

APPLYING CLUSTERING TECHNIQUE TO IMPROVE CREATIVE WRITING SKILLS FOR JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS IN DESCRIPTIVE TEXT

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Abstract

This study explores the application of the clustering technique to enhance creative writing on the descriptive text for junior high school students at SMP Marisi Medan. The research question focuses on assessing the effectiveness of the clustering technique in writing descriptive text. The objective is to determine whether the use of the clustering technique significantly affect to enhance students' writing skills. The research adopts a pre-experimental design, within the population of 298 eighth-grade students. The sample consists of 20 students, selected through purposive sampling. The research employs a writing test comprising both pre-test and post-test assessments. Following the application of the clustering technique in teaching descriptive writing, the post-test mean score (79.0) surpasses the pre-test mean score (64.0). The hypothesis testing results, with a Sig. (2-tailed) score of 0.000 less than 0.05, lead to the rejection of H₀ and acceptance of H₁. In essence, the findings indicate a significant positive impact of utilizing the clustering technique on the effectiveness of students' descriptive writing skills.

Keywords: Gender Differences, Communication, Traditional Market

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Developing strong writing skills is paramount for junior high school students, as it plays a pivotal role in fostering productivity in language learning. Proficient writing not only enhances their ability to express thoughts and ideas clearly but also contributes significantly to mastering language nuances, grammar, and vocabulary. Alamsyah, Yunanda, et al., (2022: 54) someone has good writing skills because they apply a fundamental and accurate understanding of what they want to write, enabling them to maximize creativity and imagination so that their writing is more engaging and beneficial for both the writer and the reader. Moreover, proficient writing serves as a vehicle for effective communication, enabling students to articulate their thoughts with clarity and precision. It is through the practice of writing that students can reinforce their understanding of language concepts, fostering a comprehensive approach to language learning. In essence, the development of strong writing skills empowers junior high school students to navigate the complexities of language education and sets the stage for their continued success in academic pursuits.

Writing is more complex for students than speaking because they need to release creative ideas and to be productive in mastering the structures, dictions, and any other rules. Thus, a student must create a good work of writing with less error, more appropriate that the message can be effectively received by the readers. According to Khoii (2011), the fact that students are emphasized to be able to write correctly is confronted by the problem that the writing skill is not an easy matter for most students. In order to write better texts, Husda, et.al, (2023: 134) assume that teachers need to evaluate and spot students writing faults such as conceptualizing, analyzing, evaluating, making assessments and conclusions, and problem solving are all components of critical thinking. Since teaching students to be more critical when creating texts, because they need to strengthen their abilities, particularly their understanding of sentence by sentence composition, syntax, spelling, etc.

According to Tiara (2015: 16) this assumption, however, grows because of some reasons. First, writing is a complex skill. Besides the students have problems in generating and organizing ideas, they also have to face the problems in transforming the ideas into the readable text. The skills involved in writing are mostly complex so that the students have to pay attention to the use of punctuation, spelling, word choice, and so on. Then, writing needs a set of processes, started from discovering and developing ideas, organizing, revising, and editing to make the a piece of text free of errors.

Based on pre-observation conducted for this research, the curriculum Merdeka Belajar was applied to junior high school students at SMP Marisi Medan that show some of the students were not incompetent to write creatively in a descriptive text because their average scores did not fulfill the requirement of minimum standard of English language learning. Husda et al., (2023: 504) argue that at school, many students still face many problems in writing. The students are not able to write down as they have limitations about techniques in writing. Students will find it difficult to explain their views in writing if they are unable to write. Less understanding of writing skills will cause kids to lose interest in them. Due to their lack of understanding of the writing process, students

struggle with writing assignments frequently.

