



Improving Vocabulary in Writing Recount Text at Grade VIII Students of SMP YP HKBP 1 Pematangsiantar Through Clustering Technique

Marino Sihombing¹, ²Loria Sitanggang, ³Inggrid Sianipar, ⁴Herman Herman

^{1,2,3,4}Department of English Education, Universitas HKBP Nommensen Pematangsiantar, Indonesia

marinosihombing1@gmail.com, vikkisitanggang@gmail.com, inggridsianipar8@gmail.com, herman@uhnp.ac.id

Abstrak

Pengabdian ini bertujuan untuk meningkatkan keterampilan menulis teks recount siswa melalui penguatan penguasaan kosakata kerja bentuk lampau (verb 2) dengan menerapkan teknik clustering dalam pendekatan Genre-Based Approach (GBA). Permasalahan utama yang dihadapi adalah rendahnya kemampuan siswa dalam menyusun teks recount yang sistematis, baik dari segi struktur, pilihan kosakata, maupun alur kronologis ide. Kegiatan dilaksanakan dalam bentuk sosialisasi dan pelatihan yang melibatkan 10 siswa kelas VIII SMP YP HKBP 1 Pematangsiantar pada 13 Mei 2025. Metode pelaksanaan mencakup ceramah, diskusi, dan praktik menulis, dengan evaluasi melalui observasi, analisis hasil tulisan, dan lembar kerja siswa. Hasil menunjukkan bahwa 80% siswa mengalami peningkatan signifikan dalam aspek struktur teks, pemilihan kosakata bentuk lampau, dan pengorganisasian ide. Temuan ini menunjukkan bahwa integrasi teknik clustering dan GBA efektif dalam mengembangkan hardskill menulis siswa pada genre teks recount.

Kata Kunci: Genre-Based Approach, Keterampilan Menulis, Teknik Clustering, Teks Recount, Verb Bentuk Lampau.

Abstract

This community service program aimed to improve students' recount text writing skills by enhancing their mastery of past tense verbs through the application of clustering techniques within the Genre-Based Approach (GBA). The main problem addressed was the students' limited ability to construct recount texts with appropriate structure, vocabulary, and chronological flow. The program involved socialization and training for 10 eighth-grade students at SMP YP HKBP 1 Pematangsiantar on May 13, 2025. The implementation methods included lectures, discussions, and writing practice, with evaluations conducted through observation, worksheet analysis, and student writing assessment. Results indicated that 80% of the participants showed significant improvement in text structure, use of past tense verbs, and idea organization. These findings suggest that the integration of clustering techniques and GBA is effective in enhancing students' writing hardskills in the recount text genre.

Keywords: Clustering Technique, Genre-Based Approach, Past Tense Verbs, Recount Text, Writing Skill.

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INTRODUCTION

Education fundamentally shapes students' cognitive, linguistic, and social development, serving as the cornerstone for acquiring essential skills that support lifelong learning and effective communication. Language education, in particular, plays a vital role in enhancing learners' ability to communicate across diverse contexts, both academic and social. Writing, as one of the four productive language skills, is especially important because it requires learners to actively produce language output rather than passively receive it. This productive skill demands mastery of grammatical rules, vocabulary, and the ability to logically organize and express ideas coherently.

For junior high school students learning English as a Foreign Language (EFL), these demands present unique challenges. Their limited exposure to English outside the classroom often restricts opportunities for natural language acquisition, making vocabulary mastery a critical factor in writing development. Without an adequate vocabulary, students struggle to express their ideas clearly or develop their writing beyond simple sentences. Vocabulary knowledge is foundational to language learning, particularly for EFL learners who often lack sufficient input and output opportunities compared to native speakers (Lin, 2023). A rich contextual learning environment that fosters both intentional learning (through direct instruction) and incidental learning (through meaningful use and exposure) not only supports grammatical accuracy but also enables learners to express nuanced ideas, which are essential for effective writing.

Further supporting this, vocabulary size the number of words known and vocabulary depth the quality of understanding of those words, including their collocations, connotations, and appropriate usage both play vital roles in writing. Research reveals that vocabulary depth has a stronger influence on EFL students' writing performance than vocabulary size alone (Rahayu et al., 2023). This insight suggests that teaching strategies should focus not only on expanding students' word banks but also on deepening their lexical knowledge to empower them to write more fluently and cohesively. This is particularly important for writing genres that require narrative coherence, such as recount texts.

