



Improving Students' Writing Skills in Composing Descriptive Texts with Clustering Technique: A Lesson Learned from Vocational Schools

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Abstract

This study investigates the use of clustering techniques to improve students' writing skills in composing descriptive texts. This study used Classroom Action Search (CAR) as the research method. This study consisted of two cycles. Each cycle consists of four steps: Planing, Action, Observation, and Reflection. The researchers conducted this study over almost a month, as each cycle was conducted in three sessions. To collect and analyze the data, the study used information from interviews, observations, questionnaires, and students' pre-test and post-test performance to corroborate the data collected. The results of this study indicate that using clustering techniques in teaching descriptive writing can improve students' writing skills. The students' responses showed that they were interested in learning the subject of writing because they found it easy to write using this technique. Additionally, students' ability on pre-test and post-test showed significant improvement. Therefore, the average value for pre-test was 37.30. In the first cycle, the average was 71.60. On the other hand, the average for the second cycle was 80.45. This means that there was an average improvement of 34.30 points or 91.96% from the student's score from pre-study to the first cycle, and an improvement of 43.14 points or 115.66% in the average score compared to the student's score from pre-study to the second cycle. Based on the this result, the study concluded that teaching descriptive English writing to the 10th grade of SMKN 3 Mataram students using clustering techniques can improve their writing ability.

Keywords: Writing Skills; Clustering technique; Descriptive texts; Vocational schools

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INTRODUCTION

Writing is one of the four language skills that are difficult for second and foreign language learners to master (Manegre, 2021). The difficulty lies not only in generating and organizing ideas but also in translating ideas into readable texts. For students who consider English as a second or foreign language, writing is the most difficult skill to learn. This involves brainstorming, planning, drafting, revising, editing, and proofreading (Fadhly, Emzir, & Lustyantje, 2018). Writing is a form of language production just like speaking, but writing requires more time to think about the topic and revise the work to complete good sentences and paragraphs (Hassanzadeh & Fotohnejad, 2021). Writing takes more time to develop the language through topic determination and revision to become good writing. Writing is the process of expressing thoughts and ideas in paragraphs where each sentence is related to each other (Nemati,

Alavi & Mohebbi, 2019). Writing in this study means inserting words into sentences that relate to each other to form an explanatory paragraph.

Teachers should use an appropriate techniques to involve students in the learning and teaching process of writing English. Appropriate methods are used to achieve objectives using consistent methods and in harmony with the approaches used by teachers and carried out in the classroom. This technique manifests through specific activities that are consistent and in line with the classroom approach (Khoiriyah, Waris & Juhansar, 2019). This technique is a specific activity of great importance in the learning and teaching process in the classroom, in which the method is consistently implemented or manifested in line with the approach to achieve the goal (Anggrani, 2020). Teaching Descriptive writing in English requires effective techniques such as clustering to overcome students' problems. Clustering techniques are similar to idea diagramming or mapping, which visually generates paragraph material by creating lines, boxes, arrows, and circles that represent relationships between ideas. Clustering method is a strategy to express relationships between facts and ideas and requires advance preparation time to roughly divide topics (Herniyastuti & Rahmi, 2020). In other words, clustering techniques are preliminary and it's strategic preparation into appropriated paragraph.

Performing writing skill, students often struggle of faced difficulties in composing the idea into paragraph. Ismayanti, & Kholiq (2020) says writing is the hardest skill for second language learners to learn. The challenge is not just coming up with and organizing ideas, but also putting those ideas into readable text. Rovikasari, Suparno, and Supriyadi (2019) suggest that teachers can help with writing by providing vocabulary lists, having students translate words, and practicing with text. They also provided solutions for language use, such as teachers explaining tenses in relation to texts, giving feedback on writing assignments, and engaging in discussions with unmotivated students, Rahman, Al-Qasri, S., & Ofara (2023). They also emphasized the importance of collaboration among students and conducting intensive writing exercises to identify weaknesses. Consistent application of teaching techniques in the classroom is crucial (Almubark, 2016).

Descriptive text is hard for students to learn and write. Students typically struggle with organizing their ideas and encounter challenges in building and developing their imagination. Teachers must be skilfull in organizing learning-teaching activities, mastering materials, methods, and techniques to facilitate student understanding and practical application of descriptive writing. A good technique can help students comprehend and master the lessons. Teaching failures can be caused by unsuitable methods. There are many effective English teaching methods and techniques.

