

# THE EFFECT OF CLUSTERING TECHNIQUE AND MOTIVATION TOWARD STUDENTS' SKILL IN WRITING A RECOUNT PARAGRAPH AT GRADE X SMAN 1 BATANG ANAI

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**Abstrak:** Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui apakah teknik clustering dan motivasi memberikan dampak yang signifikan terhadap keterampilan menulis paragraf recount di kelas X SMAN 1 Batang Anai. Teknik ini dibandingkan dengan teknik konvensional. Penelitian ini merupakan penelitian eksperimen menggunakan rancangan penelitian faktorial  $2 \times 2$ . Kelas  $X_1$  yang terdiri dari 32 siswa ditetapkan sebagai kelas eksperimen sedangkan kelas  $X_2$  yang juga terdiri dari 32 siswa ditetapkan sebagai kelas kontrol. Data penelitian diperoleh dari tes menulis dan angket motivasi. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa (1) teknik clustering memberikan dampak positif terhadap kemampuan menulis paragraf recount dibandingkan dengan teknik konvensional dimana nilai  $t_{hitung}$  2.45 lebih tinggi dari  $t_{tabel}$  1.70, (2) siswa dengan motivasi tinggi yang diajar menggunakan teknik clustering mempunyai kemampuan menulis yang lebih baik dibandingkan dengan siswa dengan motivasi tinggi yang diajar dengan memakai teknik konvensional, (3) siswa dengan motivasi belajar rendah yang diajar dengan teknik clustering mempunyai kemampuan menulis yang lebih baik dibandingkan dengan siswa dengan motivasi rendah yang diajar dengan menggunakan teknik konvensional, dan (4) tidak terdapat interaksi antara kedua teknik dan motivasi siswa terhadap kemampuan menulis paragraf recount siswa dimana nilai  $F_{hitung}$  nya adalah 0.150 yang lebih kecil daripada nilai  $F_{tabel}$  4.02.

**Key Words:** clustering technique, motivation, writing recount paragraph, recount Text.

## Introduction

Writing is one of the four crucial skills that has to be mastered by students since it determines the students' success in learning. Students need this skill to make them able to transfer their ideas in written form and to familiarize themselves with several writing tasks. However, many students still find difficulties in writing English texts and paragraphs

as Competency Based Curriculum demands them to master. This fact can be observed on the students low scores in their daily test, mid-term and final exam.

One of the potential factors that causes the problem is dealing with the teaching technique used by the teachers. Some teachers do not apply technique that really encourages and facilitates the students to write well. In fact, teachers tend to use the conventional

technique which is mostly teacher-centered rather than student-centered activity. As a result, teachers do not actively involve the students much in the whole writing process.

Moreover, teachers rarely asked the students to work cooperatively in writing class. Although sometimes teachers asked students to work in pairs or groups, they mostly assigned their students to work without considering the students' involvement and responsibility individually. The fact shows that only high motivated students were involved in the writing class, meanwhile the low motivated students just left their counterpart to finish the writing assignments given by the teachers.

Actually, it is a good idea to make the students accustomed to doing their writing tasks in pairs or groups so that they can help and work together to accomplish their tasks and find the solution of the problems they faced during the process of accomplishing their tasks. By doing so, the writing class will be enjoyable, interesting and inspirative for the students. Moreover, it can train them to work cooperatively to become successful writers later.

Another factor that potentially influences the students' achievement in writing is that few teachers do not concern much on students' psychological factors found in the classroom, such as individual differences. The factor itself deals with students' motivation in writing English, especially in writing a recount paragraph.

Some of them were classified into high motivated students. The

high motivated ones tend to finish their tasks earlier, bring their dictionary in learning English, and have certain target in learning. Meanwhile, some of them were categorized into low motivated students who tend not to submit their tasks, forget to bring their dictionary, and have no goal orientation in learning.

In fact, teaching technique plays an important role in accommodating the students to have better achievement in writing English. According to Hamlin (2011) the technique the teacher uses in the classroom guides the students which in turn builds confidence and increases accountability while developing writing and thinking skills.

