# *The Effect of Clustering Technique on The Students' Ability in Writing Descriptive Text at Grade Viii of SMP Negeri 4 Pematangsiantar*

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## Abstract

This research is aimed to know the effect of clustering technique on the students' ability in writing descriptive text. Therefore, the researcher formulate a question as the problem. In order to answer the problems, some theories of experts were used, they are: Brown (2001), Checkett and Checkett (2006), Harmer (2004), Langan (2000), Patel and Jain (2008), Reid (1988), Richard and Renandya (2002). This research is quantitative research. This research was conducted by applying Quasi-Experimental design. To answer the problem, grade VIII students of SMP Negeri 4 Pematangsiantar were used as the population and there were 60 students chosen as the sample of the research. It was chosen that grade VIII-5 students were chosen as the experimental group and VIII-9 as the control group. To analyze the data, the writer used IBMSPSS 20.0. From data analysis, mean of the writing score in experimental group is 77.95, meanwhile mean of the writing score in control group is 67.79. The result of analyzing the data shows the score of t-test is higher than t-table (4.12> 1.67). The hypothesis was accepted. Based on the analysis of data, it can be concluded that there is a significant effect of using clustering technique on the students' ability in writing descriptive text at grade VIII of SMP Negeri 4 Pematangsiantar.

Keywords: Clustering technique, writing, descriptive text

## 1. Introduction

English has been chosen by Indonesian government as the first foreign language. It could be seen that English learnt from all level of Indonesia. English also has significant role especially in education. It is taught at school and considered as a major subject. It becomes one of important subject material that at school even includes as one of material of national examination. Basically, there are four skills of English: listening, speaking, reading and writing. Students must master the four language skills in order the use of English effectively. But one of the most important of those four basic skills is writing because it is one of media of communication.

As we know, writing is not easy. Among the skills, writing is the most difficult skill to be learnt, because it needs hard thinking in producing words, sentences, and paragraph at the same time. As Richard and Renandya (2002: 303) stated that, "writing is the most difficult skill for second language learners to master. The difficulty lies not only in generating and organizing ideas, but also in translating these ideas into readable text." Writing is an important skill which students must have, besides reading, listening and speaking in language learning process. Brown (2001: 335) stated that, writing is the product of thinking, drafting, and revising procedure that requires specialized skills. It is

a process of putting ideas or thoughts into words which is combined into the form of paragraphs. Writing also requires background knowledge and competence of vocabulary, spelling, grammar, punctuation, coherence, etc. The importance of writing for students is to express their feeling and produces their language on the paper. To be a good writer, the students practice and try to write and increase their ability in writing a good text.

In general students have some problems in learning writing descriptive text that make the students have less knowledge on descriptive text. They have no found ideas to begin in writing form. They did not know generic structure of writing descriptive text. The teachers lack of creativity to improve students in writing descriptive text. The situations that make the learners bored and difficult to face the condition of writing descriptive text and make the students less about writing descriptive text.

To solve the problems above, there are many techniques that can be used by teacher to attract the students' interest in writing; one of them is clustering technique. By using a clustering, students can develop their writing skill and easier to develop the ideas. The process of clustering is very useful to help students to generate and organize ideas into a good composition of writing, so the product of writing can ease the reader in understanding the composition coherently. According to Langan (2000: 7) clustering technique also known as *diagramming or mapping,* is another strategy that can be used to generate material for a paper. This method is helpful for people who like think in a visual way. In clustering, you use lines, boxes, arrows, and circle to show relationships among the ideas and details.      Based on the explanation discussed above, the writer is interested to conduct a research entitled: "The Effect of using Clustering Technique in Teaching Writing Descriptive Text at grade Eight in SMP Negeri 4 Pematangsiantar".

**Writing**

Writing is an important skill that should be learned by students in language learning. Writing also one of the language skills, which inform us the writer's ideas in the written form. Writing is a kind of process or activity that needs much time to make a good writing. It needs time to think, to write, to edit, and to rewrite in order to make a good composition and used to express and explain ideas. It also takes more study and practices.