Recount texts are a staple genre in junior high school English curricula worldwide. These texts require students to narrate past events in a clear, structured, and chronological manner. The generic structure typically consists of three parts: orientation (setting the scene), a series of events (detailing what happened), and re-orientation (concluding or reflecting on the events). Linguistically, recount texts rely heavily on the use of past tense verbs, temporal conjunctions, and descriptive vocabulary to effectively convey the sequence and details of events. Despite their importance, many students face significant challenges in mastering recount writing. A study with eighth-grade students found that the main obstacles included insufficient vocabulary to describe events vividly, poor understanding and application of the generic structure, and frequent grammatical errors especially in verb tense usage (Amanda et al., 2024). These difficulties hinder students' ability to narrate events logically and coherently, which is essential for clarity in recount texts. When students cannot express their experiences clearly, their motivation to write often decreases, leading to frustration and disengagement from learning English. Writing difficulties among tenth-grade students show similar trends, including struggles with maintaining chronological order, weak or missing re-orientations, and incorrect tense or vocabulary use all of which compromise writing quality (Sari et al., 2024).

One particularly effective visual strategy is the clustering technique, a form of visual brainstorming that allows learners to map out related words and ideas around a central concept before writing. This technique aids students in organizing their thoughts, identifying relevant vocabulary, and establishing connections between ideas crucial steps in the writing process. Semantic clustering improves vocabulary acquisition and retention by grouping words into meaningful categories, which not only facilitates memorization but also enhances learners' ability to retrieve and use vocabulary productively in writing tasks (Heidari-Shahreza, 2020).

Moreover, recent studies have shown that the integration of ICT tools specifically designed for teaching recount texts can significantly enhance students' writing skills and

engagement. Using multimedia presentations and interactive storytelling applications in recount instruction improves students' ability to organize events chronologically and use appropriate vocabulary effectively (Putra & Sari, 2023). These ICT-based tools provide multimodal input combining visual, auditory, and textual elements that make learning more engaging and accessible, especially for EFL learners. When combined with visual strategies like clustering, technology-enhanced instruction fosters a richer learning environment that supports vocabulary acquisition, idea organization, and narrative coherence, ultimately improving students' writing fluency and confidence .

In response to the observed difficulties in writing instruction at SMP YP HKBP 1 Pematangsiantar, a community service program was designed to implement the clustering technique as a practical intervention. The program targeted eighth-grade students who struggled with recount text writing, aiming to enhance their vocabulary mastery and help them organize their ideas more effectively. The clustering technique was introduced as a pre-writing activity, encouraging students to brainstorm and visually map vocabulary related to their recount topics. This process enabled students to see the relationships between words and concepts, facilitating richer and more coherent content generation. By visually structuring their ideas, students could better understand the logical sequence required in recount texts, improving both the content and organization of their writing. This approach aligns with current pedagogical recommendations emphasizing explicit vocabulary instruction, the use of visual aids, and interactive learning environments to foster student-centered learning. By engaging students actively in the learning process, the program not only improved writing outcomes but also increased students' motivation and confidence in using English. The success of this program suggests that integrating visual strategies like clustering with technology-enhanced instruction can be a powerful tool in overcoming common challenges faced by EFL learners in writing.

METODE

This community service program was carried out through a combination of socialization, training, workshop, and mentoring activities. The academic team, consisting of a group of university students engaged in a field-based learning activity (KKN-Dik), collaborated to deliver a structured writing improvement program focused on the Genre-Based Approach (GBA). The main objective was to enhance junior high school students' skills in writing recount texts using GBA principles combined with the clustering technique as a pre-writing strategy. The instructional stages included *Building Knowledge of the Field (BKOF)*, *Modeling of the Text (MOT)*, *Joint Construction of the Text (JCOT)*, and *Independent Construction of the Text (ICOT)* (Hyland, 2004).

The target partner of this activity was SMP YP HKBP 1 Pematangsiantar, a private junior high school located in Pematangsiantar City, North Sumatra, Indonesia. The program was implemented on May 13, 2025, involving 10 Grade VIII students selected by the English teacher based on their interest and need for writing enhancement. These students represented a variety of proficiency levels in English, particularly in writing.



Figure 1. Stages of Method Implementation

1. Phase 1: Preparation

The initial phase focused on coordinating all elements necessary to ensure the success of the learning activity. The preparation activities were as follows:

a. Coordination

Coordination was established with the English teacher of SMP YP HKBP 1 Pematangsiantar to determine the target class and select student participants for the writing activity.

b. Material Preparation

Teaching materials were developed, including PowerPoint slides, student worksheets, and printed resources centered on recount texts and vocabulary in past tense (V2).

c. Logistical Support

Supporting tools such as laptops, LCD projector, whiteboard, and sound system were prepared to facilitate the smooth delivery of the classroom session.

d. Lesson Planning

A lesson plan was designed based on the principles of the Genre-Based Approach (GBA), with clustering integrated as a pre-writing strategy to help learners generate and organize ideas and vocabulary.



