Using Story Mapping Technique to Improve Students’ Ability in Writing Recount Text

Rizka Yunda¹, Endang Komariah¹, and Burhansyah¹

¹Syiah Kuala University, Banda Aceh

*Corresponding author: rizkayunda02@gmail.com

Abstract

This study aims at examining whether or not the use of story mapping technique can improve students’ ability in writing recount text. It was conducted to the second grade of SMPN 1 Darul Imarah. The sample was chosen randomly. There were 25 students as the sample. Quantitative approach with pre-experimental type of one group pre-test post-test design was undertaken to overcome the problems faced by students in learning writing skill. The data was obtained by giving a set of tests in the form of written test. Some statistical formulas were used to analyse the data. From the results of the study, it reveals that the post-test score of five aspects in writing is higher than the score of pre-test. To test the hypothesis, the writer used t-score formula. Based on data analysis, t-score was 21.03, meanwhile t-table was 2.064. It means that t-score was higher, so that alternative hypothesis (Ha) was accepted and null hypothesis (Ho) was rejected. It proves there is a significant improvement on the students’ writing ability after they are taught by using story mapping technique. Thus, story mapping can be one of the alternative techniques used by the teacher in teaching writing.

Keywords: Story Mapping Technique, Writing Skill, Recount Text

1. INTRODUCTION

Writing is an important skill in learning a language. Through writing, people can convey their ideas, express feelings, provide information and knowledge into written messages which can be used as a communication tool, between a writer and reader(s), either at distance places and distance times (Rogers, 2006). According to Howell, Fox, and Morehead (1993), writing can measure students’ performance in mastering a language. Thus, students need to do writing besides listening, speaking and reading, to be successful in school.

However, writing is not an easy skill to be mastered. Chen and Zhou (2010) state that writing is a complicated process of problem solving. This process involves generating ideas by retrieving long-term memory, organizing ideas to define the
Using Story Mapping Technique to Improve Students’ Ability in Writing Recount Text by Rizka Yunda, Endang Komariah, and Burhansyah

target for writing, and planning-arranging the thought to produce an understanding written text.

Meanwhile, the result of preliminary research conducted on May 21st, 2016 at SMPN 1 Darul Imarah revealed that the students still had difficulty in conveying their ideas into a well-organized recount story. From their written products, the researcher found out that their writings were not detailed with specific explanation or unfinished and confusing. This indicates that the students could not develop their ideas and the lack of English vocabulary could be the evidence to that problem. Secondly, their paragraphs were not written in chronological order which recount text should have. In their paragraphs, the researcher also found out that their writings contained a lot of grammar errors.

After interviewing an English teacher, the researcher found out that those problems happened because of their lack of knowledge and practice. In teaching writing, the teacher usually asked her students to write a recount text by using pictures as the media. Unfortunately, the use of media made the students confused on how to start their writing on a blank paper. Several of them were reluctant to even start their writing because they already lost interest. Consequently, the teacher asked her students to translate English recount text from a textbook into Bahasa Indonesia that made the learning process not effective anymore since writing involves the process of gathering ideas and then expressing them into a text, not translating meaning of other’s works.

Thus, to overcome those problems, the researcher is intrigued to conduct this study on applying the story mapping technique to improve students’ ability in writing recount text at second grade of SMPN 1 Darul Imarah.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW
2.1 Definition of Writing

Writing is a productive skill that involves coordination of processes, such as gathering ideas, acquiring the most effective messages to convey, before expressing them into written words (Carter, Bishop, Kravits, 2002). That is why Bearne (2002) states that writing and thinking are closely related to each other. This statement is supported by Langan (2008, p.18) who says that writing is a process of discovery. Sometimes the writers will know what they want to write as they explore their thought in writing. He illustrated the discovering process as the zigzag journey below:

```
Starting Point          Finish Paper
```

Langan (2008) elaborates that writers frequently do not know their exact destination as they begin to write. They usually discover the direction and shapes of paper during writing. Obviously, it is seldom easy for writers to compose a written messages at all once without stopping and revising since writing involves exploration step. Unfortunately, many people believe that writing is a 'natural gift' that some people have and the others not. They think it is very difficult to be a competent writer. However, this belief is absolutely not true. In fact, writing is not an instant work. It is a skill that anyone can learn with practice.