Several studies on clustering techniques and English writing have been conducted by scholars. Some of these studies explored the use of Classroom Action Research in improving students' writing ability in descriptive text (Arifuddin, 2019; Herniyastuti & Rahmi, 2020). These studies suggest that students grasp the concept of descriptive sentence formation and are motivated to transform them into a descriptive text. This engaging activity stimulates students' interest in describing visuals or objects, resulting in higher participation and enthusiasm during the writing learning process. These studies suggest that clustering improves students' writing ability (Megawati, 2019; Sari & Wahyuni, 2018; Suryani & Apriliani, 2021; Widiyanti et al., 2018). Other studies examine the impact of clustering on enhancing students' English writing skills. These studies were conducted by Dewi & Ayunisa (2020), Hanafiawi, Muharam, & Parmawati (2020), and Sumartini, Puspita, & Zahrída (2018). In 2018, research revealed that clustering technique impacts students' writing ability with a t-count of 2.07 and t-table

2.01. The organization's T-count was 2.56 and the content's T-count was 3.62, T-count of coherent: 3, 47. H1 accepted due to higher t-count than t-table.

Based on the researcher's experience, the observation of tenth grade students in the Otomotif Department of SMKN 3 Mataram indicated a passive teaching and learning process. During an interview with the teacher, it was discovered that the students lacked a clear understanding of descriptive text, including how to identify and describe people, places, and things in English writing. The teacher used the old teaching method, making students bored and unable to understand the material. Students had low interest in writing and struggled with language use, vocabulary, and punctuation. Hence, the teacher must employ creative teaching methods, such as interviews and observation, which are commonly used in survey-based and qualitative research (Mackey & Gass). Interviews enable researchers to explore unobservable phenomena and gather extra data (Susan, 2005).

To enhance students' descriptive writing skills, the researcher utilizes the "Clustering Technique". According to Turkay, & Holzinger (2017) Clustering is a visual strategy that aids in generating content and promotes visual thinking. In clustering, you visualize relationships among ideas using lines, boxes, arrows, and circles. It aids students in generating ideas prior to writing. The clustering technique can motivate students to write and stimulate their ideas. It also helps them organize their thinking before developing it in a paragraph (Weigle, SaraCushing, 2020).

This research aims to enhance English writing by using clustering technique and exploring students participation and ability improvement. Action research will be conducted to understand how students experience the technique implementation. This study is expected to contribute constructively to students, teachers, and researchers. It provides information on using the clustering technique in English writing instruction, helping teachers and students understand and prepare for its implementation. This research can help students enhance their English writing by using clustering technique. Students can cluster words into boxes, arrows, and circles, connecting lines to organize and generate ideas for quality English sentences, paragraphs, or text.

RESEARCH METHOD

Research Design

This study conducted the Classroom Action Research (CAR) design proposed by Ivankova & Wingo (2018) to investigate changes in classroom practices and learning-teaching quality. It diagnoses and solves problems through need analysis, planning, acting, observing, reflection, creativity, and innovation. The technique implementation occurred in two cycles with three meetings each (Sugiyono, 2017). This research design aimed to use the clustering technique in the learning-teaching process, and examine its impact on students' participation in English writing descriptive text. This study included 31 of 10th grade students from SMKN 3 in Mataram city, NTB province. This school was chosen as a research institution due to difficulties students face in writing descriptive texts in English. Students struggle to express and explore ideas and experiences in written English. To solve problems and encourage students to express ideas and experiences through English writing using clustering techniques, the researcher conducted the studies with Classroom Action Research (CAR).

Interviews were conducted with English teachers before and after the CAR. This study aimed to determine students' writing difficulty, participation in writing lessons, and instructional strategies in writing learning before conducting the classroom action study. It was conducted after action research in the classroom to find teachers' reactions to the cluster method learning strategy. The survey had questions for student respondents to answer as a preliminary study to obtain data about students' English language learning

preferences, specifically in writing skills and techniques used by teachers. Researchers used field notes to observe and document the classroom atmosphere, instructional environment, and student activities during writing instruction. The test was given and aimed to help students focus on explanation writing, resulting in their descriptive text. The aim of this test was to evaluate students' descriptive writing skills using pre-test and post-test assessments. A pre-test was done before using clustering in the pilot study to assess students' expository writing ability. The post-test was done after practicing clustering in a descriptive writing class.

