How Brainstorming Technique Rapidly Enhances University Students’ Narrative Writing Skill

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ABSTRACT
Brainstorming technique is an activity done before the writing process. This technique can help a teacher of English related to writing narrative essays. This technique also helps students in making the outline before writing the narrative essays. The aim of the study was to discover the ability of students to write narrative essays using a brainstorming technique and its effect on the students’ writing ability. The study was used two groups: control and experimental. Each group consisted of 30 students selected by simple random sampling. The data were obtained through test and analyzed by using t-test. The results of the study indicate that the students’ ability in writing narrative essays using brainstorming technique improves significantly.

1. Introduction

English as an international means of communication in most countries all over the world may serve differently from one country to another. In Indonesia in which English serves as a foreign language, as described by Rahman (2018) that the status of foreign language means it is taught as a language not used as the official language by members within the country, but it is taught.

In Management Department of Musamus University, the third semester students usually find some difficulties when they are learning English writing. The interview data gathered from the students and the English teacher specified that the students’ ability in English writing is low. In addition, the reality is that many of the students are familiar with English from listening, speaking, and reading texts, but only few of them can write in English properly. However, based on the results of interviews to students it is known that there are some students who actually prefer to convey their ideas in written form rather than verbally. In relation with that the researcher focused this research on writing as one skill in English.

Writing in English means to fill gap exists between the ability to express ideas, feeling and opinions. It is widely admitted that language is a crucial means of communication that cannot be separated from human life. Pincas (1987) stated that writing is an instrument of both communication and self-expression. The importance of writing seems to be increasing in which people can put their ideas, feeling, opinions, and knowledge into written form more freely.

Many students during the writing task are sometimes stuck and could not continue to complete their writing task with very simple reasons: lack of vocabulary, and disability make any sentences longer. As a result they can only write down short paragraph without including the details to the topic assigned. As supported by the research of Vlasáková and Manuhutu (2018), they argued that lack of vocabulary will discourage a learner to use English as the target language, either in spoken or written communication. These occur frequently since they have not enough writing experience and focus their attention mainly to grammar and vocabulary. As a result, they cannot organize their ideas well. These lead students to state ideas directly to the content and produce a collection of ideas without meaningful information.

There are some factors that influence the students’ ability to write, such as vocabulary, interest of the students to learn, writing strategies of students, interesting topics, length of teaching time and suitable teaching technique. Among those factors, writing strategy is one of the important factors that need to be given special attention. In writing class, the teachers must often think that the students’ difficulties in writing in English as a foreign language are due to the weaknesses in grammar and vocabulary. Thus, they either prefer controlling students’ writing, which guides the students on the sentence level testing, to paying attention on the text organization, this case is a higher mental process. As stated by Norman (1990) that the writing process is a highly sophisticated all combining five general components that is content, organization, grammar, vocabulary, and mechanics.
Accordingly, the students have a lot of ideas in their mind. The worry to start and even they do not know develop ideas. This problem is faced by not only the students as beginner writer but also an advance writer may have such kind of feeling. It is because to start writing may not easy as it first appears. Thus, the students as beginner writers need to be customized to plan their work well by any form of prewriting strategies as a way of adopting systematic strategies for finding a focus and beginning of writing. Through prewriting stage, the students will be challenge and encouraged to explore topics, develop ideas and discover relationship which is very important in doing writing activities. The students who lack prewriting strategies which is usually called out lining may never be able to write well (Ike, 1989), because it will determine how the students develop their writing.

Therefore, teachers must use techniques and make good preparations to give English essays. They must master the techniques that can be used when writing lessons, especially when writing narrative essays. They must use different techniques to achieve your goal in the right way. In this way, students can write essays as easily as possible, they can arrange words into sentences, they can arrange sentences into paragraphs, and finally they can arrange paragraphs into essays.

So far, the teachers of English generally still apply conventional techniques, verbal method, in teaching and learning process of writing. It is regarded that its results are still poor. So we need to know what other techniques that can be applied in order to improve the students’ achievement in writing English essays.