There are several definition of writings. Harmer (2004: 4) said that, "Writing is kind of expressing ideas, feelings and desires uses a conventional graphic system". Harmer (2004: 31) also added, "Writing encourages students to focus on accurate language use and because they think as they write, it may well provoke language development as they resolve problem which puts in their minds". Axelord and Cooper (1985: 1) "Writing helps you think and learn, enhances your chances of success, contributes to your personal development, and strengthens your relationships with other people." The very act of writing encourages you to be creative as well as organized and logical in your thinking. All these points make the teaching of writing a complex matter, since all this should be taken into consideration for efficient learning of writing strategies.

Based on the explanation above, the writer gives her opinion that writing is a unique skill because writing allows us to flow our ideas, knowledge, experience and emotion into words on the page considerately. It is also an important skill which is able to give message or information to the readers based on their understanding of written form. Besides it, the writer can communicate with the readers through writing.

**The Writing Process**

According to Harmer (2004: 12), "The writing process is a way of looking at what people do when they compose written text". The writing process teaches the students how to develop their ideas and record them in written form. Each stage of the writing process is important and needs to be explicitly taught. Harmer (2004: 4) also added, "There are four main elements in writing process, they are: planning, drafting, editing (reflecting and revising), and final version. All of them will be discussed in the following:

a)      Planning

When planning, students have to think about three main issues. In the first place they have to consider the purpose of their writing since it will influence (amongst other things) not only the type of the text they wish to produce but also the language they use. Secondly, experienced writers think of the audience they are writing for, since this will influence not only the shape of the writing (how it is laid out, how the paragraphs are structured, etc) but also the choice of the language. Thirdly, writers have to consider the content structure of the piece that is, how best to sequence the facts, ideas or arguments which they have decided to include.

b)      Drafting

As the writing process proceeds into editing, a number of drafts maybe produced on the way to the final version. Drafting offers the students opportunity to get their ideas down. It may be in author's notebook, on separated sheets of paper, or on the computer. It offers writer a choice of ways to draft to motivate them to write and to draw on their different strengths as learners.

c)      Editing (Reflecting and Revising)

Reflecting and Revising are often helped by other readers (or editor) who comment and make suggestions. Other reader's reaction to a piece of writing will help the author to make appropriate revisions. Doing editing gets the writing ready to go out into the world. It explains to the author that the purpose of editing is to make writing easy for readers to understand.

d)      Final Version

After editing the draft, making the changes is necessary to produce the final version. It may look considerably different from both the original plan and the first draft, because things have changed in the editing process. The author is now ready to share the written text to its intended audiences.


**Descriptive text**

**Definition**

The word "descriptive" comes from the word "describe". Description paragraph was a paragraph that describes a particular person, place or thing. Description in writing is the process of creating visual images and sensory impression through words. More often, description is a part of another piece of writing and is used to inform an audience about how something or someone looked or to persuade an audience to see something from the writer's point of view. Descriptive is type of written, which has the specific function to give description about an object (human or non-human). It means that it has a purpose to describe an object. The object can be concrete or abstract object. It can be

person, animal, personality, etc. Kane (2000: 351) stated, "Description is about sensory experience how something looks, sounds, tastes. Mostly it is about visual experience, but description also deals with other kinds of perception."

The function of descriptive text is to entertain, express feelings, related experience, inform, and persuade the reader. It means that descriptive text has some function to make the reader interest to read the text, because it can be entertain, and the writer can relate his experience to all of the reader.

### 1. The Generic Structure
Identification    : identifies the subject of description.
Description       : describes object's parts, qualities, and   characteristics.

### 2. The Lexical Grammatical Features
a)  Focus on a specific participant: has a specific object, is not general and unique (only one); for example: Bandengan beach, my house, Borobudur temple, uncle Jim.
b)  Use of simple present tense: if things/persons descried are still alive the sentence pattern used is simple present because it tells the fact of the description object.
c)  Use of relational process: used when classifying and describing appearance/qualities and parts/functions of phenomena (is, are, has, have); for example: Cat is a mammal, My mum is really cool, It has very thick fur.
d)  Use of adjectives: the use of adjective to clarify noun (noun); for example: a beautiful beach, a handsome man, the famous place in Jepara etc.
e)  Use of action verb: there is a verb that shows an activity (its activity can be seen); for example: run, sleep, walk, cut etc.

