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International Seminar

**“Empowering Learners’ Language
Competence and Soft Skills to Face the
Global Competition”**

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The current Internasional Seminar is aimed at providing the participants with enlightening environment to further and broaden their expertise and experience in Language Competences and Soft Skill.

Editors Team

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SEMANTIC MAPPING TECHNIQUE IN TEACHING WRITING REPORT TEXT

(Drs. Johan Sinulingga)

Introduction

English is one of the international languages that are used by many people in the world and in many areas of everyday life. Therefore, using English is the easiest way to communicate with people from other countries about many aspects in human life such as technology, economy, social, and politics.

For Indonesia, English is a foreign language. Learning a foreign language is an integrated process that the learner should study the four basic skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. We use it to understand our world through listening and reading and to communicate our feeling, need, and desires through speaking and writing.

In Unit-Oriented Curriculum (Kurikulum Tingkat Satuan Pendidikan; KTSP) of the 2006 junior high school, it is written that there are four language skills that should be achieved by the students along the process of education, such as: listening, speaking, reading and writing. These four skills relate one each other. These four skills are the aim of the teaching and learning of the English as a foreign Language. One of them is writing. Writing is one of the most powerful communication tools used today and for the rest of our life. Writing is a process of transforming thoughts and ideas into written form. Writing is not only a process of linking words into sentences or paragraphs, but it is a sequence or steps of ideas, organized thoughts and feeling in the form of words and combined into sentences into form of paragraphs in which every sentences is closely related one another.

Many genres in English, one of them are report text. Report text is a text which presents information about something. It is as a result of systematic observation and analysis. Within writing report text, students have to write something decent to report by researching and analysis something.

Based on writer's experience when we did the training teaching practice (PPL) in SMP N.1 P.Cermin, writer found some problems found in the field when giving writing materials to the students, especially in the report text.

The first problem is that the students' writing is not comprehensible, because the content of the composition is not relevant to the topic, the ideas are not clearly stated, the ideas and sentences are not well organized. The second problem is that there are many errors in vocabulary, grammar, and spelling.

Another problem is the students have low motivation and are not interested in doing the task since the writing activities are not interesting. Usually, the students are asked to write sentences and paragraphs without being given some clue so that it is difficult for them to express their ideas on a piece of paper.

Besides that, the students have difficulty to write. This occurs because writing is difficult for them so they have to master enough vocabulary, spelling, and grammar. In reference to the explanations above and the strong desire of finding the solution of these problems, the writer has motivation to do the research in improving the teaching of writing in real class through Semantic mapping. Semantic mapping is one of technique of cooperative learning in which the students are assigned. Semantic mapping are designed as a specific type of graphic organizer to support or assist student to become more strategic in writing. In conceptual terms, a semantic map contains "verbal information within and between the shapes which create a pattern and/or relationships of ideas". Semantic mapping can help students to overcome their anxiety in writing because the student can imagine and write all of the problems where are related to writing, so this technique can help students to develop their ideas in writing.

In relation to the background of the study, the research problem is formulated as follows "Is the students' achievement in writing report improved if they are taught through Semantic Mapping?"

Students' Achievement

According to Hornby (Oxford Advanced Learner's dictionary, 2010: 23) "Achievement is a thing one successfully especially with afford and skill". Santrock in Manalu (2007:15) states that achievement is accomplish something, reach a standard of excellence, and expected effort to excel. From the

quotations above, it can be concluded that achievement is the successful finishing or gaining of something through skills and hard work.

Bloom (2000:61) is divided into three large domains: the cognition, the affection and the psychomotor. Cognition is having a basis in or reducible to empirical factual knowledge. Cognition consists of knowledge, comprehension, application, analysis, synthetic and evaluation. Affection is the changing of behavior that affects someone lies to do something. Psychomotor is the skill to do something, ready to do it based on physic and emotion, self control and become a habit. Therefore it is concluded that the achievement is a success in reaching particular goal, standard, especially by effort, skill, courage, etc.

Based on the explanation above, student's achievement is done by students especially to increase their skill. Teacher gets the achievement of the students based on cognition, affection and psychomotor. In this study, writing is involves as affective aspect.

Writing

Lamb and Johnson (1999) stated that writing is the expression of language in the form of letters, symbols or words. Primary purpose of writing is communication. In other words, writing is how does someone more creative to develop their mind by written.

Writing is the mental work of inventing ideas, thinking about how to express and organizing them into paragraphs that will be clear to reader. On the other hand, writing is not merely process of thinking something to say and selecting words needed tom express it. The ideas and thoughts are informed into paragraphs and have a meaning, so the readers can understand the meaning of the content. In conclusion, writing is a process to put some thoughts into words in a meaningful form that used to express the ideas.

