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MIND MAPPING: A STRATEGY TO IMPROVE STUDENTS' READING SKILLS

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Abstract

Students' reading skills can be observed through some strategies. One of those is the ability of students in summarizing the text. This study focuses on the application of mind mapping as an alternative way to summarize a text. It is conducted to the third semester students of English Education Department at one of the private university of Surabaya who take Reading subject. The instrument is a documentation of students' mind map products. Students create mind mapping in post-reading activity. After reading, they have to summarize the text written through mind map. The result shows that the application of mind mapping strategy is valuable in recalling students' prior knowledge. So far, mind mapping is a beneficial strategy to construct summary of text reading. Then, this study proposes the use of mind map as a way to assist students' reading skill especially in summarizing.

Keywords: *Mind Map, Post Reading, Summary.*

Introduction

Reading is one of the English skills that train students to use brain actively. This is because reading associate with the content of texts. The students who read a text need an adequate ability to get meaningful understanding. In other words, comprehension is considered as a process that leads the readers use some clues from the text related to their existing knowledge to make predictions, monitor the predictions and construct meaning from the text (Klapwijk, 2015:1). To comprehend a text, students should be provided some strategies to facilitate them in learning reading.

The strategies of reading are intended to assist students' in comprehending the text through the instruction. Gorlewski (2009:127-132), explained that the use of comprehension strategies are expected to improve students' reading skill. She added some strategies involves: making connections; questioning; visualizing and inferring; determining importance; and summarizing and synthesizing.

Summarizing is reducing a text to the main points for a better understanding (Kavishahi and Zafarghandi, 2016:32). The technique assists students to point out the main ideas and link crucial information that supports them to focus on the keywords and phrases in a text. This leads the students to comprehend the text, distinguish main ideas, and communicate the information through their own words.

Summarizing is not an easy activity for students. This is because during the summarizing process, the students should differentiate the main ideas and the supporting ideas from the text. This condition directs the writer to observe the use of an alternative strategy which can be applied in assisting the students in comprehending the text namely through mind mapping.

The mind map helps to organize the information in the text into an easily assimilated and remembered. This way facilitates students to get general conclusion of thought so as to get the deep meaning of a text. Sabbah (2015:4) emphasizes that the learners transfer the text into a visual map to demonstrate the relationships among the text main ideas and its sub-ideas and to integrate the new information to his/her prior knowledge.

The studies related to the application of mind mapping in teaching English skills were conducted by some researchers: Aquariza (2009) observed the use of mind mapping in organizing students' ideas and encouraging the students' in speaking class. While, Galih (2013) studied the application of mind mapping to improve students' writing ability of procedure text. Ritte (2014) examined the implementation of mind mapping to teach writing descriptive text.

Those researches have shown us the application of mind mapping in speaking and writing. Some studies deal with the implementation of mind mapping in reading have also been conducted, such as Rizqiya (2013), Indrayani (2014) and Aulia (2017). They observed the use of mind mapping in teaching reading comprehension, the application of mind mapping in reading comprehension of narrative text, and the use of mind mapping to summarize English Text.

This can be concluded that those researches have observed the use of mind mapping in speaking, writing, and reading. In the present study, the writer is interested to conduct a research related to the application of mind mapping in assisting students' in reading a text.

Research methods

This study uses a qualitative design. It is a research which highlights on participants' perceptions and experiences, and the way they make sense of their lives (Fraenkel and Wallon, 2009).

In qualitative study, there are four techniques for gathering data: *participating in the setting, observing directly, interviewing in depth, and analysing documents and materials culture* (Marshall, 2006). This study uses document analysis to collect the data that is obtained from the students' sentence when they create mind map product.

To analyse the data the writer uses technique analysis proposed by Burns (1999) that involves; (a) compiling the data, the data from mind map will be collected and will be classified based on their category. (b) coding the data, it is a process of reducing the data and arranged based on categories of concepts, themes or types (c) comparing the data, to recognize whether the data were replicated or developed across different data collection techniques. (d) building interpretation, the writer is probably goes back to the data many times to ask questions, to determine the connections and to develop clarification in order to get the bigger description on the finding of the research. (e) reporting the outcomes, after collecting, analysing the data systematically, this is the time to present in a report.

Research Results and Discussion

The finding of the research involves two subject areas. They are the result of preliminary observation on students' performance of summarizing the text by using of the conventional method and the application of mind mapping.

The researcher conducted preliminary observation to measure the students' reading skills. In this section, students did not provide any assisting tool. She provided students a reading text and asked them to answer questions. Those questions were given to reveal their comprehension on the text.