In connection with the fact previously mentioned, the researcher interested in choosing this topic to develop one of the techniques in the pre-writing stage. It is called brainstorming technique as a method of organizing information, which involves drawing diagrams to show how ideas are related to highlight broad concepts. This research aimed to analyze the ability of the third students of Management Department at Musamus University in writing narrative essays.

2. Method

This section describes the research method in detail. The researcher used an experimental design that included two groups. They were experimental groups and control groups. The experimental group dealt with the brainstorming technique and the control group without the brainstorming technique, but with conventional method. The result was compared to find out if there was a significant improvement in the delivery of narrative essay by brainstorming.

The population of this research was 160 third semester students of Management Department FEB-UNMUS that consist of four classes. The researcher took two classes as samples. The students were chosen by applying cluster simple random technique. In this case, there were 60 students taken as samples in this research. Two groups were randomly selected. Then the two groups were randomly assigned to either experimental group or control group. Each group consisted of 30 students.

In this research, the researcher used an instrument namely test of writing narrative essay. Writing narrative essay tests were used to find out whether or not there was different achievement of writing narrative essays done by the students before and after the treatment.

In collecting the data, each group was given pre-test to know the students’ prior ability to write narrative essays. The next meeting, the researcher began to give treatment to the students to write narrative essays using brainstorming. These activities were (1) lasted for six sessions, (2) all groups were given the same materials with different treatment, (3) the researcher applied brainstorming to experimental group and using usual technique, conventional technique, to control group. After that, the researcher gave post-test to know the students achievement in writing narrative essays after they were given treatment. The last, the researcher observed whether there was any significant improvement on the students’ ability to write narrative essays using brainstorming technique.

3. Results

The findings of this research deal with the students’ achievement between the pre-test and post-test of experimental and control group in the five aspects of scoring (adapted from Heaton, 1989), after that the post-test scores of each scoring aspects are presented in tabulation.

Before conducting the treatment, the researcher conducted a pre-test to know their prior ability of the students to write a narrative essay. After giving the treatment, the students did post-test to know the result of using brainstorming in writing narrative essays. The results of tests are presented in the table below.

3.1 The students’ achievement

Table 1. The difference of mean score between pre-test and post-test of control group in the five aspects of writing
of them failed to arrange them into the next sequence such as complication, rising action or climax, and outcome.

In addition, the results of the students’ writing in the post-test is higher that the result in pre-test. It can be observed from the students’ work that of the three parts of narrative essay used to analyze, some students still had low ability to arrange their essay based on the three parts of narrative essays. Moreover, some of them had written their essay by including general statement, rising action or climax, and outcome in their essays. This means there is a little difference between the results of pre-test and post-test based on the consideration of the three parts of narrative essays namely the beginning of narrative essay, the middle of narrative essay including motivation, complication, and rising action or climax, and the end of narrative essay; outcome.

3.1.2. The analysis of the students’ writing in experimental group

After analyzing the students’ writing in the pre-test, the researcher found that the result of pre-test in experimental group is higher than the result of pre-test in control group. Most students had low ability to arrange their essays based on the sequence of good narrative essays. Meanwhile, most students had a good result in the case of topic sentence or general statement. Their writing was generally started with the topic sentence at the beginning of their narrative essay, but as in pre-test of control group, most of them failed to arrange their essay into a good sequence such as general statement, complication, climax and outcome.

On the contrary, the results of the students’ writing in the post-test of experimental group show a different result. It can be observed from the students’ work that of the three parts of narrative essay, most students had arranged their essay based on the three parts of narrative essays. Moreover, some of them had written their essay by including general statement, rising action or climax and outcome. It means there is difference between the results of pre-test and post-test based on the consideration of the three parts of narrative essays. It also means that the use of brainstorming can improve the students’ ability to write narrative essays based on the three parts of narrative writing.

Moreover, based on the five aspects of writing, the researcher observed that the students had shown a good ability to arrange their essays based on content and organization aspects. They had known how to write cohesion and coherence essays. The similar results might
also be seen in mechanics aspect where the students had performed a fairly good classification although there were some basic mistakes done by the students such as the use of capitalization for the name of places and spelling of words.

### 3.2 The students’ score of each scoring aspects

The post-test scores of each scoring aspects are presented in tabulation. Each table also shows the $t$ value.