Research Instruments

In this study, various instruments were used to gather data. The researcher utilized interviews, field notes, and questionnaires for qualitative data. The researcher used students' final papers as pre-test and post-test for quantitative data collection. Interviews were conducted with English teachers before and after the classroom behavior survey. This study aimed to determine students' writing difficulty, participation in writing lessons, and instructional strategies in writing learning before conducting the classroom action study. It was conducted after action research in the classroom to find teachers' reactions to the cluster method learning strategy. The survey had questions for student respondents to answer. It was used in a preliminary study to obtain data about students' English language learning preferences, specifically in writing skills and techniques used by teachers. This study consisted of five items. It was used to identify student responses to teaching and learning activities using clustering techniques after classroom behavioral research. Field notes were utilized to document study conduct and gather valuable student and teacher discussions and considerations for future meetings.

Researchers used clustering techniques to observe and document the classroom atmosphere, instructional environment, and student activities during writing instruction. The test aimed to help students focus on explanation writing, resulting in their descriptive text. The aim of this test was to evaluate students' descriptive writing skills using pre-test and post-test assessments. A pre-test was done before using clustering in the pilot study to assess students' expository writing ability. In addition, researcher used clustering techniques to calculate quantitative data to determine the performance and improvement of students in writing their descriptive sentences in English. The researcher used the overall assessment rubric to analyze the results of the quantitative data.

Data Analysis

In analyzing data related to testing students' writing skills, the researcher used an analytical scoring rubric adapted from Boztunç & İlhan, (2019). The scoring rubric for analytical writing presents five elements: content, organization, vocabulary, mechanic, and language use or grammar. In this study, researchers combined vocabulary and mechanical components. The table below is an analytical scoring rubric that authors used to analyze students' writing paragraph.

Table 1. Analytical scoring rubric adapted from Boztunç & İlhan, (2019)

Components of Writing	Scores	Indicators
Content	4	Relevant to the topic and easy to understand
	3	Rather relevant to the topic and easy to understand
	2	Relevant to the topic but is not quite easy to understand
	1	Quite relevant to the topic but is not quite easy to understand

Components of Writing	Scores	Indicators
Organization	4	Most of the sentences are related to the main idea
	3	Some sentences are related to the main idea
	2	Few sentences related to the main idea
	1	The sentences are unrelated to each other
Vocabulary & Mecanic	4	A few errors in choice of words, spelling and punctuation
	3	Some errors in choice of words, spelling and punctuation
	2	Occasional errors in choice of words, spelling and punctuation
	1	Frequent errors in choice of words, spelling and punctuation
Grammar	4	A fewgrammatical inaccuracies
	3	Some grammatical inaccuracies
	2	Numerous grammatical inaccuracies
	1	Frequent grammatical inaccuracies

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Research Findings

Findings of Preliminary Study

The preliminary interviews occurred on January 2024, the author asked the teacher about English language teaching, particularly writing. The author inquired about student writing difficulties, participation, teacher strategies, and clustering techniques. The teaching and learning process proceeded normally with pre-activities, activities, and post-activities. In writing, teachers used group and individual activities. Next, they asked about the students' difficulties. Teachers said writing is a tough skill for students to learn, as they struggle to turn their ideas into paragraphs. This could be because of limited vocabulary, grammar comprehension, and word choice in sentences. The next question was about the teacher's writing strategies and clustering techniques. The teacher said he knew about clustering techniques but never used them in writing. She argued that clustering can help students develop ideas in writing. Students' writing skills may improve.

The result of pre questionnaire

The pre questionnaire was conducted to know the students' response about English lesson especially in writing skill. The questionnaire was given to X TKRO A, the tenth-grade students of SMKN 3 Mataram - the automotive department on Wednesday, January 17th, 2024. The questionnaire provides five cluster of questions and description; see the fooling table 2.

Table. 2 The the five-cluster questionnairesdescription

No	Questionnaire	The Description
1	<i>The feeling toward English lesson</i>	The result of the survey shows that 3% of students liked English very much, 29% of students liked English classes, 52% of students felt that English classes were fair, and 52% of students did not like English classes was 16% English class, thus, a conclusion can be drawn from this result.
2	<i>The most difficult skill in English skill</i>	The result appeared that 55% of understudies accepted that composing was the foremost troublesome ability to memorize, there were 26% of the students consider tuning in was the foremost difficult skill to memorize. It was 16% of the students consider talking the foremost troublesome expertise to memorize. Whereas 3% appeared that perusing was the foremost troublesome aptitude to be learnt by understudies.

