

Using Clustering Technique in Teaching Writing

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Abstract

Writing is categorized as a productive skill which means learners doing these to produce language. It is the process of developing the idea, arranging the words becoming a good writing. As a productive skill, writing is considered as a complex one. The following article tries to discuss the technique which can be used in teaching writing, *The Clustering Technique*. The aim of this study is to discuss the use of clustering technique in teaching writing based on the theories or previous researches. Based on the literature review of the previous research and expert opinion, it is found that clustering technique is very effective to be used in teaching writing. This technique allows the students to generate their ideas easily, group them correctly, and develop them into an organized paragraph. The method of this research is a literature review. The result shows that this technique can improve students writing skill. It helps students develop their idea before they writing. Besides, they also feel motivated and fun in writing.

Keywords: *Clustering technique, Teaching, Writing skill.*

Abstrak

Menulis merupakan keterampilan produktif dimana peserta didik melakukannya untuk menghasilkan bahasa. Menulis adalah proses mengembangkan ide, mengatur kata-kata menjadi tulisan yang bagus. Sebagai keterampilan produktif, menulis dianggap sebagai keterampilan yang kompleks. Artikel berikut mencoba membahas teknik yang dapat digunakan dalam pengajaran menulis, *The Clustering Technique*. Tujuan dari penelitian ini adalah untuk membahas penggunaan teknik pengelompokan dalam pengajaran menulis berdasarkan cerita atau penelitian sebelumnya. Berdasarkan tinjauan pustaka dari penelitian sebelumnya dan pendapat ahli, ditemukan bahwa teknik clustering sangat efektif untuk digunakan dalam pengajaran menulis. Teknik ini memungkinkan siswa untuk menghasilkan ide-ide mereka dengan mudah, mengelompokkannya dengan benar, dan mengembangkannya menjadi paragraf yang terorganisir. Metode penelitian ini adalah tinjauan pustaka. Hasilnya menunjukkan bahwa teknik ini dapat meningkatkan keterampilan menulis siswa. Ini membantu siswa mengembangkan ide mereka sebelum mereka menulis. Selain itu, mereka juga merasa termotivasi dan senang dalam menulis.

Kata kunci: *Clustering, pengajaran, keterampilan menulis.*

1. Introduction

In the era of globalization, English has been used for communication whether in local or global. As a result, the demand of English language skill is needed in every country. It has been a challenge for a non-

native country to be ready with the growth of globalization by mastering English effectively. English has been considered as a foreign language in Indonesia. Like other languages, it has language skills that should

be mastered, they are receptive skill and productive skill. The receptive skill cover listening and reading, while productive skill cover speaking and writing. When students learn English, they are expected to be able to master four major skills of English; listening, speaking, reading and writing. Listening and reading are considered as receptive skills. While speaking and writing are considered as productive skills (Isa, 2017). All of them have an important role in mastering English.

As a productive skill, writing is considered as a complex skill, for it has several elements including, vocabulary, grammar, and paragraph organization. Besides, it also has the mechanics needed in order to produce a good writing, among other, punctuation, capitalization, spelling, unity, coherence, and organization. Richard (2002) says that writing is the most difficult skill for foreign language learners to be mastered. They have to put together string of grammatically correct sentence. In addition, Heaton (1988) assumes that the writing skill are complex and sometimes difficult to teach, requiring mastery not only of grammatical and rhetorical devices but also conceptual and judgemental elements. All of the elements are important to be mastered in order to help learners produce a good writing. However, it is not easy. In writing, there are some difficulties commonly faced by students. First, they hardly get ideas to write. Second, they are lack of vocabulary. Third, they found difficulty in organizing the paragraphs. The last, they have a low motivation in writing. Most of them are still lack of knowledge/idea to develop, vocabulary, grammar, and a difficulty in organize the paragraph.

There have been many researchers discussing the technique used to help

teachers create an effective way in teaching writing. Gerlach & Ely (1980) state The effective teacher has a multitude of techniques and must be prepared to select the ones which will be the most efficient in leading te learner to desire terminal behavior. There are a lot of techniques that can be applied by teacher in teaching. However in this article, the writer will discuss a technique called “Clustering Technique”.

According to Langan (2002) clustering technique is also known as diagramming or mapping. It is a technique that can be used to generate ideas in writing. This technique is helpful to visual way. In clustering technique, there are lines, boxes, arrows, and circles to show relationships among the ideas and details. In addition, Pharr and Santi (2005) in clustering the students write a topic in the center of a piece of paper, then write ideas suggested by the topic around it, connecting these to the topic with lines, follow the same procedures with their subtopics. Thus, this technique can help students generate their ideas before develop them into a writing. Clustering technique can help the students generate the ideas (Royan, 2005). They can clearly describe what they are going to write in an organized paragraph. Besides, it can also motivate them to write.