#### Table 3. The difference of post-test score between control and experimental group on content aspect

| Group     | Sample | Mean | SD  | $t_{value}$ |
|-----------|--------|------|-----|-------------|
| Control   | 30     | 19.5 | 3.45|             |
| Experimental | 30   | 25.4 | 3.85| 7.195       |
| Difference|        | 5.9  |     |             |

On organization aspect, there is also a different result of achievement between two groups. The difference can be seen on the difference of mean scores of both. In this case the difference (4.4) is significant. It means that the using of brainstorming can also improve the students’ ability to write narrative essay especially on organization aspect better that using of conventional technique. Indeed, based on statistical analysis, $t_{test}$ value (6.285) is greater than $t_{table}$ value (2.042). For mechanic aspect, the difference between post-test score of control and experimental group is the same with the two previous analyses (content and organization).

#### Table 5. The difference of post-test score between control and experimental group on vocabulary aspect

| Group     | Sample | Mean | SD  | $t_{value}$ |
|-----------|--------|------|-----|-------------|
| Control   | 30     | 15.2 | 2.80|             |
| Experimental | 30   | 21.2 | 3.79| 7.228       |
| Difference|        | 6    |     |             |

Based on the table above, it can be concluded that the mean score of control group is lower than that of experimental group. The difference of mean scores between the two groups is 6 and it is statistically significant since $t_{test}$ value (7.228) is greater than $t_{table}$ value (2.042). On this aspect, however, the students both control and experimental group made some mistakes, the source of problem occurred from the students’ non-mastery of English syntactical rules. The typical grammatical errors of the students mainly made are the subject and verb agreement, the mistake of auxiliary, and the mistake of personal pronoun.

#### Table 7. The difference of post-test score between control and experimental group on mechanics aspect

| Group     | Sample | Mean | SD  | $t_{value}$ |
|-----------|--------|------|-----|-------------|
| Control   | 30     | 3    | 1.15|             |
| Experimental | 30   | 4    | 1.70| 3.030       |
| Difference|        | 1    |     |             |

Based on the table 7, the difference of mean scores between the two groups is 1 and it is statistically significant since $t_{test}$ value (3.030) is greater than $t_{table}$ value (2.042). It also means that the using of brainstorming can improve the students’ ability to write narrative essay.

To know whether or not the use of brainstorming can increase the students’ ability to write narrative essay, the researcher analyzes its standard deviation and $t_{value}$. The following tables show the standard deviation of the students’ in pre-test and post-test.

#### Table 8. The mean score and standard deviation of the students’ pre-test and post-test

| Group     | Mean Score | Standard Deviation |
|-----------|------------|--------------------|
|           | Pre-test   | Post-test          |
| Pre-test  | 40         | 62.3               |
| Post-test | 63.6       | 91.6               |

The table above shows that the mean score obtained by the students in the experimental group is higher than that of the control group (91.6 > 62.3). It means that the scores of post-test obtained by the students of the two groups were different. It can be observed from the table above that the standard deviation of control and experimental groups were also different. The table shows that the students’ mean scores of the two groups increases after they are given the treatments. Since the students’ mean scores of post-test are different, it should be decided whether or not it is statistically significant. In order to answer such question, the researcher applies $t$-test analyses for independent sample.

#### Table 9. The $t_{table}$ value of the students’ post-test score

| Variable | $t_{test}$ | $t_{table}$ |
|----------|------------|-------------|
| Post-test| 7.850      | 2.042       |

Based on the table above, the $t_{test}$ value of the students’ post-test (7.850) is higher than the $t_{table}$ value (2.042). It means that there is a significant difference between the
students’ ability of the two groups to write narrative essay after they are given treatment. Another thing is the formula states that if the $t_{\text{test value}} > t_{\text{table value}}$, the $H_0$ is accepted. On the contrary, if the $t_{\text{test value}} < t_{\text{table value}}$, the $H_0$ is rejected. It means that the different result of the students’ post test score is statistically significant. In other words, it can be said that the using of brainstorming technique can improve the ability of the students to write narrative essay.