Moreover, Haddley (2001:208) explains that writing might be best viewed as a continuum of activities that range from the more mechanical or formal aspects of 'writing down' on the one end to the more complex act of composing on the other. Writing does not only involve mechanical way, but also the content of what the writer wants to convey to the readers.

Writing assessment is one of the crucial aspects in the writing process. One form of the assessments is in form of writing a recount paragraph. In the Competency Based Curriculum used in schools, the basic competence the students are demanded is that they should be able to write a discourse monolog and functional text at the end of the lesson. They are also asked to write a text which is suitable with kinds of text or genre they have studied. A recount paragraph is the beginning

product of writing that the students produce.

Interestingly, O'Malley and Pierce (1996:144) state about a form of scoring, namely analytic scoring, which separates features of a composition into components scored separately. By applying the analytic scoring, it is hoped that the scoring process is done completely since it scores every aspects of scoring integratively.

Moreover, Brown and Abbeywickrama (2010:284) claim that classroom evaluation of learning is best served through analytic scoring, in which several major elements of writing are scored. This kind of scoring is also credited to make the learners hone in on weaknesses and capitalize on strengths. By applying the analytic scoring, it is hoped that the scoring process is done completely since it scores every aspects of scoring integratively.

Brown and Bailey in Brown and Abbeywickrama (2010:286) confirm that to measure students' writing skill, there are some writing indicators which should be included in a writing test. The indicators are based on the four aspects of writing. They are vocabulary, grammar, mechanics, and form.

Furthermore, Bachman (1990:236) mentions that the primary concern in test development and use is demonstrating not only that test scores are reliable, but that interpretations and uses make of test scores are valid. A good writing test should have its validity, reliability and practicality aswell.

Brown and Abeywickrama (2010:276) state that one type of lower-order task in writing, which has the pedagogical benefit of guiding a learner, is asking the students to write or guided writing test. The test has a one paragraph long and can be scored on an analytic scoring.

Actually, there are some phenomena found in English instruction, in this case is writing class, at Senior High School 1 B. Anai. The first phenomenon is that students are not accustomed to writing in pairs. Teachers often assign them to write individually. So, the low motivated students can not discuss with the high motivated ones in completing their writing tasks. Consequently, their writing skill is not improved.

Another phenomenon is teachers sometimes do not prepare the students with the text construction which requires them to retell their own experience in a written form. In fact, mastering the construction or generic structure of a text is the basic knowledge to write a text or a paragraph. The students need to understand how a recount paragraph works. The next phenomenon is teachers do not facilitate the students on how to generate ideas to start writing. Brainstorming ideas is the first stage of writing the students should do.

The other phenomenon is that teachers do not use an appropriate technique in teaching the students to write. They usually ask them to discuss the topic to be written freely or give it as a homework. The situation makes the students bored during teaching and learning process.

Last but not least phenomenon is the students' motivation in learning English is still low. They do not show that they are motivated during English lesson. As a result, only few students finish and submit their writing tasks.

Motivation is one of psychological aspects that needs to be considered in teaching writing a recount paragraph which focused on student-centered activities. William and Burden (1997) define motivation as a state of cognitive and emotional arousal which leads to a conscious decision to act, and which gives rise to a period of sustained intellectual and/or physical effort in order to attain previously set goal (or goals). Mc. Donald in Jahja (2011:363) also claims that motivation is an energy change with in the person characterized by effective arousal and anticipatory goal reaction.

Some experts differentiate motivation into various categories, for instance, Dariyo (2013) categorizes it into intrinsic motivation and extrinsic motivation. Meanwhile, Gardner and Lambert in Berhenke (2011) focus on two types of motivation, namely integrative motivation and instrumental motivation. The types of students' motivation indicate their successfulness in learning a language. Motivation will encourage students in reaching the goal of studying English. As what Berhenke (2011) says that when an individual is highly motivated, he or she does something with a certain goal and puts a lot of efforts on it. These efforts are associated with a desire or willingness to reach the goal toward the activity the individual intends to do. A low motivated student will not

show some efforts in reaching the goals in studying.

The most common instrument used in assessing students' motivation is a motivation questionnaire. The questionnaire is the instrument used to know the students' motivation towards English language learning whether they can be categorized as high motivated students or low motivated ones. The questionnaire requires the test takers to select the responses that best describe their motivation towards writing a recount paragraph as guided by Rensis Likert (Likert Scales).