**The Example of Descriptive Text**

*My Teddy Bear*

*I have a favorite doll. It is an original Teddy Bear from America. Aunt Lily gave it to me last year when she returned from her business trip in New York. I was very happy. I put it on a cabinet next to my bed. Sometimes I use it as a pillow.*

*My Teddy Bear is very big, and the color is brown. It is about 150 centimeters tall and the width is about 50 centimeters. When I put it on my bed it will occupy half of it. It is almost as big as my body. It is made of typical kind of fabric called rasfur. The head is round with the size of 25 centimeters. It has two ears which located on top of its head. The shape of the ear is half circle and the size is half of my palm. The color of its eye is dark brown. I think it is made of glass since I can see through it. It has a light brown ribbon encircling its neck. On the sole of each foot, there is a paw pattern made of smooth fabric.*

Adopted from: http://www.wordcliff.com/2017/05/contoh-descriptive-text-tentang-boneka.html

The Lexical Grammatical Features of "My Teddy Bear"
a.      Focus on a specific participant  : Teddy Bear
b.      Use of simple present tense      : is, have, has
c.      Use of relational process        : I have a favorite doll, My Teddy Bear is very big, It has two ears.
d.      Use of adjectives                : happy, big, brown
e.      Use of action verb               : put, see, made

**Clustering Technique**

1. **The Definition of Clustering**

In the writing process there is a prewriting step. One of the prewriting steps is clustering. There are a lot of definitions about clustering stated by experts. According Dawson and Essid (2010: 1) said that "clustering is a type of prewriting that allows you to explore many ideas as soon as they occur to you. Prewriting is one of activities that prepare to write the first draft. Clustering is one of prewriting activities that helps students to find a topic.

Another definition stated by Langan (2000: 25) said that "Clustering also known as diagramming or mapping, or another strategy that can be used to generate material for a paper." This technique is helpful for people to think in a visually way. In clustering, you use lines, boxes, arrows and circle to show relationship among the ideas and derails that occur to you. Buscemi (2002:14), said that "clustering is a good way to turn a broad subject into a limited and more manageable topic for a short essay." It means that clustering is one way to be used when we are in doubtful how to express our ideas well.

As stated above, clustering technique is particular technique can be used in pre-writing stage before a rough draft is developed into a piece of writing. Clustering is also named as diagramming, is a strategy in producing material for a paper which is helpful for people who like thinks visually. In diagramming people use lines, boxes, arrows, and circles show the connections among the ideas and details that occur. The rule in diagramming is that there is no right or wrong way of diagramming so that the various ideas and details relate to one another.

2. **The Application of Clustering Technique in Writing Descriptive Text**

From the concept stated previously, it can be known that clustering is a strategy that can be used to generate material for a paper. This technique is helpful for the writers who like to do their thinking in a visual way. According to Axelord and Cooper (1985: 461) 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 clusters before finding one that is promising. 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.

It can be concluded that to use the clustering technique to students' descriptive writing, is firstly introducing about the topic, whether it describes about person, place, and object. Circle the topic which has been determined. Try to engage students in clustering activity by giving their contribution in oral responses. After getting the topic, let them to explore their ideas. Make a sentence of each idea that has been deserved.

