APPLYING OF SEMANTIC MAPPING TECHNIQUE IN STUDENTS' WRITING QUALITY

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Abstrak:
Keterampilan menulis sering dianggap sulit, karena dalam menulis siswa melibatkan banyak hal, seperti: gerakan tubuh untuk menulis, otak untuk berpikir apa yang akan ditulis serta pengembangannya untuk menjadi sebuah tulisan yang baik. Penelitian ini mengaplikasikan teknik *semantic mapping* dalam kualitas menulis siswa. Teknik semantik mapping adalah strategi yang efektif dalam menyusun konsep menulis agar siswa dapat menulis dengan lebih baik dan termotivasi, karena dalam proses menulis siswa sudah dengan mudah membuat konsep dan outlinenya.

Keywords: *applying*, *semantic mapping*, *writing quality*

A. Background

Mastering English was an important point for one's success in facing the globalization era. It can be achieved either formal (schools) or informal (courses) programs. However, teaching English in formal school seems to be the main source of learning for most Indonesian students.

Writing is one of the language skills that are needed by the students if they want to be successful in learning language. According to Byrne (1991:1), writing is the act of forming graphic symbols: making marks on a flat surface of some kind. Nevertheless, writing is clearly much more than the production of graphic symbols. The symbols have to be arranged, according to certain conventions, to

forms words, and words have to be arranged to form sentences. Besides that, writing involves the encoding of a message of some kind.

Similarly, Hornby (1974:7) states that writing is the act of one writer. There are two major reasons for writing, they are: we write to learn (for private purpose), and we write to communicate (for public purpose). It means that writing skill is the ability of fusing some words into a meaningful grammatical sentence and arranges them to be a good discourse.

In addition, Ur (1991: 163) states that the purposes of writing is the expression of ideas, the conveying of a message to the reader; so the ideas themselves should arguably be seen as the most important aspect of the writing.

And then, the writer found some problems faced by students and teachers during learning writing. They are writing is un-enjoyable activity to do because they thought that writing was very difficult, especially in choosing ideas and combining them into a good sentence arrangement, the students' lack of the vocabulary to write, especially in choosing the words and combining them into a good paragraph, and the students were not motivated to write a good paragraph; they were still in doubt and confused to start writing.

On contrast, English teacher's problems were: 1) the teachers only focused on English guidebook, which made the learning neither communicative nor interactive. Then, most of the students were passive during learning in the classroom, 2) the technique used by teachers seems to be monotonous because they only used traditional or conventional technique, and 3) the teachers did not

combine the materials in learning process and only used English guidebook in the classroom.

Furthermore, one way to solve those problems above was by using some techniques in learning, such as storytelling, games, puzzles, jigsaw, reading text, and so on. And then, the teachers must determine what techniques will be better for them to be used in learning because it is related to the activities on the classroom. In addition, in order to increase the quality of English lessons among students, the teachers should be more creative in designing their materials, and have a good skill in arranging the lesson, managing class, and increasing their effectiveness. The writer was interested in applying semantic mapping technique in teaching of writing skill to improve the students' writing quality.

B. Discussion

1. Semantic Mapping Technique

According to Miyazaki (2000:1), semantic mapping is a term that describes a variety of strategies designed to show how key words or concepts are related to one another through graphic representations. It means that mapping is an affective technique for teaching vocabulary and textual patterns of organization, and it is effective for improving note taking and creative thinking skills.

On contrast, Hui-lung Chia (2001:2) states that the mapping is an organized arrangement of vocabulary concepts that reveal what students

already know about the topic and provide them with a base upon which they can construct the new information learned from the text.

According to Oxford (1990: 61-62), semantic mapping is a strategy involves arranging concepts and relationships on paper to create a semantic mapping, a diagram in which the key concepts (stated in words) are highlighted and linked with related concepts via arrows or lines. Such diagram visually shows how ideas fit together. This strategy is valuable for improving both memory and comprehending of new expression. To sum up, it can also be used as the basis for entire listening reading activity, and also provides a good note-taking format.

Meanwhile, Zaid (1995:2) explains that semantic mapping is a visual representation of knowledge, a picture of conceptual relationship. Furthermore, he suggests that semantic mapping is a graphic arrangement showing the major ideas and relationships in text or among word meaning. Similarly, Whorter (1992:306) says that mapping is a process of drawing diagrams to describe how a topic and its related ideas are connected. It is means of organizing and consolidating information by using a visual format. In addition, the maps can be divided into two types; they are concept and thought pattern maps.

