THE EFFECT OF USING CLUSTERING TECHNIQUE ON THE ABILITY OF THE FIRST YEAR STUDENTS OF SMA NEGERI 1 RENGAT IN WRITING DESCRIPTIVE TEXTS

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Abstract: *The research was aimed to investigate whether clustering technique can affect students' writing ability. The research was conducted at the first year students of SMA Negeri 1 Rengat. In conducting the research, the researcher applied a pre-experimental method with XI IPA 1 as the sample. There were 36 students as the sample of this research. This research design used one group pre-test post-test. They were taught by conventional technique. They were given pre-test at the beginning, the post test at the end of the treatment. The data were analyzed by using t-test formula. From the calculation, the researcher found that t-test was 7.933 and the t-table was 2.030. Since t-test was higher than t-table, Ha was accepted and Ho was rejected. It means that there is significant effect in using Clustering Technique on students' ability in writing descriptive texts.*

Key Words: *Writing, Writing Ability, Clustering Technique, Descriptive Texts*

SEBUAH PENGARUH DARI PENGGUNAAN TEKNIK CLUSTERING PADA KEMAMPUAN SISWA TAHUN PERTAMA DARI SMA NEGERI 1 RENGAT DALAM MENULIS TEKS DESKRIPTIF

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Abstract: Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menyelidiki apakah Teknik clustering dapat memengaruhi kemampuan menulis siswa. Penelitian ini dilakukan pada siswa tahun pertama SMA Negeri 1 Rengat. Dalam melakukan penelitian, peneliti menerapkan metode pra-eksperimental dengan XI IPA 1 sebagai sampel. Ada 36 siswa sebagai sampel penelitian ini. Desain penelitian ini menggunakan one-group pre-test post-test. Mereka diajar dengan teknik konvensional. Mereka diberikan pre-test di awal, post-test di akhir treatment. Data dianalisis dengan menggunakan rumus t-test. Dari perhitungan, peneliti menemukan bahwa t-test adalah 7,933 dan t-tabel adalah 2,030. Karena t-test lebih tinggi dari t-tabel, Ha diterima dan Ho ditolak. Ini berarti bahwa ada pengaruh yang signifikan dalam menggunakan Teknik Clustering pada kemampuan siswa dalam menulis teks deskriptif.

Kata Kunci: Menulis, Kemampuan Menulis, Teknik Clustering, Teks Deskriptif

INTRODUCTION

Harmer (2007) points out that English is taught at schools in order that students are able to comprehend the four language skills; listening, speaking, reading, and writing. These skills are divided into two types; receptive and productive skill. Receptive skill is a term used for reading and listening, meanwhile, productive skill is the term used for speaking and writing.

Among those four skills, writing is considered as the most difficult to learn and comprehend. Richard & Renandya (2002) state that there is no doubt that writing is the most difficult skill for L2 learners to comprehend. Writing is not only good to be developed as it can unify ideas and thoughts, and translate somebody's thoughts for other people but also a creative process which expresses the ideas, thoughts and feelings in written form. Writing is one of the four skills in learning English which is used to explore or express fact, feelings, thought from writers to the reader in written form (Nunan, 2003). There are many kinds of texts in writing: narrative, descriptive, report, recount, and procedure. One of them is descriptive text.

Based on the curriculum 2013, the students of the first year of senior high school level are required to study some text types and one of that is descriptive text. In learning the text types, the students are expected to be able to define the text types, to identify the language feature, social function and generic structure of the texts. Besides, students are also expected to be able to recognize and use the appropriate grammar, vocabulary, punctuation, and capitalization. It means that students are expected to be able to identify the components each text types and the use of language grammatically and systematically, including learning descriptive texts.

Hyland (2004) defines that descriptive text is a text which has a social purpose to give an account of imagined or factual events. However, most students find it difficult to share their thought in written form because they are lack of vocabulary, low capability on expressing idea and grammar comprehension.

Buscemi (2002:14) points out that teacher needs to help students building up their writing habit so that students can think writing is a normal part of classroom practice and they do the writing tasks with as much enthusiasm as they do other activities. Teaching and learning process will be more interesting if the teachers can create fun activities by applying some kinds of techniques. In this case, the researcher would like to propose Clustering Technique as an alternative technique in teaching writing.