While Byrne (1984, p.1) had another thought about writing. He says that as writers confess their ideas into written words, they will do the act of forming which is graphic symbols namely letter or combination of letters. The letters have to be
arranged according to particular contention to form a word, and words have to be organized to form a sentence, sentences have to be well-supported to form acceptable paragraph, and paragraphs have to be knitted together to create a cohesive passage.

In language acquisition, writing plays an important role as learners exercise how to use a language. By writing, they can practice how to use appropriate vocabulary to confess their ideas, produce sentences in grammatical order and organize the content into well-structured, so that the piece of writing will be understood by others, in which the conversation between a writer and reader takes place. This activity will reinforce their skill in learning a language through practice (Bello, 1997). He also says one of the major failings in the traditional curriculum could be associated with the lack of attention given to writing, which is an important avenue for thinking. Thus, a teacher should create many assessments in the written form to enhance students’ ability in mastering a language.

2.2 Process of Writing
Writing needs process. Stanley as cited by Erdiana (2016, p.246) offers five steps in teaching writing, they are: 1) pre-writing, 2) writing, 3) revising, 4) editing, and 5) publishing. In line with her, according to Harmer (2004, p.11), there are some stages in writing as mentioned below:
1) Planning
At this stage, students make a list of ideas related to the topic. They plan what they are going to write. According to Tompkins & Hoskisson (1995, p.211), it is the getting-ready-to-write stage which is like a warming-up for the athletes.
2) Drafting
At this stage, students start writing their first draft by using the list of ideas related to the topic they have planned in the first stage. However, the students do not need to pay attention for mistakes like mechanic and neatness (Roe, Stoodt & Burns, 1995, p.110).
3) Editing/revising
At this stage, students will revise their first draft to form the second draft. Its purpose is to see where it works and where it does not, with the emphasis on the content and organization rather than on the mechanics.
4) Final Version
At this last stage, students write the final version of their paper after revising it with peers and teachers. It is the process in which students begin to look at correctness in spelling, punctuation, capitalization, and grammar (Stone, 1990, p.18).

2.3 Aspects of Writing
Considering the aspects of writing is essential to produce an understanding written text. According to Oshima and Houge (1997), there are some aspects of writing, namely content, organization, vocabulary, language use and mechanics. Content is the heart-beat of any great writing (Onukwugha, 2006, p.1), while organization concerns the way writer arranges and organizes his ideas according to what kind of text he wants to write. Students should also master vocabulary to write an understanding written product. Language use deals with the rules of verbs, agreements, articles, etc. To have good grammar in writing, the writer should pay attention to the use of grammatical rules concerning tenses, prepositions, conjunctions, clauses, etc. Mechanic deals with capitalization, punctuation, and
Using Story Mapping Technique to Improve Students’ Ability in Writing Recount Text by Rizka Yunda, Endang Komariah, and Burhansyah

spelling. It is essential in writing because it will lead the reader to recognize instantly what the writer means.

2.4 Recount Text

According to Hartono (2005), recount text is categorized as a story genre whose function is to retell past events for the purpose of informing or entertaining. Anderson & Anderson (2003) also state that a recount text is a piece of text retelling past events, usually written in the chronological orders. While Knapp (2005, p.224) says that recount text is basically written out to make a report about an experience of a series of related events.

Mukarto, et al. (2007) state that the generic structure or rhetorical features of a recount text consist of three parts, namely:

a. Orientation. It gives reader background information of the story. As the opening paragraph, it should answer the questions: who, what, where, when, and how.


c. Reorientation. It consists of a type of conclusion with a comment or a summary and evaluation about the topic of the story.

2.5 A Review of Story Mapping Technique

Li (2007) noted that a story map is a graphic organizer used to identify the main elements of the story and categorize the main events in sequential order. The purpose of this activity is to supply students with a mnemonic device that helps them to remember the basic structure of a story and the connection between the various elements of a story (Hennes, Büyüknarci, Rietz, Grünke, 2015). This activity can boost students’ critical thinking and because writing is like putting together a jigsaw puzzle. All the pieces must add up to a finished picture. They must fit together at the end (Steiner, 1985).

In line with Li (2007), Farris (2004) also states that story mapping is used to represent some story components in the form of graphic visualization which has a purpose to give writers a picture to provide an overview of a story so that they can relate the components of the story to each other. This will support the brainstorming process of students by reminding them of different elements of a story by providing them with an opportunity to take notes systematically.