4. Discussion

This section covers the technique of writing, especially the writing of narrative essays. The use of brainstorming and conventional writing technique by students of the third semester in the Management Department of Musamus University can increase the student score. This can be demonstrated by the fact that the t-test value of the student's post-test is greater than the t-table value (see table 9).

Although both techniques can be used to write lessons and improve students’ achievement, the better technique is the brainstorming technique. This technique changed the students’ ability to write a narrative essay better than before. This is demonstrated by the result of the student's average score and the standard deviation of the control and test group. The control group shows that the average of the students is 62.3 and the test group 91.6. On the basis of the t-test value, it can be statistically concluded that the use of the brainstorming technique when writing narrative essays is better than the conventional technique.

Based on the result of the students’ work either in control group or experimental group before and after treatment, the researcher analyses that of the five elements in writing, most of the students still find difficulties in language use, vocabulary and mechanic items. In fact, of the three categories above, the students got lowest scores in language use item both in control group and experimental group. Some evidence of the students’ mistakes were the personal such as “I called they to see the beautiful garden”, and correct personal pronoun should be “I called them to see the beautiful garden”. Subject and verb agreement such as “I and my friend were happy to visit Lotus Garden”, the mistake of auxiliary such as “we very happy to ate together”. This means that the students still cannot express their idea by using language correctly and effectively.

The general problems that students encounter while writing are due to the fact that they do not master the English syntactic rules. The typical grammatical errors that the students mainly make are the matching of subject and verb, the errors of the auxiliary verb and the errors of the personal pronoun. Students must therefore practice much more to improve their writing skills through correct grammar.

The same problems also occur with vocabulary and mechanical objects. In general, students still have few options for using medium and advanced vocabulary when writing. They even make some mistakes when choosing words or dictations. Some examples of mistakes made by students in their choice of words were "ate together" instead of "had lunch", "to sew my head" instead of "to stitch my head". The use of vocabulary is indeed one of the most important conditions for good and effective writing. The lack of vocabulary means that someone sometimes does not write what he or she will say because he or she has difficulty choosing the most suitable words that correspond to Indonesian words.

According to Pincas (1987), a writer does several things to express his opinion in writing. He arranges his ideas into a sentence, then sorts the sentence into paragraphs and uses it to construct the entire essay, the story. They are all made with special words, sentences, sentences and paragraphs that actually relate to each other. Based on this statement, it is necessary to use some activities to improve the students’ vocabulary so that they can write their idea using an appropriate and comprehensive vocabulary.

Nunan (1989) discovered that some of the successful conditions for writing are to control the mechanics of letter information, to control and to follow the convention of English spelling and punctuation, using the grammatical system to convey the intended meaning. However, students still cannot use mechanical elements such as spelling and punctuation while writing. The most common problems were the spelling of words such as "swimming" instead of "swimming" or "village together". They sometimes make some mistakes when using such conventions. Therefore, a lot of practice is required at this point to improve their skills in this case.

Based on the above discussion, it can be concluded that a lot of practice is still needed to improve the skills of the students on the three points mentioned above. In fact, based on the study, students have made significant progress in post-treatment writing, such as writing a narrative paragraph. Based on the results of this study, there are four main reasons why the use of brainstorming techniques can improve students’ ability to write narrative essays. Firstly, the brainstorming technique leads students to certain topic-related ideas. This means that students may have instructions about what to write in their essays. Secondly, they use the brainstorming technique to arrange letters.

The brainstorming technique can give them words or dictionaries to choose from. This means that students know
some suitable words in their essays for a specific context. Finally, the brainstorming technique can become a model for language use and mechanics. Because the brainstorming technique can improve students’ performance when writing narrative essays, the researcher believes that this technique is better to use than the conventional technique used to treat students without using the writing process.

5. Conclusion

Based on the objectives of the study, it can be concluded that in general, the results of this study show that brainstorming obviously can improve the students’ writing skill of the third semester of Management Department at Musamus University. In addition, the students are motivated to study with this technique. Finally, brainstorming technique enables teacher and students, and among students themselves to have a close relationship, so that the stress free atmosphere could be created in the teaching and learning process. Therefore, this technique is beneficial to be employed as a teaching writing strategy. In connection with this result, it is also concluded that brainstorming as pre-writing activity is effective in teaching writing skill.

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