Clustering Technique is developed by Rico in 1983. According to Buscemi (2002:14), Clustering Technique is a good way to turn a broad subject into a limited and a more manageable topic for a short essay. Reid (1993) mentions that the invention of Clustering Technique helps students to generate, develop, and arrange their ideas. In writing a descriptive text, students are required to be able to develop ideas and imagination. Using Clustering Technique students are expected to be able to generate their ideas. So, the purpose of descriptive text can be achieved.

Based on the previous explanation, the researcher decides to conduct a research to offer a technique that might be used to solve the problems entitled "The Effect of Using Clustering Technique on the Ability of the First Year Students of SMA Negeri 1 Rengat in Writing Descriptive Texts".

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research was classified into pre-experimental research with one group pretest-posttest design. There were two variables on this study. The Clustering Technique was independent variable, while the students' writing ability was dependent variable. It was conducted that Clustering Technique can give significant effect on writing ability of the first year students at SMA Negeri 1 Rengat. In conducting this research, the writer involved one group pre-test – post-test design. Where pre-test is the effect created on the second measurement by having a measurement before the experiment. The instrument of the research is writing test.

The research was conducted at SMA Negeri 1 Rengat, especially toward the first year students. The school is located on Jl. Sultan Kilometer 4, Kampung Dagang, Rengat, Kabupaten Indragiri Hulu, Riau. The reason for choosing this location and time was because this school is the researcher's former school and the researcher would like to conduct this research in this school to know the students' ability. The population of this research was the students in the first year students of SMA Negeri 1 Rengat. The reason for choosing the first year students as the sample of this research was this grade was learning about descriptive texts. Other reason for choosing the first year students was based on the interview conducted towards the English teacher. She said that the second year students had low level ability in writing. The population of the first year students of SMA Negeri1 Rengat is shown in Table 1 below:

Table 1. The Total Population of the First Year Students

No.	Class	Population
1.	X IPA 1	36
2.	X IPA 2	36
3.	X IPA 3	36
4.	X IPA 4	36
5.	X IPA 5	36
6.	X IPS 1	36
7.	X IPS 2	36
8.	X IPS 3	36
9.	X IPS 4	34
Total		**322**

Based on the Table 1 above, the total of population of the first year students of SMA Negeri 1 Rengat was 322 students in nine classes. Cluster Random Sampling technique was used to get the sample. The chairman of each class took a lottery of the nine lotteries provided with a number in it as the sample of the research. The instruments of this study were tests (a pre-test and a post-test). The researcher distributed the pre-test in order to know the students' ability before conducting the treatment. In order to obtain the objective of this study the researcher conducted a treatment by applying the offered procedure. The treatment was conducted for four meetings. As discussed in chapter 2, the other instrument was a post-test which was

given to the students after the treatment. The pre-test and the post-test were in the form of writing test.

RESEARCH FINDINGS

In this research, T-Test formula was used to compare the pre-test and the posttest results in determining whether the hypothesis could be accepted and measuring whether the instruments in treatment could give an effect to the students or not.

The finding of this research shows the positive result of the use of Clustering Technique in students' writing ability. The improvement in the students' writing ability was shown through the pre-test and post-test result. The comparison of the pre-test and post-test score in each aspect of writing can be seen in Table 2.

Table 2. The Comparison between Pre-test and Post-test Score

Aspects of	P	P	Score
Content	8	9	9.17
Organizati	7	8	10.50
Grammar	6	8	19.17
Vocabular	7	9	13.37
Mechanic	8	9	9.17

As shown in Table 2, the score of each aspect of writing increased. The biggest score difference is in the grammar aspect (19.17). The vocabulary aspect increase (13.37) followed by organization aspect (10.50). The lowest score difference is in content and mechanics aspect which increase 9.17. These score differences proved that there is a significant effect of Clustering Technique on the students' writing ability.

Table 3. The Result of T-test

		Paired Differences						
					95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				Sig. (2-tailed)
	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	Lower	Upper	t	df	
Pair 1 Posttest – Pretest	12.97222	9.81103	1.63517	9.65265	16.29180	7.933	35	.000

As shown in Table 4.4, the mean score of the pre-test and post-test is 12.97222. The standard deviation is 9.81103 and the standard error mean is 1.63517. The low standard deviation indicates that the data points tend to be very close to the mean. Furthermore, the value of standard error mean shows that the sample is representative.