In teaching, writing is a communicative activity between teacher and students. So, students should practice and do a lot of exercises to study language seriously.

Genre of Writing

According to Knapp and Watkins (2005) genre is an organizing concept for cultural practices. Genre are classified according to their social purpose and identified to the stages. There are five fundamentals genre of writing: describing, instructing, arguing, explaining and narrating. According to Daniel in <http://www.aber.ac.uk/media/Documents/intgenre.html> (accessed on March, 12th 2010) states that genre is a recognized category of works that share a common form purpose or content, so as a writer, it is important to understand what these commonly shared attributes for each of the different genre.

According to Gerot and Wignell (1994:190-219), there are thirteen types of genre; spoof, recount, report, analytical exposition, news item, anecdote, narrative, procedure, descriptive, hortatory exposition, explanation, discussion and reviews.

1. Spoof : to retell an event with a humorous twist
2. Recount : to retell something that happened in the past and to tell a series of past event
3. Report :to describe the way things are, with reference to arrange of natural, man-made, and social phenomena in our environment
4. Analytical exposition : to persuade the reader or listener that something is the case
5. News item :to inform readers, listeners or viewers about events of the day which are considered newsworthy or important?
6. Anecdote : share with others an account for unusual or amusing incident
7. Narrative :to amuse, to entertain and to deal with actual or vicarious experience in different ways, it deals with problematic events which lead to a crisis of turning points of some kinds, which in turn finds a resolution
8. Procedure :to describe how something is accomplished through a sequence of action steps.
9. Description : to describe a particular person, place or things
10. Hortatory Exposition : to persuade the reader or listener that something or should not be the case.

11. Explanation : to explain the process involved in the formation or working of natural or socio cultural phenomena
12. Discussion : to present two points of view about an issue
13. Review : to critique an art of work or event for a public audience

Every genre has a number of characteristics and it has the specific purpose which makes it different from other genre. In this study, it is only focused on report text.

Report Text

Gerot and Wignell (1994:196-197) state that report is a text which functions to describe the way things are, with reference to a range of natural, man-made and social phenomena in our environment. Report means a text which describes things in general. Report text contains the class or subclass of the topic described and then following by telling the shape, parts, behavior, etc

A report presents information about a subject. It is a result of an observation and analysis. Within writing report text, students have to write something decent to report by researching and analyzing something.

Cooperative Learning

Cooperative Learning is an approach of teaching that makes maximum use of cooperative activities involving pairs and small groups of learners in the class room. Olsen and Kagan (1992:8) describes that cooperative learning is group learning activity which is organized, so that learning depends on structured exchanged of information between the learners in group and in which the learner is accountable for his or her learning and it is motivated to increase the learning of the other.

Semantic Mapping

Speidel (1982:35) states that map is an arrangement of vocabulary (concepts) about a topic. These concepts are categorized in some way. The making of a semantic map is a procedure for building a bridge between the known and new. The map informs the teacher what students know about a topic and give the students' anchor points to which they can attach new information and concepts they will encounter. Semantic mapping is consistently associated with higher scores on test items measuring specific comprehension, such as recall of text ideas and recall of key concepts.

Semantic Mapping Technique

Speidel (1982:35) states that map is an arrangement of vocabulary (concepts) about a topic. These concepts are categorized in some way. The making of a semantic map is a procedure for building a bridge between the known and new. The map informs the teacher what students know about a topic and give the students' anchor points to which they can attach new information and concepts they will encounter. Semantic mapping is consistently associated with higher scores on test items measuring specific comprehension, such as recall of text ideas and recall of key concepts. Dale Johnson and others have introduced refocused semantic maps for helping students become familiar with-text specific meanings associated with a central concepts (Johnson, Toms-Bronowski, and Pittleman 1981).

Semantic mapping is a method to visualize the structure of knowledge. Since the knowledge expressed in the maps is mostly semantic, concept maps are sometimes called semantic networks. Often it is claimed that concept mapping bears a similarity to the structure of long-term memory. Instead of describing all concepts and their relations in text, one may choose to draw a map indicating concepts and relations in a graph or network.

Semantic mapping technique is also a way to help students to think more creative to associate ideas more easily. Fisher(1995,p.68) states that semantic map is an arrangement of shapes such as boxes, rectangles, triangles, circles, and so on, connected by lines and/or arrows drawn between and among the figures. It means that semantic mapping can be used to explain certain objects (diagrams, lines, boxes, arrows, and circles) to show their relationship. He also states that it will be easier for students to write report text by referring to related words as many as possible, identifying characteristic of the word given, determining the related word with the word given. Therefore, semantic mapping are designed as a specific

type of graphic organizer to support or assist student to become more strategic in writing. In conceptual terms, a semantic map contains “verbal information within and between the shapes which create a pattern and/or relationships of ideas”.