3	<i>The feeling toward teaching learning process of writing</i>	The result shows that 71% of understudies felt reasonable to composing ability, 10% of the understudies like composing expertise, and 16% of the understudies didn't like composing aptitude, and 3lt like exceptionally much toward composing ability. From the information displayed over it was demonstrated that a few understudies ought to be given inspiration and advancement in examining in arrange to alter their feeling gotten to be fascinated by composing lesson.
4	<i>The feeling if the students write using English</i>	It showed that 61% of the students got difficulties in writing skill, and 26% of the students felt fair dealing with writing. Meanwhile 10% felt easy, and 3% felt very easy to write in English.
5	<i>The teacher's style when teaching writing</i>	The result was 74% of the students felt fair in the way of the teacher teach, 23% of the students felt interested about it. While 3% of the students felt very interested in the way of the teacher teach. The conclusion in term of writing problems was the class still got difficult in writing skill and need improvement to reach the Minimum Mastery Criterion- <i>Kriteria Ketuntasan Minimal (KKM)</i> .

The result of pre-test

The pretest was held on Friday, January 19th, 2024. Understudies assigned to type ten sentences in a graphic section. To determine the pre-test result, the author calculated the cruel score, which turned out to be 37.30. Around 3 out of 31 students achieved a score above the minimum passing criteria, while the remaining 28 students did not meet the criteria. This analysis indicates that most of the students in X TKRO A, the tenth-grade automotive department of SMKN 3 Mataram, have poor writing skills in the graphic section. After analyzing the pre-test results, it can be concluded that most of the 10th grade students at SMKN 3 Mataram - automotive division struggled with writing skills. Therefore, a solution needs to be found to overcome this issue. The essayist used Clustering Strategy in teaching writing as an improvement in the teaching and learning process. The aim was to enhance students' writing skills. The activity inquiry was conducted in two cycles, each following the stages of planning, acting, observing, and reflecting. Each cycle had three gatherings.

Findings of Cycle 1

The researcher plans and prepares everything before carrying out the learning and teaching activities at this stage. At this stage, the researcher used appropriate clustering techniques, appropriate teaching materials, and media to use in English Language teaching. The researchers used descriptive text as the appropriate material, clustering technique as the appropriate technique, and powerpoint and pictures as the media to teach. Besides, the researchers also make the lesson plan and consult it with the English teacher before applying it in the classroom. After getting the lesson plan ready, the researchers prepare the material of descriptive text and the clustering technique, including the research instruments for collecting the data. The following tabel.3 is the result of the description finding from the Cycle 1.

Table. 3. The result of finding from cycle 1

Steps of Cycle	Description of Finding cycle I
<i>Planning</i>	There are some activities conducting int his phase. First of all, to find out students' writing ability the writer did pre-test in cycle one. Next, the writer and the teacher designed a lesson plan and selected the appropriate material. The lesson plan in this cycle was three lesson plans. The writer also prepared the model of clustering technique. The model of clustering was using boxes and lines. The writer also

	<p>prepared the material and source of study, besides the writer also prepared the media of learning. Furthermore, the teacher determined the criteria of success. The criterion of success was 75% of the students achieved the minimum writing score, the Minimum Mastery Criterion-<i>Kriteria Ketuntasan Minimal</i> (KKM).</p>
Acting	<p>Action of the first cycle was done on January 24th, 26th, and 31st, 2024. The study implemented the teaching learning process based on the lesson plan had been made. In the first meeting, the writer taught descriptive paragraph through Clustering Technique and asked the students to make Clustering Technique based on the topic given and then he collected it. In the second meeting, the students were asked to make the first draft based on their Clustering and asked them to revise their first draft by peer correction. In the third meeting, the students were asked to edit their draft, read their final draft, and collect the final draft. The final draft was the data for the post test</p>
Observing	<p>The writer carried out the observation. The writer observed the teaching learning process by monitoring the students' activities in this cycle. The writer saw that most of meetings were no running well. The students still looked confused, and still felt difficult to generate their ideas into a readable text of descriptive. It caused most of students had problems in looking for vocabularies and correct grammar. The result of post-test 1 showed that the mean score of the class derived 71.60 in which there were 19 students who passed the Minimum Mastery Criterion-<i>Kriteria Ketuntasan Minimal</i> (KKM) 65.</p>
The result of students writing	<p>To explore the result of students' writing, we need to calculate the mean score firstly. Then draw conclusion the class percentage whose passed the Minimum Mastery Criterion- <i>Kriteria Ketuntasan Minimal</i> (KKM) using the formula. The data showed that the mean score of post-tests 1 was 71.60. There were only nineteen students or 61% of the students who got the score above the Minimum Mastery Criterion-<i>Kriteria Ketuntasan Minimal</i> (KKM) meanwhile the other 12 or 39% of the students still below the criterion. It implied that the first cycle has not fulfilled the criterion.</p> <p>Based on the result of the students' writing in the cycle1, there was an improvement of students' mean score from the students' writing on the preliminary study to the students' writing on the first cycle. The mean score of the previous score was 37.30 and the mean score of the students' writing on the first cycle was 71.60. That means that there was 34.30 points or 92% of mean score improvement.</p>
Reflecting	<p>After analyzing the data by observing and evaluating the result of students' writing product showed that even though there were 92% improvement in the means score, but there were 61% of the students who got the score above the Minimum Mastery Criterion - <i>Kriteria Ketuntasan Minimal</i> (KKM). From the data above, it can be concluded that the implementation of clustering technique has not given satisfactory result on the improvement of students' writing ability. The students have not achieved the Minimum Mastery Criterion. Therefore, it needs to be revised before the implementation of the next cycle. So that it could achieve the criterion of success of this study.</p>