Table 1. The problems faced by students in reading a text

No.	Aspects	%
1	difficulties in identifying main idea	70
2	difficulties in identifying implicit details	55
3	difficulties in identifying the word meaning	47.5
4	difficulties in summarizing	95

The table (1) shows that there are four problems faced by students in comprehending the text. From 40 students, there are 70% (28 students) had difficulties in identifying the main idea of the text, 55% (22 students) had problems with identifying the implicit details, 47% (19 students) found difficulties in understanding the word meaning, and 95% (38 students) had problems in summarizing the text. This can be said that mostly students had difficulties in summarizing the reading text.

The students offered an alternative device to assist them reducing those problems namely by using mind mapping. In *post reading* activity, the students were asked to summarize the text individually through mind map.

Table 2. The problems faced by students in reading after giving treatment

No.	Aspects	%
1	difficulties in identifying main idea	22.5
2	difficulties in identifying implicit details	25
3	difficulties in identifying the word meaning	20
4	difficulties in summarizing	30

The table (2) describes the result of the post test. There are 22.5% (9 students) had difficulties in identifying the main idea of the text, 25% (10 students) had problems with identifying the implicit details, 20% (8 students) found difficulties in understanding the word meaning, and 30% (12 students) had problems in summarizing the text. The table (2) presents that there is significant progress in the post test. This can be seen from the number of students who had problems of reading skills.

Reading is a complicated activity. This denotes to the cognitive process in which the readers construct meaning through the process of interacting and comprehending the text. The success of readers interact with text depends on certain aspects. This related to the strategy to assist them understanding the text easily.

Reading strategy can be applied in *pre-reading*, *while reading*, and *post-reading* activity. The use of a strategy in *pre-reading* activity is beneficial especially in preview and make a prediction; activate prior knowledge; and do anticipation guides. *While-reading* involves skimming, scanning, inferencing, and identifying important information. The last is *post-reading* activity that may in the form of various activities, such as: discussion the text, summarizing (orally or written), retelling the theme of the text, and thinking about how the text connects to one's own life.

Summarizing is one the post-reading activity that reflect the students' understanding on the overall content of the text. The use of mind mapping is an appropriate strategy to do this. This enables students to make links the material in meaningful ways. By creating mind map, summary of a text can be produced through the key and relevant ideas. Then comprehension will be easily achieved through written summary using mind map.

The result of this study shows that the students can summarize the text by utilizing mind mapping. The key points that are stated in mind mapping guide the students comprehend the text easily. Meaningfully, this takes up the students' comprehension in post-reading activity, since more information, details, and examples stated in text are clearly visualized.

In addition, the products of students' mind map indicate that mostly they can visualize the graphic connection between ideas positively. This can be seen through their ability in constructing the summary of the text. However, there are some students' who are unable to achieve this positive impact of mind mapping. In this case, the students look like to disregard the important part namely creating mind map without considering the unity of relationship both the organization of a text and the main ideas. As a result, some of keywords do not connect with others. Therefore, their mind map products do not provide appropriate summary of the text.

The results of this study is in line with the general conclusions drawn by Aulia (2017) who found that creating mind mapping in post-reading activity was helpful in constructing a summary of a text.

In the present study, the mind mapping strategy was an excellent strategy as it enabled the students to generate new ideas for constructing a summary of the text. Specifically, in the prewriting activity of mind mapping helped the students to identify the topic of the text. This facilitated students focus on ideas of writing in their own words along with observing connections between ideas.

Another possible explanation is that mind mapping strategy enables students to construct new conceptualizations and to create abstract thoughts. This indicates that, mind mapping can be used to reduce students' miscommunication and lack of clearness since it involved pictures and colours which, inspired them to write the summary.

Conclusion and Recommendation

This study concludes that mind mapping is a beneficial strategy to assist students' reading skill namely writing a summary. Summarizing the text is one of important post-reading activities to gain the students' comprehension of a text. This strategy provide students organize their thoughts and develop their skill in summarizing a text as a writing sub-skills.

Making a summary is not an easy task. It is a cognitive process in which the students are required to have understanding of text before being summarized. The use of mind mapping facilitates this cognitive process is recommended. Mind mapping as a part of thinking process can be an alternative way to help students summarizing the text written. The application of mind mapping to summarize the text is beneficial in transferring implicitly stated in the text become explicitly clear to get the point.

In addition, mind mapping activate students' prior knowledge which in turn, enables them to generate ideas through interesting way.

Based the result of the study, the writer proposes recommendations:

- 1) Teachers are encouraged to use mind mapping strategy to help students organize their ideas and to summarize the text. This, motivates students and activates their prior knowledge; which is useful for generating ideas.
- 2) Curriculum developers and textbook writers may incorporate mind mapping strategy to help students comprehend the text.

- 3) Students who want to use this strategy. The number of branches (circles and lines) in mind map provides information about a text. But, they should follow the rules of creating mind map so that their mind map products can be easily be understood for those who read it.

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