The figure of clustering technique

(Diagram: TOPIC at center connected by arrows to five "Key Word" ovals)
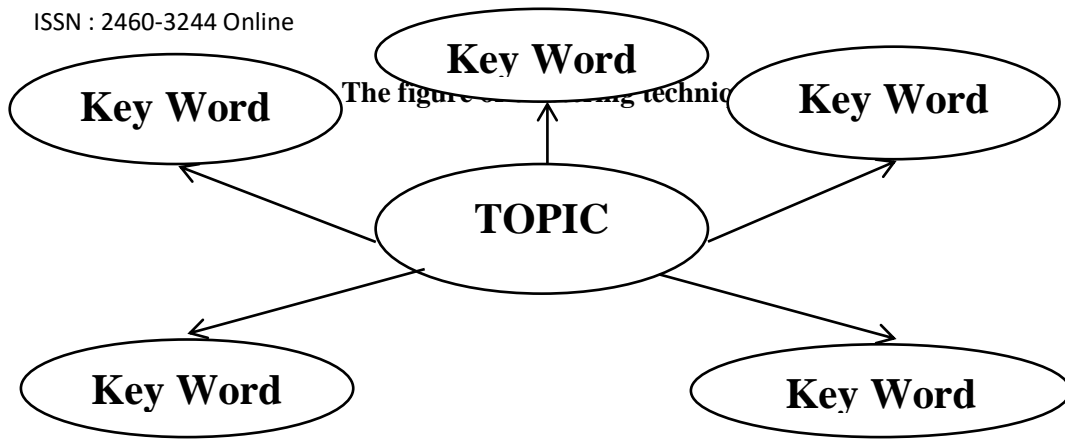
## 2.Research Methodology

The research design used in this study is quantitative research design by applying Quasi-Experimental design to know the effect of applying Clustering technique in writing descriptive text. In conducting this design, the subjects of the writer were divided into two groups; experimental group and control group. According to Creswell (2009: 4) "Quantitative research is a means for testing objective theories by examining the relationship among variables. These variables, in turn, can be measured, typically on instruments, so that numbered data can be analyzed using statistical procedures."

The treatment was introduced only to the experimental subject after measuring the two groups. The experimental group was treated by using Clustering technique while the control group was treated without Clustering technique. The test was given for each group and the average differences score were compared in order to certain whether the experimental treatment produce the greater change than the control group.

**Table**
**Research Design**

| Group/Class | Pre-Test | Treatment | Post-Test |
|---|---|---|---|
| *Experiment* | X1 | ✓ | Y2 |
| *Control* | X1 | - | Y2 |

Note:
- ✓  : Treatment using clustering technique
- -  : Treatment without clustering technique

## Sample

According to Gay (1987: 110), "Sampling is the process of selecting a group of subjects for a study in such a way that the individuals represent the larger group from which they were selected." In selecting the sample, simple random is used. The writer divided them into two groups; the first class is VIII-9 consist of 30 students called as the control group and the second class is VIII-5 consist of 30 students called as the experimental group and both of the sample is 60 students.

## Research Instrument

The instrument that the writer used in this research is essay test. The test given to the students are focused on writing descriptive paragraph. The aim of this test is to measure the students' ability in writing descriptive paragraph. The test is used in this study is pre-

To know the effect or result of the research, t-test formula was used to calculate. To analyze the data, the independent sample t-test is applied by using IBM SPSS 20.0. It is to analyze the possible differences in writing composition between the two groups involved in essay test. The procedure of analyzing data using IBM SPSS 20.0. Open the IBM SPSS 20.0 application.

a) Input the data.
b) Click **Analyze**→ Compare Means →**Independent Sample T-Test**.
c) Input value variable to **Test Variable(s)** and group variable to **Grouping Variable**. Then click **Define Groups**.
d) Type *Experimental* in **Group1** column and *Control* in **Group 2** column. Then, click **Continue**→**OK**.
e) The output will appear in two tables: **Group Statistics** and **Independent Sample Test**.
f) **Group Statistics** table shows data description which we analyze. The column which can be compared between two samples is **Standard Deviation (Std. Deviation)** column. It shows the difference of standard deviation of students' mark from two different groups.
g) **Independent Sample T-Test** table is divided into two parts, such as **Levene's Test for Equality of Variances** (to test the homogeneity of variances) and **T-Test for Equality of Means** (to test mean difference)
h) In **T-Test for Equality of Means** column, if the result of $t_0 > t_t$, it means that the students' average mark in experimental group is higher than in control group. It also shows that there is a significant effect of using Clustering technique in writing descriptive text.