Since descriptive text is a first stage of acquiring the skills of writing for junior high school students, it purposes to describe something or someone with detail information. It means that students are supposed to create description of one thing by using their creative ideas and thoughts. Restika (2022: 21) states that students may have some problems to write a descriptive text such as feeling unsure of which point to give description of something in order to organize their thoughts or to determine the topic that would be written, frequently they make error and mistake because of having not much vocabulary, and the most important is they are interested in learning or getting bored with the conventional method done by their teacher. It needs some revolutionary learning by applying approaches or techniques from the teacher to replace the conventional method. Alamsyah et al., (2022: 72) argue that English teacher has to know some techniques to make students interested in learning. Meanwhile, Husda & Sembiring, (2020: 494) assume that no matter whatever the strategy applies on, at present, it is not only the main task for teacher or educators but also important to be aware of the attitudes and responses of students in learning.

This is evident in students of the English Education study program, where one of the problems faced is not only related to communicating in English but is also supported by certain subjects that are considered to require a deep interpretation, such as English teaching. Asrul & Husda (2022: 4175) state that there need to be additional lessons that can be assisted by their subject there need to be additional lessons that can be assisted by their subject teacher who motivates them to be active in communicating and mastering foreign languages such as English. In this case, the teacher is the basic guide from which students will be able to deal with other people or even English speaker. Thus, preventing too much considering on the language features and generic structures of a text, is a solution to help students energize their minds by having fun and challenging learning to work independently in the class.

One technique that can be used in teaching writing specifically for descriptive text is clustering technique. There are some experts who assume about this kind of technique. First, according to Blanchard & Root (2008: 42), clustering technique is a pre-writing technique visually drawn from a diagram of the author's ideas. It uses circles and lines develop the ideas into a text. Tyner (2006: 176-177) previously stated that clustering technique starts from a general topic, put in the central part and is unlocked some specific information in detail. However, clustering is quite similar to mind mapping, using diagrams such as arrows, boxes, lines, circles, and other shapes to help the writer think of his ideas and put them inside before developing into a certain text.

This research does not only choose clustering technique in descriptive text based on how to use but also how to prove. Thus, there are also some previous relevant experiments to support this research. Firstly, researches done by Marpaung (2020) and Elista, et.al (2020) used clustering technique in teaching recount text for senior high school students. The results of both researches pointed that the average score of each was significantly increased up to 85, passing through the minimum standard of

competence in writing. Secondly, this techniques applied to teach descriptive text at junior high school, done by Abidin (2022) and Lestari, et al., (2022). The average score was up to 79.0, definitely the students were creatively developing the ideas into a text and worked confidently with no hesitation to write. In addition to the above explanation, the researchers choose this topic to assist and to motivate educators in realizing the importance of language learning technique in writing skill particularly on descriptive text. Therefore, this research gives information about clustering technique as the hypotheses to affect student's competence in writing descriptive text.

CHAPTER II

RESEARCH METHOD

This research would use a pre-experimental one-group pre-test and post-test design to prove the use of clustering techniques to improve students' writing skills in descriptive texts. The pre-test was intended to measure the ability of students before treatment and the post-test was intended to determine the effect after treatment in writing descriptive text. The research design was presented in the following table:

Table 1. Quasi Experimental Design

Group	Pre-Test	Treatment (Clustering Technique)	Post-Test
Experimental	01	X	02

This research was conducted at SMP Marisi Medan. This research focused on focusing the clustering technique in improving students writing skills on the descriptive text of the eighth grade at SMP Marisi Medan. This research was also conducted for six meetings. In this research, There were two variables in this research: namely independent variable and dependent variable. The independent variable of this research was the use of the clustering technique. Meanwhile, the dependent variable of this research was students' writing skills. According to Creswell (2012), the independent variable is a variable that affects the dependent variable, while the dependent variable is a variable that is influenced by the independent variable. The independent variable is clustering technique and the dependent variable is students' ability in writing descriptive text.