The indicators and sub indicators of the questionnaire are based on Ur (1991) who mentions positive task orientation, ego involvement, need for achievement, high aspiration, goal orientation, perseverance, and tolerance of ambiguity to distinguish the students into high motivated students and low motivated ones. Therefore, the researcher constructed the questionnaire items based on the indicators and sub indicators mentioned above.

Teacher needs to apply appropriate teaching techniques in teaching the students to write. In fact, teacher tended to use conventional technique which was dominated by the teacher in the process of teaching writing. The conventional technique used here is free writing technique. The technique frees the students to simply write ideas without being influenced by others.

According to Seow in Richards and Renandya (2002:316), in rapid free writing, individual

students freely and quickly write down single words and phrases about a topic within a limited time. Elbow (1998) defines that free writing technique as to write without stopping, editing, sharing, worrying about grammar, thinking and rushing.

Rule (2013) also adds that free writing technique serves as a means for discovery and as an exercise in thinking, being capable of generating surprising insights and ideas from the writer. This technique is associated with writing several topics in a recount paragraph produced by the students. The technique does not allow students to explore much and does not facilitate two types of learners.

Having considered the problems above, teachers need to apply certain teaching writing technique that can help the students to gain better writing skill and accommodate two types of students to involve much and to be successful in writing class. The researcher is interested in applying Clustering Technique for writing instruction.

Clustering technique is one of pre writing technique that is used to develop ideas of the learners by writing down the words or phrases by using circles or bubbles. The ideas are inherited by asking wh questions about who involved in the topic, when it occurred, where it happened, what happened, and how the student felt about the topic. Theoretically, clustering technique is a good technique to teach writing for several reasons.

Firstly, clustering technique works on the three stages of writing

process, namely pre writing, whilst writing and post writing. It helps students develop and improve fluency with thinking and it functions as a guide line in delivering idea. It also functions as a tool in organizing idea. The last one, it is used as a reflection tool to look back to the text the students write later. It means the technique is useful to lead and guide the students before, during and after writing process integratively and comprehensively.

Secondly, clustering technique acts as a guiding tool for students to start writing. Sometimes, the pre writing stage is the most difficult stage for students to write since they deal with their effort to generate idea. Idea can not come and go effortlessly. The cluster the students make will set and guide it to become a writing product. As a result, the paragraph they make is structurally well-organized.

Finally, clustering technique works well to two types of learners whether they belong to high motivated students or low motivated ones. Since the students work in pairs, the high motivated students encourage their counterpart in finishing the cluster they make. Meanwhile, the low motivated ones are hoped to be motivated by their friends. Not only that, the other types of learners, in this case is visual learners and auditory learners, are also benefited by this technique since the technique also accommodates the two kinds of learners.

The purpose of this research is to find out whether the use of clustering technique and students' motivation can give significant effect

toward students' skill in writing a recount paragraph.

### Method of the Research

This research was conducted by using a quasi experimental research design which is a form of quantitative research. As Creswell (2009) proposes that the suitable research design for this kind of research is quasi experimental design in the post test only control group design. The design that was also used in this research was two factorial design in which Creswell (2009) states that factorial design represents a modification between group designs in which it is studied two or more independent variables.

The population of this research was all the five classes of ten grade students of SMAN 1 B. Anai enrolled in the academic year of 2013/2014. They consisted of 153 students. The normality and homogeneity tests were conducted to the population to ensure whether the population of this research was normal and homogeneous.

The researcher, then, chose two classes by using cluster sampling. Gay et al (2009:129) state that in cluster sampling, intact groups, not individuals, are randomly selected. Class  $X_1$  was taken as an experimental class and class  $X_2$  as a control class. Meanwhile, class  $X_3$  was taken for trying out the instruments. The trying out was aimed at testing the validity, reliability, normality and homogeneity of the instruments. This research was conducted for 8 meetings starting from May 5 until June 7, 2014.

The data of the research were collected from the writing test and

motivation questionnaire. The post test was given to both classes at meeting 9 or at the end of the research.

