decreases into twelve (25%). In addition the improved numbers of

students above KKM is thirteen (52%). It means that there are still twelve students (48%) who were under the KKM.

Findings in cycle 2

The Learning Process Quality

From the observation sheet, it is clearly seen that the seriousness of the students during the learning process was categorized high. It is proved by the increase in the number of the students who participated the learning process. More than twenty three students (92%) gave high attention to the teacher explanation and instruction. They also asked some questions and commented about the questions.

When talking about the enthusiasm of the students in doing the tasks, the data showed that they compelled their writing tasks provided by the teacher was finished seriously and on time. They also used semantic mapping when they generated their ideas for starting their writing recount texts. It was found that the communication between students and the researcher ran well. It means that the second aspect was met.

The Students' Writing Product

The second indicator observed and analyzed was the students' writing product. As mentioned in cycle 1, there were still 12 students (48%) who got under the minimum criteria. The teaching and learning were focused on the application of semantic mapping more understandably. The result of that product can be seen in the following table.

Table 7. The Result of Writing Test in Cycle 2

No.	Score intervals	Freq.	Qual.
1.	90 - 99,9	12	Very good
2.	80 - 89	13	Good
3.	70 - 79,9	-	Fair
4.	60 - 69,9	-	Poor
5.	> 59,9	-	Very poor

From table 7 it is clearly seen that all student meet the minimum score criteria. No one is considered "fail" since as previously stated that the minimum score is 80. Based on the data above, it also means that the action research is stopped.

As we can see here, none of the students failed from the test in cycle 2 since all got above 80. It suggests that the next cycle could have a big chance to stop. The mean score in cycle 2 was 88.60 (88.60%). When analyzed more accurately, the highest rank of aspect of writing was posed by the mechanic with its mean 4.75 of the ideal score 5. It implies that this aspect was paid more attention by the students which covered spelling, punctuation, and other conventions. The same mean scores were obtained from grammar and vocabulary 90%. However, the mean score of grammar was higher than that of the vocabulary. Globally speaking, semantic mapping was an appropriate tool for the students of this school to apply in learning writing, more particularly, in term of pre-writing stage whose aspects inside were generating ideas and organizing ideas.

Table 8. The differences the Writing Score between Pretest, Cycle 1, and Cycle 2

No.	Score intervals	Pre-	Cy. 1	Cy. 2
1.	90 - 99,9	1	1	12
2.	80 - 89	8	12	13
3.	70 - 79,9	1	12	-
4.	60 - 69,9	4	-	-
5.	> 59,9	7	-	-

From table 8 it can be read that all students have got the minimum criteria. The students Moreover, there is a very significant increase in cycle 2 compared with the one in cycle 1. It also indicates that the next cycle might be a big possible to stop. So, cycle 3 is not necessary to conduct anymore.

Discussion

The results indicated that there was an improvement on the students' writing ability using Semantic Mapping Strategy. Referring to the objectives of this research, both the learning quality process and the students' writing products improved. The first learning qualityIt was supported and proved by the fact that the learning process got better. From the three aspects consisting of the students' seriousness during the learning process, the enthusiasm in completing the writing task, and the students' participation among friends and between the researcher were categorized high. The improvement also happened to the students' writing product. The mean of the score in every meeting increased. The mean score at the pre-test was 64,08. And then, the cycle 1 was conducted, the mean of the score was 80.48 and the mean score of the cycle 2 was 88.60. On the other words, it can be summarized that the mean of the cycle 1 was better than that of in the preliminary research, and the mean score in the second cycle was better than the first cycle. In short, applying Semantic Mapping could improve the students' ability in writing recount paragraph.

The students' activities through semantic mapping could improve the students' writing ability at eight grade students of SMPN 1 Metro. The improvement, as obviously stated and expected covered writing aspects of content, organization, vocabulary, language use, and mechanics. In addition, the students' activities through semantic mapping built up the students' motivation and improve the students' participation in teaching learning activities.

When compared to the traditional teaching which heavily depended on the textbook or lks only, students preferred using semantic mapping to brainstorm, generate and organize ideas as measured by the posttest. This means that use of the semantic mapping proved to be a powerful tool for improving students' ability to generate, visualize and organize ideas. It made the topic more tangible. Semantic mapping raised the good and average student performance. Users of the semantic mapping became faster and more efficient in generating and organizing ideas for their paragraphs and were able to generate more detailed ideas .Moreover, the present study revealed positive effects of semantic mapping on students' attitudes towards the semantic mapping prewriting activity.

The other impact of implementing semantic maps was that this strategy could be used as a tool for developing student's vocabulary. Traditionally, teaching and learning vocabulary by using word lists made them bored and tired. Moreover, memorizing vocabulary using word lists hardly made progress in the students' vocabulary learning. In contrast, the semantic mapping used in this study attracted the attention of both the teacher and his students. For the teacher, it was one of the ways to present words logically. It was also a tool to check the students' understanding as it assisted them in summarizing the lessons on maps. For the students, they were provided a new strategy to learn vocabulary which made them feel interested and motivated when working with words.

The semantic mapping activities at the pre-writing stage could afford students the opportunity to pull ideas on the task. However, because of the limited time for collaborative planning, the peer interactions might not have been sufficient to allow students to have joint responsibility for completing the semantic mapping task. Students seemed to spend more time on individually writing their text.