To collect data in the research field, students were given writing tests namely pre-test and post-test. This test is in the form of an essay to make a composition. Students were instructed to write descriptive text according to the topic given by the researchers. In analyzing the data, t-test was applied to prove that the hypotheses could answer the research question that is affecting to student's ability in writing a descriptive text. The researchers assessed the students by using a rubric score based on five aspects: content, organization, language use, vocabulary, grammar, and mechanics. After all the score got from each test applied to, the researchers then analyzes the prerequisite data; normality and homogeneity. After normality and homogeneity test as a requirement of t-test was complete, the researcher collected all the data in post-test from both experiment and control class in order to state the significant effect of Clustering Technique on students'

creative writing skill in descriptive text at eight grade of SMA Marisi Medan, Academic Year 2022/2023. The purpose of t-test is to measure the hypothesis is accepted or even rejected.

Furthermore, hypothesis test is used to know the result of test observation about sample. The criteria of statistical hypothesis as follows:

a. If t-test (t_o) < t-table (t_t) in significant degree of 0,05 = H_a is rejected and H_0 is accepted.

b. If t-test (t_o) > t-table (t_t) in significant degree of 0,05 = H_a is accepted and H_0 is rejected.

As the researcher explained before, the hypothesis of this study is: accepted.

b. If t-test (t_o) > t-table (t_t) in significant degree of 0,05 = H_a is accepted and H_0 is rejected.

As the researcher explained before, the hypothesis of this study is:

a. Alternative Hypothesis (H_a): There is significant effect of using Clustering Technique on the students' creative writing skills in descriptive text at eight grade of SMP Marisi Medan.

b. Null Hypothesis (H_0): There is no significant effect of effect of using Clustering Technique on the students' creative writing skills in descriptive text at eight grade of SMP Marisi Medan.

CHAPTER III

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

Researchers got data in the form of scores. The scores were obtained from students' writing tests (pre-test and post-test). In the following description, the results of the research are presented in the table 2.

Table 2. The Mean Scores in Pre-test

Criteria	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Content	20	19.00	21.00	20.1000	.71818
Organization	20	20.00	13.00	12.2500	.85070
Vocabulary	20	12.00	14.00	13.0000	.85840
Grammar	20	15.00	17.00	15.9500	.68633
Mechanism	20	2.00	3.00	2.7000	.47016

Based on the data presented in the table, it is evident that students achieved a range of scores in different assessment categories. In terms of content, the lowest and highest scores were 19 and 21, respectively, with a mean score of 20.1000 in the pre-test. For organization, students scored between 10 and 13, with a mean pre-test score of 12.2500. In vocabulary, scores ranged from 12 to 14, and the mean pre-test score was 13.0000. Grammar assessment showed scores between 15 and 17, with a mean pre-test score of 15.9500. Mechanics had scores ranging from 2 to 3, and the mean pre-test score was 2.7000. The subsequent paragraph details the mean scores for the post-test.

Table 3. The Mean Scores of the Post-Test

Criteria	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Content	20	24.00	26.00	25.1000	.64072
Organization	20	14.00	16.00	15.0500	.82558
Vocabulary	20	15.00	16.00	15.6500	.48936
Grammar	20	19.00	21.00	20.1500	.58417
Mechanism	20	3.00	4.00	3.0500	.22361

The data illustrates that students achieved scores ranging from 24 to 26 in the content assessment, with a mean score of 25.1000 in the post-test. For organization, the lowest and highest scores were 14 and 16, respectively, and the mean post-test score was 15.0500. In vocabulary, students scored between 15 and 16, with a mean post-test score of 15.6500. Grammar assessment showed scores ranging from 19 to 21, and the mean post-test score was 20.1500. In mechanics, scores ranged from 3 to 4, with a mean post-test score of 3.0500.