First, the concept maps are visual outlines, show how ideas within a passage are related. Maps can take different forms. Think of a map as a diagram that shows how ideas are connected. Maps, like outline, can vary for detail included, ranging from very general to highly specific.

The last, thought pattern maps is evident throughout a passage; it may wish to draw a map reflecting that pattern. When reading a history text, you may find it helpful to draw time lines to organize events within historical periods. Alternatively, when reading a text that compares two works of philosophy or two key political figures, you may find one of the maps helpful in distinguishing similarities and differences.

According to Zaid (1995:5), there are 5 (five) procedures of semantic mapping technique, they are:

1)Introducing the topic

The teacher studies a unit in the syllabus and determines that semantic mapping can be useful. The teacher announces the topic of the unit by drawing a large oval on the chalkboard overhead projector can also be used-writing the topic inside of it.

2)Brainstorming

The teacher asks the students to think of ideas that might be related to this topic. This brainstorming phase allows students to make use of their prior knowledge or experiences. Brainstorming is an application of the schema theory, which attempts to explain how people integrate new information with their existing framework of knowledge. The theory posits that information is stored in the brain in networks, called schemata.

3)Categorization

The teacher encourages the students to see relationship among their suggestions, and the map is modified as the class begins to organize and

integrate the individual suggestions. This 'pulling together' phase allows students, as they begin to relate ideas, to see the connections between their suggestions. During categorization, the teacher can also introduce vocabulary words that students might need during the next phase of the activity. In the phase, the students gain experience in practicing some valuable cognitive skills, particularly categorization and exemplifying, but also (depending on the topic) comparing and contrasting, cause and effect, inference making and forming judgments.

4)Personalizing the map

After each student has made a copy of the pre-assignment map, the class is provided with some material on the topic. This material is typically a reading passage since semantic mapping is designed to show the relationship between the verbal and the visual. The reading will almost certainly contain more information about the topic than the students had listed on the pre-assignment map. As they read, students are to decide what to add to or eliminate from the pre-assignment map. New information is thereby integrated with prior knowledge.

5)Post-assignment synthesis

The last part of the class period is used to record the student suggestions from their personal maps on the pre-assignment, chalkboard version of the map. The teacher should state that all personal versions have a validity and that even when a suggestion for modifying the chalkboard version of the map. Finally, the map can be an outline for the writing of the short essay on

the topic, or one segment of the map can be used in the writing of a paragraph.

Besides, Whorter (1992:306) states that the following steps in semantic mapping:

a) Identify the overall subject and write it in the centre or at the top of the page. How you arrange your map will depend on the subject matter and its organization. Circles or boxes are useful but not necessary.

b) Identify the major supporting information that relates to the topic. State each fact or idea on a line connected to the central topic.

c) As you discover details that further explain an idea already mapped, draw a new line branching from the idea it explains.
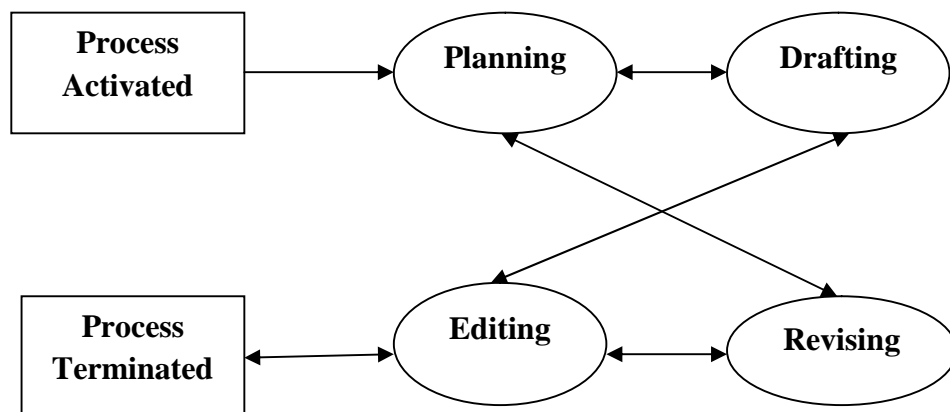
Thus, in this journal, the writer uses the procedures by Zaid, because it is simple to do and easy to understand by the students.