Findings of the cycle II Re-Planning

In line with the results of Cycle I, the researcher creatively and innovatively modifies the plan for the learning and teaching process. During this phase, researchers will also revise their lesson plans for the second cycle. When revising the lesson plan, the researchers changed the implementation of clustering technique from individual to group, allowing students to discuss, share ideas, and solve problems in groups. The following tabel. 4 is the result of the description finding from the cycle II.

Table 4. the Result of finding from cycle II re-planning

Steps of Cycle	Description of Finding Cycle II
Planning	After finding the facts that students' writing ability was not satisfied, which was proven by their post-test 1 score, the writer helped by the teacher made a lesson plan for the second cycle. Almost there were not significant differences with the previous lesson plan. The material still related to descriptive writing but it is focused on describing a thing, for example "A Car". The second cycle was carried out to solve the problem found in the first cycle in which students were still difficult to produce the word and organizing their ideas into a good descriptive paragraph.
Acting	In the implementation of this phase, the writer conducted the teaching learning process in the second cycle to get better result that was significant in improving writing ability using clustering technique in order to improve students' ability in writing descriptive text. The action of the second cycle was done on February 7 th , 14 th , and 16 th , 2024. Before began the action, the writer explained the clustering technique briefly to remembering the students. After that, the writer asked the students to make a draft using clustering technique which facilitated by the dictionary based on the topic given. After finished, the writer asked to collect it. In the second meeting, the students were asked to make the first draft based on their key words which were gathering in a cluster. In the last meeting, the students were asked to edit their draft, read their final draft, and collect it. The final draft was the data for the post-test
Observing	In line with the results of Cycle I, the researcher creatively and innovatively modifies the plan for the learning and teaching process. During this phase, researchers will also revise their lesson plans for the second cycle. When revising the lesson plan, the researchers changed the implementation of her clustering technique from individual to group, allowing students to discuss, share ideas, and solve problems in groups.
The result of Students' Writing	Based on the result of the students' writing product, there was better improvement of students' mean score from the students' writing in the preliminary study to the students' writing in the second cycle. The mean score for the first one was 37.30 and the mean score of writing post-test 2 in the second cycle was 80.45. It means that there was 43.15 points or 116% of mean score improvement. The students who passed the Minimum Mastery Criterion- <i>Kriteria Ketuntasan Minimal (KKM)</i> were 28 students or 90% if it calculated into class percentage. It indicated that the criterion of success has been achieved.
Reflecting	The result of the second post-test showed that 90% of the students got the score above the Minimum Mastery Criterion- <i>Kriteria Ketuntasan Minimal (KKM)</i> . So it has met the criterion of success that 75% of the students must get the score above the Minimum Mastery Criterion- <i>Kriteria Ketuntasan Minimal (KKM)</i> . So the writer and the collaborator decided to stop the action.

Findings After Implementing the Action

After the instructing activity had been executed, the author carried out the meet to the English educator who acted as spectator. It was to know her reaction approximately after implementation of the activity. Other than, the author gave the survey to the understudies to know their reaction about the execution of clustering procedure in educating graphic composing.