Table 4. Paired Sample Statistics

	Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pair 1 Pre-test	64.0500	20	2.48098	0.55476
Post-test	79.0000	20	1.37649	0.30779

The table provides statistical outcomes for the pre-test and post-test before and after treatment. In the specified group, denoted as N with a total of 20 student data, there is a notable difference between the pre-test, conducted before the treatment, and the post-test, conducted after the treatment. The average score for students in the pre-test was 64.0500, whereas the post-test yielded an average score of 79.0000. Furthermore, the research statistical hypotheses are described in the table below:

Table 5. Paired Sample Test

	Paired Differences				t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	
	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
Lower				Upper				
Pair 1 Pre-test								
Post-test	-14.95000	1.95946	0.43815	-15.86705	-14.03295	-34.121	19	000

Based on the results above on the pre-test and post-test of students before and after treatment, the researcher found that analyzing the pre-test and post-test results of students before and after treatment, the researcher observed that the probability value was below the alpha (α) level ($0.000 < 0.05$). This indicates a significant difference between the pre-test before treatment and the post-test after treatment. Consequently, it can be inferred that the application of clustering techniques is effective in enhancing descriptive text writing skills.

Discussion

The research was done to investigate the impact of employing clustering techniques in fostering creative writing skills, specifically in descriptive text, among junior high school students at SMP Marisi Medan. Through researcher observations, it was noted that numerous students faced challenges in articulating their ideas and thoughts in writing,

likely due to limited vocabulary and difficulties in conveying ideas effectively. This could contribute to students feeling disinterested in language learning, particularly in the context of writing. Consequently, it is recommended that teachers employ various techniques to enhance English language skills, with a specific focus on productive skills such as writing.

According to the findings, the pre-test results, conducted before implementing the clustering technique in descriptive text writing, were lower compared to the post-test results after the application of the clustering technique. The utilization of clustering techniques in teaching descriptive text writing proves to be motivating, enhancing students' enthusiasm and facilitating their ability to compose descriptive texts. Notably, there is a substantial disparity between the pre-test and post-test scores, evident in table 4.18 where the 2-tailed significance (Sig.) score of 0.000 is less than 0.05. This implies a rejection of the null hypothesis (H0) in favor of the alternative hypothesis (H1), indicating the effectiveness of the clustering technique. The approach significantly aids students in overcoming challenges related to idea generation in writing activities, as its primary objective is to gather groups of interconnected ideas.

CHAPTER IV

CONCLUSION

This research demonstrates that the integration of the clustering technique into the instructional process leads to improved English writing proficiency among students, particularly in the context of composing descriptive texts. The utilization of the clustering technique fosters heightened engagement, seriousness, and motivation among students during the instructional sessions for descriptive text writing, as evidenced by the results of the observation checklist. This approach not only captivates students' attention and active participation but also underscores enhancements in their performance in English descriptive text writing. The evidence for this improvement is substantiated by the scores obtained by students, which indicate a notable increase subsequent to the implementation of the Clustering Technique in the instruction of descriptive text writing.

The results demonstrates the effectiveness of applying the clustering technique to enhance students' writing abilities, with pretest and posttest averages of 64.0 and 79.0, respectively. This is substantiated by the acceptance of the alternative hypothesis and rejection of the null hypothesis during hypothesis testing, indicating a significant impact of the clustering technique on improving students' proficiency in writing descriptive texts at SMP Marisi Medan. It is crucial for educators to recognize the importance of instructional techniques in boosting students' motivation to learn. Teachers are encouraged to integrate clustering techniques, particularly in teaching descriptive texts, to facilitate idea generation and enhance students' vocabulary for writing.

Creativity in selecting or creating instructional methods aligned with the syllabus or lesson plan design is emphasized. Additionally, alternative methods should be employed

to assist students in developing ideas, ensuring grammatical accuracy in writing, and expanding their vocabulary for constructing focused and comprehensible text structures. The proven effectiveness of the clustering technique in generating ideas for students' writing skills reinforces its recommendation for use. Furthermore, the researcher envisions the continued improvement and application of the Clustering Technique to enhance various writing skills.

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