2.6 Advantage and Disadvantage of Using Story Mapping Technique

Story mapping technique is good for writing as the part of pre-writing process or planning stage of writing. By using a story map, students can visualize what they want to apply in their story. This activity boosts their critical thinking by being actively involved in their learning process. On the other hand, story mapping also has disadvantage when students are spending too much time on planning their story by using story map, they would have limited time on writing their full drafts.

3. METHODS

3.1 Research Method

In this study, the researcher used experimental research. According to Sukmadinata (2006, p.194), experimental research attempts to determine the influence of one or more variables to other variables. In this research, there are two variables, namely independent variable and dependent variable. The independent
variable is the use of Story Mapping technique and the dependent variable is the students’ ability in writing recount text.

3.2 Population and Sample
The population of this research was second grade students at SMPN 1 Darul Imarah. In this school, second graders are divided into seven classes. On average, each class consisted of 28 students. Hence, total population of this research was 196 students. The sample of this research was class VIII-2 consisted of 25 students. To select the sample, the researcher took random sampling assumed as a technique that gives everyone the same chance to be a sample. In this study, the researcher did lottery to select random sample.

3.3 Data Collection and Analysis
The researcher used a written test as the instrument to measure students’ ability in writing recount text. The writer selected two topics (Activity on weekend and unforgettable experience in the past) as their pre-test and post-test. They were asked to write a recount text at minimum 100 words in 45 minutes.

After collecting the data, the researcher analyzed the data that given to the students by using some criteria in assessing writing and using a statistical formula. The researcher uses a scoring rubric of writing which is adapted from Jacob et al. (1981). Furthermore, the score of pre-test and post-test were classified into grouped data (class interval) and tabulated them by using statistical formula which consists of mean score and t-test to prove the hypothesis.

4. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION
4.1 The Result of students’ Scores in Writing
Chart 4.1 illustrates the students’ mean score in writing. The red bar represents the students pre-test while the blue one represents the post-test score in each aspect of writing.

![Chart 4.1. The Mean Scores of Each Writing Aspects in Both Tests](image_url)

Based on the chart, there are upward movements in each mean score of writing aspects. Firstly, the highest increasing aspect is the mechanic which goes up significantly 40 points from the pre-test to the post-test. It followed by the content aspect which increases 34 points. The language use aspect comes next which increases 33 points. While, the organization aspect also shows a significant
improvement by reaching the progress of 29 points. Next, the vocabulary aspect lays last because it only increases 26 points.

In the pre-test, most of the students were still incapable of producing their ideas into written messages which made their texts incomplete and not well-organized. However, after the researcher taught them by using the Story Mapping technique, the students were able to generate ideas and write a well-structured recount story. The same goes to the language use and vocabulary aspects. Based on the researcher's preliminary research, they had no motivation to improve their vocabulary mastery and ability to arrange words because of their lack of knowledge and practice.

After the researcher implemented the Story Mapping technique in three meetings of treatment, the students became enthusiastic to produce their own texts although they still needed a dictionary in conveying their ideas into target words. As for language use aspect, their ability in arranging words into grammatical order were also still needed the teacher's guidance. This could be the evidence to why the score of post-test in both aspects of writing (vocabulary and language used aspect) still had not passed the KKM. Nevertheless, they showed a significant improvement compare to the pre-test.

4.2 Discussion

The purpose of this study is to find out the significant improvement of students' ability in writing recount text after they were taught by using Story Mapping technique. After the researcher did the experimental study at SMPN 1 Darul Imarah, it was found that the students' writing ability increased. The score significantly improved after the researcher had given three meetings of treatment to the students in class VIII-2 as the sample of this study.

From the result of both pre-test and post-test by using statistical formula, the researcher found out that the score of post-test was higher than the score of pre-test. Referring to the passing grade (KKM) of the English subject required by their school (i.e. 75), the result of data analysis revealed that there were no students who passed the KKM in the pre-test, while there were fourteen students who achieved the passing grade (KKM) in the post-test. Thus, it can be assumed that the Story Mapping technique could improve the students' ability in writing recount text.

From five aspects of writing that were measured in pre-test and post-test, the researcher found that all those aspects increased after the researcher applied the Story Mapping technique in three meetings of treatment. In the pre-test, the average score of the content aspect was 43, while in the post-test they could obtain 77 on average. In the organization aspect, the students obtained 48 points in the pre-test, while in post-test they could reach 77 points. It indicates that the content of their stories in the post-test was relevant to the topic, understandable and well-organized. While in the pre-test, the students' ideas were still loosely organized, had limited supports, and were not enough to evaluate.