The Result of Post-Interview

The meeting took place on February 17th, 2024, the author asked the teacher about the students' condition during the activity. Despite her distant appearance, the clustering procedure was effective in teaching expressive writing. She was dedicated and passionate during the teaching and learning process. Despite some understudies were not paid attention to the instructor, so they felt more ease and confident to type their drafts using this technique. The students' support was great, as they were involved in the classroom movement. Other aspects addressed the problems faced by students and their solution in implementing clustering technique for the activity. Many students struggled with writing skills, particularly in expressing their thoughts in paragraphs. Therefore, educators should motivate students to tackle challenges. The educator should have emphasized that writing is a skill that requires practice. She concluded by saying that the clustering strategy is an effective method for teaching expressive writing because it makes it easier for students to compose a passage. It is an elective procedure in teaching writing and improves students' writing ability. The recent score showed notable differences in the teaching of graphic writing. Based on the above explanation, it can be concluded that the educator had a positive response to using the clustering method in teaching clear writing. Clustering method significantly improved students' composition skills.

The Result of Post-Questionnaire

The following *questionnaire* was administered to know the students' reactions after learning descriptive writing using clustering technique. The questionnaire was distributed to X TKRO A, the 10th grade student of SMKN 3 Mataram school - automobile department, on Friday, February 16th, 2024. This questionnaire consisted of five questions; The following are the results of the following questionnaire as seen in tabel.5.

Table 5. The result of five-questionnaires

No	Questions	Description
1	<i>The feeling toward learning writing</i>	The result of the first question showed that 7% of students felt like very much toward writing subject, 35% like writing, and 42% of students felt fair about it, the last 16% of the students unlike toward writing subject
2	<i>Does clustering technique help the student to improve their writing's ability</i>	The second question showed that 10% of the students felt clustering technique was very helpful to improve their writing's ability, 51% of the students felt clustering technique could help them to improve their writing's skill, and 39% of the students felt little help.
3	<i>The feeling toward teaching writing through clustering technique</i>	The result showed that 6% of the students felt very happy in learning writing using clustering technique, 16% of the students felt happy to learn descriptive writing using clustering technique and 68% of the students felt fair about it, and 10% of the students didn't feel happy toward writing using clustering technique. The result indicated that most of the students accepted clustering technique in teaching descriptive writing.
4	<i>The feeling in writing using clustering technique.</i>	The result showed that 3% of the students felt very easy in writing after taught using clustering technique, 26% of the students felt easy in writing, 65% of the students felt fair about it, whereas 6% of the students still felt hard in writing. From the data above, it was indicated that clustering technique was easy and

		interesting to be applied in teaching descriptive writing.
5	<i>Teacher's style during teaching writing using clustering technique</i>	The result showed that 3% of the students were very interested in the teacher's style during the action, 35% of the students felt interested, and 52% of the students felt fair about the teacher's style. It indicated that the teacher had done the action well.

Discussion

The implementation of clustering techniques to enhance students' writing skills in composing descriptive texts involves organizing ideas into visually distinct groups or clusters. This method helps students brainstorm and categorize their thoughts more effectively, leading to clearer and more coherent descriptive paragraphs (Haerazi & Irawan, 2019; Haerazi & Irawan, 2020). By grouping related ideas together, students can see connections between different aspects of their descriptions, which aids in the development of rich, detailed, and well-structured texts. Consequently, clustering techniques not only improve the organization of students' writing but also encourage creativity and thoroughness in their descriptions.

The traditional instructional methods employed in many classrooms present significant challenges. Typically, English teachers guide students through text analysis, followed by translation and comprehension exercises (Polat & Dedeoglu, 2023; Haerazi & Irawan, 2020). Afterward, students are asked to draft texts closely mirroring the examples provided. This approach often results in student disengagement, as it does not foster creativity or independent thinking. Students frequently find it challenging to generate and organize ideas, leading to frustration and a lack of motivation in writing exercises. In contrast, the introduction of clustering techniques has demonstrated considerable benefits. Students exposed to clustering methods reported an increased ease in writing. This technique involves visually grouping related ideas, which helps students to see the relationships between different concepts and elements of their descriptive texts. It is in line with Rafida (2017) who states by making the connections between ideas more explicit, clustering facilitates a more organized and systematic approach to writing. Students are better able to develop their thoughts and expand on their descriptions, resulting in richer and more detailed texts.