The data taken from the students' score in writing test were analyzed by using statistical analysis in order to find out the average score of both experimental class and control class. The formula of Liliefors testing proposed by Irianto (2004:274) was also used to test the normality of the data. Meanwhile, the formula of F test by Riduan (2012:156) was used for homogeneity testing of the sample classes.

The hypotheses were tested statistically. Hypotheses 1, 2, and 3 were tested by using t-test as proposed by Gay (2000). Meanwhile, hypothesis 4 was tested by using two ways ANOVA through SPSS version 20 as proposed by Ary (1985) and Irianto (2004).

### Findings

Based on the statistical analysis of the hypotheses testing, there are some findings of the research:

- 1. Students who are taught by using clustering technique have better writing skill in writing a recount paragraph than those who are taught by using conventional technique.**

The data description of students' writing test and motivation as a whole conveys some information dealing with the total score, mean, the lowest score, and the highest score. The data profile can be seen on table 1.

**Table 1. The Summary of Students' Writing Test and Motivation of**

**Experimental and Control Class**

| Statistic   | Writing Experimental | Writing Control | Motivation Experimental | Motivation Control |
|-------------|----------------------|-----------------|-------------------------|--------------------|
| <b>Sum</b>  | 2365.5               | 2041            | 3440                    | 3366               |
| <b>Mean</b> | 73.92                | 63.78           | 107.5                   | 105.19             |
| <b>Min</b>  | 52.5                 | 45              | 85                      | 90                 |
| <b>Max</b>  | 92.5                 | 90              | 127                     | 117                |

From table 1 above, it can be seen that the maximum score of students' writing test in experimental class was 92.5 and the minimum score was 52.5. The mean score was 73.92. In control class, the maximum score of students' writing test was 90 and the minimum score was 45. The mean score was 63.78.

The table also shows that the minimum score of students' motivation of experimental class was 85 and it was 90 in control class. Meanwhile, the maximum score of students' motivation of experimental class was 127 and it was 117 in control class. It would then cause the mean score of motivation of experimental class (107.50) was higher than that in control class (105.19). The difference was 2.31.

Meanwhile, the brief result of the first hypothesis is shown on table 2.

**Table 2. The Statistical Analysis of Hypothesis 1**

| Hypotheses   | t-calculated | t-table | Note                      |
|--------------|--------------|---------|---------------------------|
| Hypothesis 1 | 2.45         | 1.70    | H <sub>1</sub> : accepted |

From the result of the first hypothesis, it can be seen that the value of t-calculated (2.45) was higher than the value of t-table (1.70). It means that the alternative hypothesis was accepted or the students who are taught by using

clustering technique have better writing skill in writing a recount paragraph than those who are taught by using conventional technique.

**2. High motivated students who are taught by using clustering technique have better writing skill than those who are taught by using conventional technique.**

The data of high motivated students' writing test and motivation in experimental class and control class can be described in table 3:

**Table 3. The Summary of Writing Test and Motivation of High Motivated Students of Experimental and Control Class**

| Statistics  | Writing of High Experimental | Writing of High Control | Motivation of High Experimental | Motivation of High Control |
|-------------|------------------------------|-------------------------|---------------------------------|----------------------------|
| <b>Sum</b>  | 713.0                        | 588.00                  | 1099                            | 1004                       |
| <b>Mean</b> | 79.22                        | 65.33                   | 122.11                          | 111.56                     |
| <b>Min</b>  | 65.00                        | 50.00                   | 114                             | 108                        |
| <b>Max</b>  | 92.5                         | 90.00                   | 127                             | 117                        |

Based on the data description above, table 2 shows that the mean score of students' writing test of high motivated students in experimental class was 79.22. The interval was 65,00 – 92,50. Meanwhile, the mean score of high motivated students' writing test in control class was 65.33, the minimum score was 50.00 and the maximum score was 90.00.

Table 3 also displays that the score of high motivated students in experimental class had the interval 114 – 127 and the mean score was 122.11. Meanwhile, in control class, high motivated students had the

interval 108 – 117, mean score was 111.56.