Besides being able to be properly implemented for individually work, semantic mapping activity could be appropriate for a group work. Students could be encouraged to individually develop a concept map first, then shared their semantic maps with group members to construct a group concept map. After constructing individual semantic maps, members of a group might then work together to seek better ways to organize and represent knowledge on the given topic. These types of learning activities might permit students to take more time thinking either in or about the target language. They may also motivate students to critically review others sc maps and engage peers in negotiating meanings of concepts and propositions. The shared concept maps may afford students the opportunities to see a view of the larger conceptual picture of the topic being written about, thus enhancing their L2 skills and confidence in their new knowledge.

Based on the interview with fifteen students about the use of semantic mapping in improving writing ability, it could be concluded that they gave a positive response to the use of semantic mapping. Most of the students responded that semantic mapping helped them in several activities: generating ideas, organizing ideas, adding their vocabularies, arranging random ideas into the ordered ones, recalling the forgotten ideas. It was also shown a clear evidence that semantic word map allowed students to conceptually explore their knowledge of a new word by mapping it with other related words or phrases similar in meaning to the new word. The collection of the new words could also function as the prerequisite for the next stage of writing – drafting. In brief, semantic mapping is a graphic organizer which includes a variety of ways to make graphic displays of information within categories related to a central concept. The strategy helps students to demonstrate prior knowledge and add new information. The semantic maps can show relationships among terms and concepts and help students to develop vocabulary, improve understanding of reading, review material learned and prepare to write.

The findings showed, specifically, that the areas of content, organization, and vocabulary scores of the students who used semantic mapping strategy for their writing were significantly satisfying. The content component mainly was focused on generating valid ideas. This study elicited that the semantic mapping was appropriately used in generating ideas. The semantic mapping strategy in this study may have helped the language learners focus their attention on the topic to choose appropriate ideas for their assigned writing tasks. In addition, on the areas of language use or grammar and mechanics the students got less errors although at the first cycle the global score for grammar ranked the lowest. To put it briefly, semantic mapping may have the potential to have significant impact on quality of writing when used as a learning activity in a prewriting phase of compositions.

The use of semantic mapping which are capable of depicting the real learning strategy promoted the enthusiasm of the students to examine the ideas because they were vivid, simple, easy to do and provide and therefore, more attractive. This in turn helped the students to be productive in generating ideas. It can be seen from the increase in scores that the students were able to improve.

The students were able to write a complete recount paragraph consisting of orientation, records of events, and re-orientation; they were able to express many ideas and write more than they had done before the study was carried out. Their work also showed more vivid descriptions of the topic. The presence of the semantic mapping gave them certain advantages in that, by examining the ideas from which they generated, they were able to obtain more detailed and past information such as the doer/doing, the action happened, the time and the place. The presence of the colour lines also enabled the students to focus their story on just the person they were supposed to describe, jumping to any other parts of the place or retelling other unrelated parts. This means that the presence of semantic mapping was able to enhance their ability to focus and concentrate on the lesson material, in this case the writing assignment.

In the language aspect the improvement can be clearly seen in vocabulary use. The students used more words compared to their work prior to the study or in their regular writing activities. Among others, they used more action verbs, nouns, and adjectives to make their story more alive than before.

The findings show that along with the variety of ideas the students want to express in their writing, they are encouraged to write more and longer sentences even though they may not be grammatically correct. This means that the use of semantic mapping is capable of encouraging students to explore language to express more ideas rising from their imagination, stimulated by the ideas. Their willingness to explore language is a good starting point for gaining further progress in language use in the future.

Limitations

The researcher is perfectly aware that there is an almost endless number of factors that affect students' achievements in writing. These factors could be related to the program,

the methods, the techniques, the s r, the learner, and others such as motivation, anxiety, etc.

Some limitations of this research are as follows: First, Semantic mapping strategy was firstly applied for this research in this school so most students did not know how to apply it well. They still used their writing habit which they directly began with their writing task whenever they were told to write. They assumed that semantic mapping was a time-consuming activity. The semantic strategy should be taught in a more attractive way so that the students are more interested in applying this learning strategy and like writing. Second, This research focused only on the recount texts. There are still other texts that can be applied through semantic mapping strategy such as descriptive, procedure, report, narrative. It can also be applicable to short functional texts, such as notices, advertisements, announcements, personal letters, and the others.

CONCLUSION

Based on the focus of the problems, the research findings, and the discussion in this action research, the researcher can take conclusions as follows. First, the implementation of semantic mapping can improve the process quality of learning English, particularly writing recount texts at grade VIII.1 students of SMPN 1 Metro Lampung. The improvement of the process in learning writing can be seen from the following conditions: (a) students are trained to find ideas, (2) students are accustomed in organizing the ideas, (3) students are brave to give some questions, (4) students are trained to learn to 'share ideas, give knowledge, and have a good communication'. Second, the implementation of semantic mapping can improve the students' ability in writing recount texts at grade VIII. 1 students of SMPN 1 Metro Lampung. The students' ability in writing recount texts before and after the action done improved significantly. The indicator used to see the improvement in students' writing was a test. The test was given before conducting the action (pretest) and after conducting the action (post-test). The results show that the mean scores of the pretest is 64,08, the mean score of the first cycle is 80.48, and the mean score in cycle 2 is 88.60. Referring to the increase in the mean score sin every action (from preliminary study, cycle 1, and cycle 2), there are improvements in both the learning writing process and the students' ability in writing recount texts.

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