After getting the result of t-test, which are the value of t-test > $t_{table}$ = 4.124 > 1.671, and Sig. (2-tailed) value < 0. 05 = 0.000 < 0.05, it can be concluded that the alternative hypothesis which the researcher has researched about there is a significant effect of using Clustering Technique on students' writing descriptive text at grade VIII of SMP Negeri 4 Pematangsiantar is accepted.

4.      **Research Findings**

Based on the data analysis of the research, the researcher found that the effect of Clustering technique is more significant to the students at grade VIII of SMP Negeri 4 Pematangsiantar in writing descriptive text than the effect of Conventional Method. It was proved from the mean of the writing score in experimental group is 77.95 and in that class almost all of students got scores that are higher than the minimum standard score (KKM) and four of them got scores higher than 90. The mean of the writing score in control group is 67.79 and there were twelve students who got the score which pass the minimum standard score (KKM).

Using Clustering technique is a good decision in teaching writing descriptive to motivate the students to write and to stimulus their ideas. The statement could be showed by describing the analysis of the score from the essay test that had been held in experimental and control class. After that, it was proved by accounting the t-test, where t-test was higher than t-table. The t-test was 4.124 and t-table was 1.671. So, Ha was accepted and Ho was rejected.

**Discussion**

This research aimed to find out is there any significant effect of using Clustering technique to the students' ability in writing descriptive text of SMP Negeri 4 Pematangsiantar. Researcher chose two classes as the sample that divided into two groups are VIII-5 as Experimental Group and VIII-9 as Control Group.

The relevant previous studies related to the use of Clustering Technique which support the materials of this research is enough to prove that the research was successful to be conducted. Langan (2000: 25) said that "Clustering known as diagramming or mapping, or another strategy that can be used to generate material for a paper." This technique is helpful for people to think in a visually way. In clustering, we can use lines, boxes, arrows and circle to show relationship amongs the ideas and derails that occur to you.

According Dawson and Essid (2010: 1) "clustering is a type of prewriting that allows you to explore many ideas as soon as they occur to you. Prewriting is one of activities that prepare to write the first draft. Clustering is one of prewriting activities that helps students to find a topic. It can be seen from the writing score and total number of students who passed the minimum standard score between experimental and control group.

Based on the result of the data analysis, it is proven that there was a significant effect of using Clustering technique to the students' ability in writing descriptive text. The students in experimental group had chance to organize their thinking before they develop in a text. The students' score in writing descriptive paragraph by using clustering technique is better. It means that using clustering technique in teaching writing descriptive paragraph is quite effective. It shows that the result of t-test was higher than t-table (4.12 > 1.67), therefore the null hypothesis ($H_0$) is rejected and alternative hypothesis (Ha) was accepted.

**4.Conclusions**

After finding the research, there are several conclusions, as below:

1. The students' achievement in writing descriptive text on experimental group at SMP Negeri 4 Pematangsiantar is more effective by using clustering technique.
2. Clustering Technique can help the students in SMP Negeri 4 Pematangsiantar to organize their thinking before they develop in a paragraph.
3. By using Clustering Technique, students can enjoy learning with others and they are more creative in composing descriptive text with well-organized.

During doing the research, the researcher found some problems that the researcher recommended some suggestion. The problems that researcher found during the researcher are:

1. The students are difficult to develop their ideas in writing because they are lack of vocabulary so they are not able to express what they are thinking or they just write a simple descriptive text.
2. The students are not able to arrange a descriptive text in accordance with the generic structure and well grammar.
3. The students are less of motivation so they are not interested to write.

Therefore, the researcher gives some suggestions for the teacher, students and for the next researcher as follows:

**1.    For the Teachers:**
a)  Clustering Technique has provided a positive influence to the students through time giving to generate their ideas before writing, so the teacher may use Clustering Technique in teaching writing as an alternatve technique.
b)  To maximize the effect Clustering Technique, the teacher should know all their students in the classroom first.
c)  The teachers should be able to create a good atmosphere or situation during the learning process in order to get the students' attention before starting the lesson. Brainstorming could be the best way to get it.

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