In the meantime, the brief result of the second hypothesis is shown on table 4:

**Table 4. The Statistical Analysis of Hypothesis 2**

| Hypotheses   | t-calculated | t-table | Note                      |
|--------------|--------------|---------|---------------------------|
| Hypothesis 2 | 1.97         | 1.83    | H <sub>1</sub> : accepted |

The result of hypothesis 2 testing indicates that the value of t-calculated (1.97) was higher than the value of t-table (1.83). It means that high motivated students who are taught by using clustering technique have better writing skill than those who are taught by using conventional technique.

**3. Low motivated students who are taught by using clustering technique have better writing skill than those who are taught by using conventional technique.**

The result of writing test score and motivation for low motivated students in experimental and control class can be described in table 5 below:

**Table 5. The Summary of Writing Test and Motivation of Low Motivated Students of Experimental and Control Class**

| Statistic | Writing of Low Experimental | Writing of Low Control | Motivation of Low Experimental | Motivation of Low Control |
|-----------|-----------------------------|------------------------|--------------------------------|---------------------------|
| Sum       | 666.50                      | 560.00                 | 845.00                         | 883                       |
| Mean      | 74.06                       | 62.22                  | 93.89                          | 98.11                     |
| Min       | 62.5                        | 45.00                  | 85                             | 90                        |
| Max       | 87.50                       | 87.5                   | 102                            | 107                       |

Based on the data description above, it can be seen that the writing score of low motivated students of experimental class was 74.06. The minimum score was 62,50 and the maximum score was 87,50. Meanwhile, the mean score of low motivated students' writing test in control class was 62.22 with the interval 45.00 – 87.50.

Table 5 above also shows that the score of low motivated students in experimental class had the interval 85 – 102, the mean score was 93.89. In control class, the low motivated students had the interval 90 – 107 and the mean score was 98.11.

Furthermore, the statistical analysis of hypothesis 3 is shown in table 6 below.

**Table 6. The Statistical Analysis of Hypothesis 3**

| Hypotheses   | t-calculated | t-table | Note                      |
|--------------|--------------|---------|---------------------------|
| Hypothesis 3 | 2.08         | 1.83    | H <sub>1</sub> : accepted |

The finding shows the calculation of data analysis which indicates that the value of t-test (2.08) was higher than t-table (1.83). It means that low motivated students who are taught by using clustering technique have better writing skill than those who are taught by using conventional technique

**4. There is no interaction between teaching techniques (clustering and conventional) and**



**students' learning motivation toward students' writing skill.**

In analyzing the interaction between the teaching techniques and motivation with students' writing skill in this research, the researcher used the formula of two ways ANOVA. The result of analysis can be seen on the following table:

**Table 7. The Statistical analysis of Hypothesis 4**

| Hypothesis   | F-calculated | F-table | Note                      |
|--------------|--------------|---------|---------------------------|
| Hypothesis 4 | 0.150        | 4.02    | H <sub>0</sub> : accepted |

Based on the data analysis by using two ways ANOVA, it was found that the value of F-observed (0.150) was lower than the value of F-table (4.02). it means that there was no interaction between the two techniques and motivation toward students' writing skill.

## Discussion

Further discussion about the result of the effect of clustering technique and learning motivation toward students' writing skill in writing a recount paragraph is explained in the following discussion:

**1. Students who are taught by using clustering technique have better writing skill in writing a recount paragraph than those who are taught by using conventional technique.**

As a matter of fact, clustering technique encourages and prepares the students to have mental readiness before coming to the whilst writing activities through brainstorming and digging ideas to be written. They

activate their schemata which is related to writing materials.

This is supported by Langan (2001) who says that clustering is a technique which gathers ideas that is a kind of free association about one concept deals with any interrelated information. Clustering is the technique which can increase students' skill in writing since it digs information from the spider web or the cluster made, which finally arranged into a well-organized paragraph.

Moreover, Nichol (2012) finds out that clustering is an effective technique in language learning which is preferred by the students because it is interesting, fun, and encourages their creativity with its cluster in creating new vocabulary and forming new sentence pattern.

In line with this, Harmer (2000) states that clustering is a visual organizer which will help the students to organize ideas into a well written work. It is a useful device for teachers especially English teachers in teaching their students on how to write.

Last but not least, Mifflin (2013) also claims that clustering is a technique that is applicable in three phases of writing process. It is not only beneficial in pre-writing phase, but also in whilst-writing and post-writing activity.