As “Knowledge representation tools” Novak (1998, p.3) states that semantic maps should be read from top to bottom, starting with the higher order (more general) concept at the top and proceeding to the lower (more specific) concepts at the bottom. They may be characterized by cross links that show relationships between ideas in different parts of the map. As Lowman (1984:9) states that thinking skills is important component of class discussion. From quotation, it can be concluded that semantic mapping is a type of prewriting that allows the students to explore many ideas as soon as they occur to them. Like brainstorming of free associating, semantic mapping allows the student to begin without clear ideas.

Semantic mapping technique developed to improve writing skills and previously used to facilitate thinking in classroom settings as a stimulus for class discussion. Fisher(1995) states that semantic mapping are allows the learner to create an understanding of the world by making connections, by creating links, by exploring and testing links (a basic process of all creative thinking). Thus, creating a semantic mapping is one way of representing and communicating one understanding of concepts.

The Procedure of Using Semantic Mapping

The procedure of using semantic mapping is very important. It gives a brief explanation how to apply semantic mapping technique in teaching writing. The procedure consists of several tests in using semantic mapping in the classroom. It also gives a brief elaboration about the form of semantic mapping as well as its usage. The teacher should notice them before teaching writing. It seems very helpful in order to use semantic mapping in good order.

To create a concept map, students need to do five things:

1. Read the passage
2. Writing down the main topic
3. Noting and writing down what is being said about the topic and subtopics.
It means that students are asked to look for the related word with the word given.
4. Then, connecting the ideas to the subtopics with arrow to show relationship. In this case, students list new words in the arrow given.
5. After students get some important ideas, students can focus an idea and describe their writing in their paper.

In addition, Smalley (2001:56) states that the using of this technique is started with the circle in the middle of a sheet the linier paper, then drawing a line radiating out from the center and labeling it the name of a major division of the subject.

Then the procedure is continued with circling it and from the circle, moving out further to subdivision, keeping associating to further ideas and to details related to them. After that, it is needed to study the semantic mapping to find new associations about the topic and to see the relationship of ideas. When finishing with one major division of the subject, go back to the center and start again with another subdivision as going along, add anything that occurs for section of semantic mapping. Continue to the process until running out of the ideas.

The Advantages of Semantic Mapping

According to Fisher (1995, p.68) states that there are some advantages of semantic mapping technique. They are:

1. It clearly defines the central idea, by positioning it in the center of the page.
2. It allows students to indicate clearly the relative importance of each idea.
3. It allows students to figure out the links the key ideas more easily. This is particularly important for creative work such as easy writing.
4. It allows students to see all their basic information on one page.
5. It allows students to add in new information without messy scratching out or sequencing it.

- It makes it easier for students to see information in different way because it does not lock it into specific position.

The example of semantic mapping can be seen as in the following:



Figure 1
Semantic Mapping for Kangaroo
 (from Dale D. Johnson: 1981)

From this example, the writer wants the student write their ideas about describe the animal by using semantic mapping technique. It is aimed to help them to explore the relationship between ideas and facts by different ways to think the subject. Therefore, through semantic mapping technique, students motivate to develop their ideas and opinion to make good writing, especially report writing.

Research Finding and Discussion

After data was analyzed, there were some research findings. It could be proven from mean of students' scores. The score mean of test I in cycle I was 52.33, the mean of test II in cycle II was 64.66, and the test III in cycle II was 74.3. There was a significant improvement of students' scores from cycle I until cycle II.

The improvement could be seen from the percentage of students' mastery. The percentage of students' mastery in test I was 16.6 %, test II was 63.3%, and test III was 100 %. Therefore, it could be concluded that the procedure of cycle II was successfully done because the result was very good.

The research findings were also obtained from the qualitative data from the observation sheet, it was found out that the students were confused in the first meeting. However, after next meeting the students could increase their understanding.

Furthermore, from the observation sheet and diary note, it was found out that teaching-learning process ran effectively and the students seemed more active and enjoyable. Even though the students got

problems in the early meeting, but by and by they could overcome the problems and enjoyed their lesson. Therefore, it could be concluded that Semantic Mapping Technique significantly improved students' achievement in writing report.

Conclusion

After analyzing the quantitative data, the writer found out that the students' scores increased during the cycles. In orientation test, total score was 1570 and the mean was 52.33. In writing test I (cycle I), total score was 1940 and the mean 64.66. In writing test II (cycle II), total score was 2229 and the mean was 74.3. Moreover, the qualitative data showed that the students were more interested and enjoyable in writing report by applying Semantic Mapping Technique. Therefore, it can be concluded that Semantic Mapping Technique can improve students' achievement in writing report.

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