2. Writing Quality

According to Heaton (1998: 135), write and describe five components of good writing quality, they are: 1) language use: the ability to write correct and appropriate sentences, 2) mechanical skills: the ability to use correctly those conventions peculiar to the written language, such as punctuation and spelling, 3) treatment of content: the ability to think creatively and develop thoughts, excluding all irrelevant information. It surely makes the composition more valuable, 4) stylistic skills: the ability to manipulate sentences and paragraphs, and use language effectively, and 5) judgement

skills: the ability to write in an appropriate manner for a particular purpose with a particular audience in mind, together with an ability to select, organize and order relevant information.

Beside that, Richard and Renandya (2002:315-316) explains that process writing as a classroom activity incorporates the four basic writing stages, they are: planning (pre-writing), drafting (writing), revising (redrafting), and editing, meanwhile three stages externally imposed on students by the teacher, namely, responding (sharing), evaluating and post-writing as presented in the following diagram.

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┌──────────────┐
│   Process    │──────▶ ( Planning )◀────▶( Drafting )
│  Activated   │
└──────────────┘              ╲        ╱
                               ╲      ╱
                                ╲    ╱
                                 ╲  ╱
┌──────────────┐
│   Process    │◀────▶ ( Editing )◀────▶( Revising )
│  Terminated  │
└──────────────┘
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After that, Harmer (2001: 258) states that the writing process is more complex than this of course, and the various stages of drafting, reviewing, redrafting, and writing are done in a recursive way. So, at the editing stage, it needs to go back to pre-writing phase and think again.

Based on explanation above, it is concluded that writing was the ability to use the structure, lexical item, and their conventional representations ordinary matter of act language. Besides, through the writing the students

could interact with their ideas and developed them in the writing activities to be a good text.

3. The Process of writing Quality by using semantic mapping

Writing is a form of thinking, because writing is transforming the writer's thought or ideas into written text. Besides, what the writer wants to say to the reader can be written in the written form. Writing is a way of putting ideas in correct order (Peim, 1993:133). Before writing the writers need to think about many things. The messages of the ideas of the writers in order to be understood by the reader, the writers also must use correct written language. Ur (1996:163) states that the purposes of writing is to express ideas and convey of messages to the reader, so the ideas themselves should arguable and the writers should also pay attention to formal aspect of handwriting, correct spelling, punctuation, grammar and vocabulary. Then, Heaton (1975) explains that writing is kind of effort to transfer oral language into written language and then the language ability in an effort idea, mind or sense in writing language correctly.

The process of writing was one way to express ideas, opinion, thoughts, feelings, in written form, but it was not easy to apply because there were many things that could be taken into account, such as: organizing and ordering ideas, linking ideas, appropriating word choice, paragraphing, spelling, and so on.

Besides, the writer thought that teaching writing was an integrative process because the students could describe, create, and interact with words and ideas that develop the good paragraph, while the students can develop their thinking, knowledge, and ability to write. Then, the students should master the five components of writing scores, such as grammar, vocabulary, mechanics, fluency (style and ease of communication), and form (organization). Moreover, the important thing, the teacher build their background knowledge and imagination, facilities, and motivates them to be a good writing.

Increase the students' motivation after they learn writing skill by using semantic mapping technique, there are: firstly, semantic mapping technique could be used as the alternative technique to encourage the students' writing quality and their motivation. It means that means that the teachers were not allowed to ask the students to write a paragraph directly without any explanations and directions, but all students should be played with words to make them easy to generalize their ideas. Secondly, encourage the students' background knowledge and imagination. It means that mapping is an effective technique for teaching vocabulary and textual patterns of organization, and it is effective for improving note taking, and creative thinking skills. To sum up, semantic mapping technique was a good technique to encourage the students' imagination and creative thinking. And the last, the students increase the students' creativity in writing skills. The process of writing skill by using semantic mapping technique could be taken

into account to improve the students' writing quality and creativity in writing.

C. Conclusion

The writer concluded that first; the purpose of this writing skill is to know the applying of semantic mapping technique in students' writing quality. Second, the semantic mapping technique is a strategy involves arranging concepts and relationships on paper to create a semantic map, a diagram in which the key concepts are highlighted and linked with related concepts via arrows or lines. Such diagram visually shows how ideas fit together. This strategy is valuable for improving both memory and comprehension of new expression. And the last, the semantic mapping technique can be used as the alternative techniques to improve the students' writing quality effectively and efficiently.

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