**2. High motivated students who are taught by using clustering technique have better writing skill than those who are taught by using conventional technique.**

High motivated students do all the tasks given by the teacher. The ones who are more skillful, have more knowledge, and more motivated will find any possible solution of the problems they found in the process of learning, including writing.

Pintrich and Schunk (2002) mention that the highly motivated students are always energized to finish the tasks given. They are sustained and motivated to do their best in handling the tasks.

It is supported by William and Burden (1997) who state that the students who take part in finishing the tasks given will use their interest and arousal to finish their work. The ones who can do and take action to conduct it must be high motivated ones. So, no wonder they can finish their work earlier and proceed to another task.

**3. Low motivated students who are taught by using clustering technique have better writing skill than those who are taught by using conventional technique.**

Both group of students, high motivated and low motivated students, worked cooperatively in clustering technique. They discussed the questions in pairs, drew their cluster, and peer corrected their written work.

Consequently, low motivated students were directly and indirectly helped and encouraged by their partner, the high motivated ones. Students are motivated to learn when they bring some needs to the classroom as the need to learn something in order to complete a particular task or activity and the need to feel involved and to interact

with others. Gradually, their motivation to learn and their writing skill can be better.

This is in line with Tahaineh and Daana (2013) claimed in their research. They state that surely the degree of success in acquiring second or foreign language is depended to a large extent which is determined by learners' individual differences. The differences lay on several factors such as attitudes and motivation.

Generally speaking, motivation plays an important role in learning English, including writing, and lack of motivation can cause procrastination because motivation is the driving force makes people act. In other words, presence of motivation can increase learning behaviour.

**4. There is no interaction between teaching techniques (clustering and conventional) and students' learning motivation toward writing skill.**

This finding indicates that motivation is not a variable that influences the students' writing skill. In other words, alternative hypothesis (H1) is rejected. So, it can be said that clustering technique can be used in teaching the students to write, especially a recount paragraph, without considering students' motivation. It also means that students' motivation is not one of the variables which can influence the result of students' writing skill.

The ordinal graph shows that students who are taught by using clustering technique have higher mean score of writing test compared to the ones who are taught by conventional technique. The mean score of high motivated and low

motivated students in both classes are also higher than those in control class.

Moreover, the difference mean score is shown by ordinal graph whose two lines do not cut one another. It means that the mean score of experimental and control class is not significantly different in terms of students' motivation.

Sharrock (2008) found that there was an interaction between clustering technique and the result of students' writing, however the research done by Tahaineh and Daana (2013) found no interaction between motivation and the result of students' writing test. The researcher also proved the similar interaction among those variables.

### **Conclusion**

Based on the results of data analysis and the research findings, some conclusions can be drawn. (1) Students who are taught by using clustering technique have better writing skill of a recount paragraph than those who are taught by conventional technique. (2) High motivated students who are taught by clustering technique have better writing skill than those who are taught by using conventional technique. (3) Low motivated students who are taught by using clustering technique have better writing skill than those who are taught by conventional technique. (4) There is no interaction between both teaching techniques, clustering and conventional technique, and students' learning motivation toward students' writing skill.

### **Suggestion**

1. Since the research has proved that clustering technique gives better result toward students' writing skill, it is suggested to other English teachers at SMAN 1 Batang Anai to apply this technique as one of alternative techniques in teaching English especially in the writing field.
2. Students' achievement in learning is influenced by several psychological factors. One of the factors is students' motivation towards language learning itself. In this case, the teacher is suggested to give more practice to low motivated students in order to improve their achievement, especially their writing skill.
3. Since the limitation of the population and sample used, it is hoped that next researchers can develop larger population and sample in order to gain more accurate and exact data.
4. To the next researchers, it is suggested to work and conduct the researches which involve other psychological factors as moderator variables, such as IQ, socio-economic, gender, interest, attitude, and others instead of motivation to get more empirical data.

**Note:** this article was written from the writer's thesis at graduate program of Universitas Negeri Padang advised by Prof. Dr. M.

Zaim, M. Hum. and Prof. Dr. Hermawati Syarif, M. Hum.

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