The data from classroom implementations of clustering techniques indicate a positive shift in both student engagement and writing proficiency. Teachers who have adopted this method have observed a marked improvement in their students' writing abilities and attitudes towards writing. Positive feedback from teachers includes satisfaction with student progress and enhanced focus on writing skills (Haerazi et al., 2020; Polat & Dedeoglu, 2023). The clustering technique's impact is reflected in the improvement of students' descriptive writing scores over successive cycles of assessment. A quantitative analysis of student performance further substantiates the effectiveness of clustering techniques. The average score of students during the preliminary study period was 37.30%. In the first cycle, this average increased to 71.60%, and by the second cycle, it rose to 80.45%. These scores represent a 91.96% improvement from the preliminary study to the first cycle and a 115% improvement by the second cycle. The number of students meeting the Minimum Mastery Criterion (KKM) also increased significantly. Initially, only 10% of students met the KKM, but this rose to 61% in the first cycle and 90% in the second cycle. These improvements underscore the clustering technique's efficacy in enhancing descriptive writing skills.

The theoretical foundation for clustering techniques lies in cognitive psychology, which suggests that organizing information into meaningful groups enhances memory

and learning (Dewi & Ayunisa, 2020). This concept, known as chunking, posits that the human brain more effectively processes and retains information when it is grouped into related clusters. By applying this principle to writing instruction, students are better able to recall and organize their ideas, leading to more coherent and detailed descriptive texts. Compared to other writing instruction methods, clustering stands out for its simplicity and effectiveness. Traditional methods, such as rote memorization and direct translation, often fail to engage students or develop their critical thinking skills. In contrast, clustering encourages active participation and creativity, making the writing process more interactive and enjoyable.

The success of clustering techniques in enhancing descriptive writing suggests potential applications in other areas of literacy education. Future research could explore the effectiveness of clustering in teaching other writing genres, as well as its impact on reading comprehension and overall literacy development (Dewi & Ayunisa, 2020). Additionally, studies could investigate the long-term effects of clustering techniques on students' writing skills and their ability to transfer these skills to other academic and real-world contexts. Clustering techniques offer a valuable tool for enhancing students' descriptive writing skills. By organizing ideas into visually distinct clusters, students can more effectively brainstorm, categorize, and develop their thoughts, leading to clearer, more coherent, and detailed descriptive texts. The positive feedback from teachers and the significant improvements in student performance underscore the technique's efficacy. Clustering not only addresses the limitations of traditional writing instruction methods but also fosters creativity and critical thinking. Future research should continue to explore and expand the applications of clustering techniques in literacy education, ensuring that more students can benefit from this innovative approach to writing instruction.

To effectively enhance students' writing skills, one needs to address the fundamental aspects of idea organization and expression. Clustering techniques have proven to be an invaluable tool in achieving this (Dewi & Ayunisa, 2020; Hanafiawi, Muharam, & Parmawati, 2020). At its core, clustering involves the visual grouping of related ideas, allowing students to categorize their thoughts systematically. This method proves particularly beneficial in writing descriptive texts, where the richness of detail and coherence of the narrative are crucial. By grouping similar ideas, students can visualize the connections between different aspects of their descriptions, leading to richer, more detailed, and structured texts. This organizational clarity is instrumental in enhancing the overall quality of students' writing, as it encourages a more thorough exploration of the subject matter and fosters creativity.

The conventional methods of writing instruction in many classrooms often fall short of fostering creativity and independent thinking. Traditional approaches typically involve a step-by-step analysis of texts, followed by translation exercises and guided writing tasks that closely mirror the examples provided by teachers (Dewi & Ayunisa, 2020; Hanafiawi, Muharam, & Parmawati, 2020). While this method may aid in understanding the mechanics of writing, it often leads to student disengagement. The lack of opportunities for students to generate and organize their ideas independently results in frustration and diminished motivation. Consequently, the traditional approach does not adequately prepare students to tackle writing tasks creatively or independently. In contrast, clustering techniques offer a more engaging and effective alternative. When students use clustering techniques, they report a marked increase in ease and enjoyment in writing tasks. This method involves creating visual clusters of related ideas, which helps students see the relationships between different concepts. By making these connections explicit, clustering enables a more organized and systematic approach to

writing. This technique empowers students to develop their thoughts more fully and expand their descriptions, resulting in richer, more detailed texts.