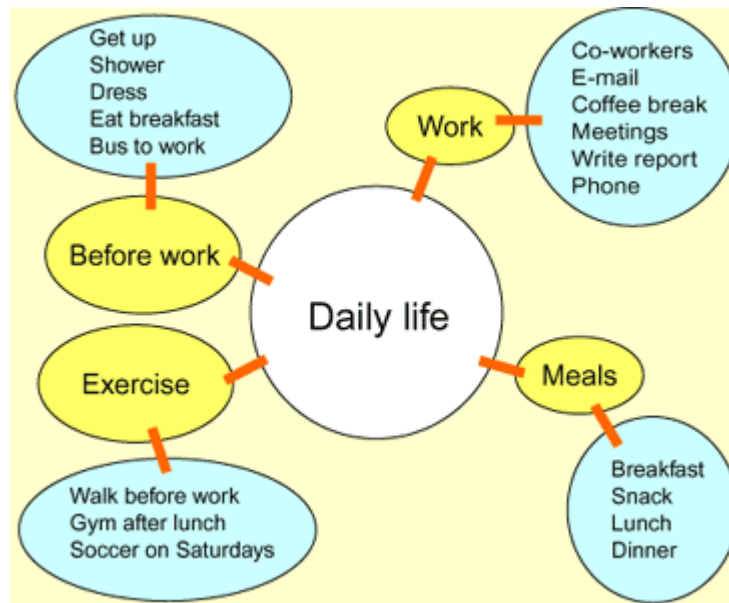
Picture 1 is an example of clustering technique with a theme ‘daily life’. The center circle is the main topic, then the students can generate ideas by giving lines to make new circle contains the subtopics and add details again by giving another lines and circles.

2. The steps of Using Clustering technique

Axelord and Cooper (1985) stated that clustering can be useful for any kind of writing. Writers use it in the early stages of planning an essay in order to find subtopic in a topic or to organize information. They may try and discard several cluster before finding one that is promising Here are the steps of clustering works as follows:

- 1) In a word or phrase, write your topic in the center of a piece of paper, circle it.

- 2) Also, in a word or phrase, write down the main parts or central ideas of your topic. Circle these and connect them to the topic in the center.
- 3) The next step is to generate fact, details, examples, or ideas related in any way to these main parts of the topic. Cluster these around the main parts.



Picture 1. The example of clustering technique

3. Method

The method of the research is qualitative with literature review. According to McCombes (2019) literature review is a survey of scholarly sources (such as books, journal articles, and theses) on a particular topic. It gives an overview of key findings, concepts, and developments in relation to a research problem or question. The method of collecting data is from written sources, such as books, scientific journals, and other literature to form a theoretical foundation.

The writer solves the problem based on the proven theory and she took the conclusion based on the observations that have been made. The object of this research is the students of English Department, UNIS, 3rd semester.

4. Result and Discussion

Based on the observation of the 3rd students of English Department, UNIS. The writer found there are some problems that is faced by the students; they hardly get ideas to write, they have a poor vocabulary, they

found difficulty in organizing the paragraphs, and they have a low motivation in writing.

Based on the proven theory and previous researches, it is true that clustering technique can improve students' writing skill, including those in the formulation of the problem.

The first problem that students usually face when writing is they hardly get ideas to write. Oshima and Hogue (2006: 34) suggested that using clustering technique helps students to develop their ideas.

Second, students are poor of vocabulary. Meanwhile, vocabulary as one of the knowledge areas in language, plays great role for learners in acquiring language (Cameron, 2001). The more vocabulary you have, the easier the communication, including in writing. Hence, it means by practicing writing the vocabulary will be improving. Students can practice their writing by using clustering technique to help them increase their vocabulary mastery.

Third, students are difficult in organizing the paragraphs. A paragraph is made up of three kinds of sentences that develop the writer's main idea, opinion, or feeling about a subject. These sentences are (1) the topic sentence, (2) supporting sentences, and (3) the concluding sentence (Oshima and Hogue, 1997). Those parts of paragraph can form an effective paragraph if they have a unity and coherence in it. Clustering technique helps students arrange the paragraph in order easily because they already mapping it in the clusters.

The last, students have a low motivation in writing. As the writer has discussed above that writing is a complex skill. Hence, it makes students' motivation in writing is low. As Sides (1995: 56) stated

students motivation in learning becomes obstacles in writing, so he suggested to motivate students to follow steps in the writing process. One of them is the first step of writing, that is, initiating ideas in a technique of clustering. The clustering technique is useful for students to develop their ideas and make it more organized.

Clustering technique is a prewriting technique in the process of writing which is suitable for generating ideas and starting write. One of the advantages of clustering technique according to Gorski (2010) is to help the students explore their ideas on their writing activity. It means in clustering technique students are free exploring their ideas and develop these ideas into sentences and paragraphs.

5. Conclusion

The aim of this study is mainly to discuss the theories and researches about the use of clustering technique in writing. The technique of clustering is effective to apply in teaching writing. Besides, clustering technique is a prewriting activity that help student generating and developing their ideas into a writing form easily. It means that clustering helps students produce better writing product.

6. Suggestion

- a. To English teachers, it is suggested to use clustering technique in teaching writing as a prewriting technique because it is easy and simple to apply.
- b. To students, it is suggested to use clustering technique to develop ideas in writing.
- c. To the researchers, hopefully this study can be used as a reference for future researchers.

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