The score in the language use and mechanics aspect in pre-test and post-test could also be evidence of the students' improvement after the research was conducted. As a matter of fact, the average score in the pre-test of language use aspect was 38, while they could obtain 71 in the post-test. Although this score had not passed the KKM, but it showed a significant improvement from pre-test to post-test which was 33 points. Moreover, the average score of mechanics aspect in the pre-test was 46 points, while in the post-test they could reach 86 points which had
passed the KKM required by the school. It indicates that their stories contained minor problems in grammar constructions and had few errors of spelling and punctuation in the post-test after the researcher applied the story mapping technique. While in the pre-test, their paragraphs were still dominated with errors of grammar and mechanics.

Meanwhile, from the comparison between students’ pre-test and post-test scores, the lowest increasing aspect was vocabulary compared to the other 4 aspects. In the pre-test, their average score was 38, while in the post-test they obtained 68 on average. The score had not even passed the KKM yet. This happened because the students had limited English vocabulary to convey their ideas. Consequently, they used the dictionary which made them rely on overuse of general, non-specific words.

Pertaining to the result of the research, it is consistent with the theory proposed by Li (2007) who says that Story Mapping is used to help the students to plan their writing because a story map contains the components of a story such as settings, events, and re-orientation. This practically can be their guidance to process their ideas before writing a well-organized text. It was obvious that when they were acquainted with Story Mapping technique, most of the students were able to gather their known information and put those ideas together to create a well understanding written story.

5. CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

This study addresses the research question about the use of Story Mapping technique in giving a significant improvement to students’ ability in writing recount text of class VIII-2 at SMPN 1 Darul Imarah as the sample of this research. To see the significant improvement, the researcher calculated and compared the mean score of all the data in pre-test and post-test before testing the hypothesis. In assessing their writing product, the researcher used a writing rubric by Jacob et al (1981) which contains five criteria of writing, namely content, organization, vocabulary, language use, and mechanics.

Referring to the finding of this study, the researcher concludes that Story Mapping technique did gave a significant improvement to students’ ability in writing recount text. It can be seen from the result of the mean score in post-test was higher than the score in pre-test. In this study, the mean score of pre-test was 42.6 while the mean score of post-test was 75. It indicates their ability in writing were 35 points increased.

Moreover, the researcher also found out that t-test score was higher than t-table. In this research, the score of t-test was 21.03 while the t-table was 2.064. It means Ha (Alternative Hypothesis) was accepted and there was significant improvement of students’ ability in writing recount text after they were taught by using story mapping technique. As Bungin (2005) says that if t-test is higher than the limit score in the score measurement table (t-table), it means the difference is significant and the hypothesis is accepted.

In line with all of the findings, an English teacher should consider using story mapping technique to teach writing especially when their students had problems with story organization, story content, and output. This technique is very useful because a story map contains the components of a story such as settings, events, and conclusion. It is designed in chronological orders which can practically be their guidance to write a well-organized recount text. By using this technique, students
are not confused about what to apply in their story. Even more, they will be actively involved in their own learning process and it also increase students’ motivation to improve their writing skill.

Second, writing instruction needs to focus on facilitating students to use richer vocabularies. It is very essential for English teachers to find strategies that can improve students’ vocabulary mastery. Unfortunately, after the researcher applied story mapping in this study, she still found out that many students still had limited vocabulary and they often used a dictionary to translate their ideas into target words. Consequently, they relied on using inappropriate words to convey their meanings. Therefore, while story mapping is recommended for writing a story genre of the text, the researcher suggests English teachers combine this technique with other strategies that focus on teaching vocabulary.

Moreover, the researcher suggests that other researchers conduct a different kind of research method like classroom action research but in the similar research topic. Furthermore, it will be more beneficial if they take a wider range of population and different levels of study, so that it may have a different outcome from previous studies including this research. In addition, research can be conducted to overcome students’ struggling in other skills such as listening, speaking or reading. Moreover, it is suggested that they choose different materials with other text types like narrative to improve students’ ability in comprehending and producing a story.

6. **REFERENCE**


Erdiana, N (2016) *Improving students’ writing skill through mind mapping* in Proceedings of English Education International Conference, Yusuf,Y.Q. (Ed.) The First English Education International Conference (EEIC 2016) in conjunction with the 2nd RGRS-CAPEU), Syiah Kuala University Press, Darussalam.p. 256