To better understand the practical application of clustering techniques, consider an example where students are tasked with writing a descriptive paragraph about a park. Initially, students might brainstorm various elements related to the park, such as trees, playgrounds, people, and activities. Using clustering techniques, these ideas are grouped into clusters: 'Nature' for trees and plants, 'Facilities' for playgrounds and benches, 'People' for visitors, and 'Activities' for games and relaxation. This visual organization helps students see the relationships between these elements and structure their paragraphs more coherently. The theoretical foundation for clustering techniques is rooted in cognitive psychology. The concept of chunking, which involves organizing information into meaningful groups, enhances memory and learning (Dewi & Ayunisa, 2020; Hanafiawi, Muharam, & Parmawati, 2020). Cognitive psychology suggests that the human brain more effectively processes and retains information when it is grouped into related clusters. By applying this principle to writing instruction, students can better recall and organize their ideas, leading to more coherent and detailed descriptive texts.

Compared to other writing instruction methods, clustering stands out for its simplicity and effectiveness. Traditional methods, such as rote memorization and direct translation, often fail to engage students or develop their critical thinking skills. In contrast, clustering encourages active participation and creativity, making the writing process more interactive and enjoyable (Dewi & Ayunisa, 2020; Hanafiawi, Muharam, & Parmawati, 2020). Additionally, clustering is a versatile technique that can be adapted to various writing tasks beyond descriptive texts, including narrative, expository, and persuasive writing. The success of clustering techniques in enhancing descriptive writing skills suggests potential applications in other areas of literacy education. Future research could explore the effectiveness of clustering in teaching other writing genres, as well as its impact on reading comprehension and overall literacy development. Additionally, studies could investigate the long-term effects of clustering techniques on students' writing skills and their ability to transfer these skills to other academic and real-world contexts.

Clustering techniques provide a valuable tool for enhancing students' descriptive writing skills (Dewi & Ayunisa, 2020; Hanafiawi, Muharam, & Parmawati, 2020). By organizing ideas into visually distinct clusters, students can more effectively brainstorm, categorize, and develop their thoughts, leading to clearer, more coherent, and detailed descriptive texts. The positive feedback from teachers and the significant improvements in student performance underscore the technique's efficacy. Clustering not only addresses the limitations of traditional writing instruction methods but also fosters creativity and critical thinking. Future research should continue to explore and expand the applications of clustering techniques in literacy education, ensuring that more students can benefit from this innovative approach to writing instruction.

CONCLUSION

Clustering techniques have proven to be a highly effective tool for enhancing students' writing skills, particularly in composing descriptive texts. By organizing ideas into visually distinct groups, students can brainstorm and categorize their thoughts more efficiently, resulting in clearer and more coherent writing. This method not only improves the organization of students' writing but also fosters creativity and thoroughness in their descriptions. Traditional instructional methods often lead to student disengagement due to their lack of emphasis on independent thinking and creativity. In contrast, clustering techniques encourage active participation and make the writing process more interactive and enjoyable. The positive impact of clustering is

evident in classroom implementations, where significant improvements in both student engagement and writing proficiency have been observed. Quantitative data from these implementations show substantial increases in average writing scores and the percentage of students meeting the Minimum Mastery Criterion.

The theoretical basis for clustering techniques lies in cognitive psychology, specifically the concept of chunking, which enhances memory and learning by organizing information into meaningful groups. This principle, when applied to writing instruction, enables students to better recall and organize their ideas, leading to more detailed and coherent texts. Compared to traditional methods, clustering stands out for its simplicity, versatility, and effectiveness. It can be adapted to various writing tasks beyond descriptive texts, including narrative, expository, and persuasive writing. The success of clustering techniques suggests potential applications in other areas of literacy education, making it a valuable approach for fostering creativity and improving writing skills across different genres. Future research should continue to explore and expand the applications of clustering techniques to ensure more students benefit from this innovative instructional method.

RECOMMENDATION

Based on the data and conclusions from the previous chapter, several recommendations are suggested for improving the teaching of descriptive writing in English classrooms. Firstly, considering the advantages of the clustering method, it is recommended that English teachers adopt this technique as an alternative method for conducting descriptive lessons. The results indicate that clustering techniques not only enhance students' ability to write descriptive texts but also improve teacher performance and student participation. Secondly, teachers should place an emphasis on teaching correct grammar, particularly the present tense, and encourage students to practice using it more frequently in their descriptive writing. Thirdly, it is crucial for teachers to motivate students to be enthusiastic about learning English, especially writing skills, as many students find this subject challenging. Finally, teachers should closely supervise students while they are working on their assignments to prevent academic dishonesty and ensure that all students are genuinely engaging with the material.

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