The value of the t-test is 7.933. Meanwhile, the value of t-table on the df (degree of freedom) 35 is 2.030 with the level of significance (α) = 5%. The level of significance

is 7.933 > 2.037. Moreover, the Sig. (2-tailed) is .000 which is lower than 0.05. From the data analysis, it could be identified that if the p-output (sig.2-tailed) is lower than 0.05 and t-test is higher than t-table on significant level 5%, the null hypothesis (H_0) is rejected and alternative hypothesis (H_a) is accepted. So, it can be concluded that Clustering Technique has a significant effect on the ability of the first year students of SMA Negeri 1 Rengat in writing descriptive texts.

DISCUSSION

This research was conducted to find out whether Clustering Technique has a significant effect when it was used in teaching writing, especially in teaching writing descriptive texts. It involved three steps. The first step was administered a pre-test to measure the students' ability in writing descriptive text. Based on the findings, the mean score of the pre-test was 76.66. The lowest score in the pre-test was in grammar aspect (65.83) and the highest score in the pre-test was in content and mechanics aspect (80.83).

Then, the next step was applying the treatment which is Clustering Technique. The researcher taught the students by implementing Clustering Technique in teaching writing on descriptive texts. The treatment was conducted in four meetings.

The last step was administered a post-test to measure the students' ability after the treatment. The mean score of the post-test was 88.93. The highest score in post-test was in content and mechanics aspect (90.00). In line with the result, Langan (2006) states that Clustering Technique is another pre-writing technique that can be used to generate material for a paper. Clustering Technique can help the students to produce the related details to the topic and also the students can easily write a descriptive text by looking at the cluster that they had created.

The score improvement in each aspect of writing can be achieved because some activities that the researcher did during the implementation of Clustering Technique. For example, to improve the mechanics aspect the researcher asked students to check their spelling, punctuation, capitalization before submit the test. To improve vocabulary aspect, the researcher asked the students to find the difficult words of their cluster then look at the dictionary. From the comparison between Pre-test and Post-test score, it can be seen that the biggest improvement is on the Grammar aspect which mean Clustering Technique had helped the students improved their ability in using tenses and agreement well. The second improvement can be seen through Vocabulary aspect which can be concluded that Clustering Technique can generate their ideas and vocabulary. The third improvement is on Organization aspect and the last is on Content and Mechanics. Every aspect is improved through the Clustering Technique.

After analyzing the data by using SPSS 23.00 the researcher found out that the value of t-test was higher than t-table (7.933>2.030). In other words, there was a significant effect of Clustering Technique on the ability of the first year students of SMA Negeri 1 Rengat in writing descriptive texts.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Conclusions

Based on the data analysis that has been explained, it can be concluded that Clustering Technique is effective to improve students' writing ability especially in writing descriptive text. The improvement of students' writing ability in descriptive texts after being taught by clustering technique can be seen through the difference in the pre-test and post-test score.

Based on the research findings, Clustering Technique has a significant effect on the ability of the first year students of SMA Negeri 1 Rengat in writing descriptive texts. Therefore, the researcher suggests using Clustering Technique in teaching and learning process to improve students' writing ability. The teacher may use Clustering Technique as an alternative technique to improve students' writing ability especially in writing descriptive texts. Before doing the activity, the teacher needs to prepare an effective lesson plan because a well-organized lesson plan will support the teaching and learning process to progressing well.

Recommendation

Based on the research findings, Clustering Technique has a significant effect on the ability of the first year students of SMA Negeri 1 Rengat in writing descriptive texts. Therefore, the researcher suggests using Clustering Technique in teaching and learning process to improve students' writing ability. The teacher may use Clustering Technique as an alternative technique to improve students' writing ability especially in writing descriptive texts. Before doing the activity, the teacher needs to prepare an effective lesson plan because a well-organized lesson plan will support the teaching and learning process to progressing well.

1. For English teachers – give them information about using Clustering Technique can help both teachers and students in teaching and learning writing descriptive text. In addition, Clustering Technique is one of the pre-writing activities that can help teacher to teach writing descriptive texts effectively and interestingly because it does not only use texts as the media in teaching.

2. For students – help them improving their achievement in writing descriptive text. In addition, students can generate their ideas or vocabulary better by using Clustering Technique, and also improve the other writing aspects.

3. For other researcher - hopefully can be useful as the source of their references and as the guide in developing their researches.

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