Figure 2: Preparatory stage determines the target audience, permission, and preparation of socialization materials

2. Phase 2. Implementation

This phase consisted of two core activities: lecture-based material delivery and structured writing practice using the clustering technique.

a. Lecture and Material Socialization

The lecture session began with the introduction of the recount text genre, covering its social function, generic structure (orientation, events, reorientation), and language features, particularly the consistent use of past tense verbs. A vocabulary enrichment session followed, where students were introduced to commonly used verbs in their V2 form related to past

experiences. They were encouraged to build a personal vocabulary bank. Subsequently, the clustering technique was introduced as a tool to help students brainstorm and map ideas visually before writing. Students were guided to create clusters based on personal experiences such as vacations, school events, or family celebrations by placing the main idea at the center and surrounding it with related subtopics and supporting action verbs.

1. Explanation of Material: The Recount Text

▪ Definition of Recount Text

A recount text is defined as a specific type of English text that retells past events or experiences. Its primary aims are to inform or entertain the reader by providing a narrative of chronological events that have already occurred. Such texts serve as conduits for sharing personal anecdotes, memorable incidents, or significant experiences, effectively bridging the temporal gap between the past and the present for the reader. According to Ariani, recount texts encapsulate a meaningful sequence of events conveyed through language that serves the narrative's purpose, further underscoring the relational aspect of human storytelling in various contexts (Ariani, 2023). By adhering to a structured format, recount texts facilitate comprehension and emotional resonance with the audience, fostering a connection with shared human experiences.

▪ Generic Structure of Recount Text

a) Orientation:

This introductory portion establishes the context of the narrative by presenting essential background information, including the time, place, and individuals involved in the recounting. Orientation is critical as it prepares the reader to engage with the ensuing narrative by situating them within a defined temporal and spatial framework, allowing for a seamless transition into the retelling of events. This structural element is supported by findings from Manihuruk, who highlights the significance of contextual elements in enhancing readers' understanding of recount texts (Manihuruk, 2022).

b) Events:

The events section forms the core of the recount text, elucidating the narrative's progression through a sequence of incidents captured in the order they occurred. This chronological arrangement not only helps convey the story logically but also aids in building a dramatic arc that captivates the reader. The clear presentation of events allows for an engrossing storytelling experience, enabling readers to visualize the actions and reactions of the participants involved, as advocated by Ariani in his analysis of the sequential structure of past events (Ariani, 2023).

c) Reorientation:

Conclusively, the reorientation section ties together the themes and emotions presented throughout the recount. It may encompass personal reflections, comments about the experience, or an overarching lesson learned from the events narrated. This reflective closure is essential in providing readers with a sense of fulfillment and emotional closure, highlighting the personal significance of the experiences recounted.

▪ Language Features of Recount Text

Based on Ariani (2023), there are some language features of recount text:

a) Use of Simple Past Tense

Recount texts commonly use the simple past tense to describe actions or events that have already happened. This helps distinguish the recounted events from the present time. Examples of past tense verbs: *went, played, saw, visited*.

b) Adverbs of Time and Sequence

These are used to indicate when events occurred and the order they happened. Common examples: *yesterday, last week, first, then, after that, finally*.

c) Personal Participants

Recount texts often involve personal pronouns or specific names to highlight the people involved in the story. Examples: *I, we*, or names of individuals/groups.

d) Action Verbs

Recount texts rely heavily on action verbs to describe what the participants did. These include: Physical actions: *run, jump, walk*. Mental actions: *think, hope, decide*.



Figure 3, 4: Conveying material about Recount Text

2. Explanation of Simple Past Tense

The simple past tense is a grammatical construct employed to convey actions or events distinctly located in the past and completed at a specific point in time. The implementation of the simple past tense is critical in recount texts as it delineates the clarity between past and present actions, facilitating reader understanding of temporal dynamics within a narrative framework. Regular verbs in the simple past are constructed by appending the suffix "-ed" to the base form, rendering them predictable and uncomplicated for learners. For example, transformations yield verbs such as "move" becoming "moved," "dump" morphing into "dumped," and "cry" altering to "cried" wherein the change from 'y' to 'i' precedes adding "-ed." Additionally, irregular verbs are an integral part of this tense; they deviate from the standard transformation patterns and exhibit unique past forms. Examples include "go" transforming into "went," "eat" morphing into "ate," and "buy" altering to "bought".

As a result, the mastery of the simple past tense not only contributes to clear communication of past events and experiences but also aids students in overcoming common misapplications associated with verb conjugations. The cumulative insights provided by Ariani and Manihuruk enhance the understanding of the significance and application of recount text elements, particularly emphasizing the importance of grammatical accuracy in composing compelling narratives.



Figure 5: The students made a vocabulary list in V2

3. Explanation of Clustering technique

▪ Definition of Clustering Technique

Clustering is a widely recognized prewriting technique designed to facilitate the generation and organization of ideas before embarking on the writing process. Often referred to as mind mapping or idea mapping, this technique encompasses the practice of placing a central topic in the middle of a blank page, with related words or ideas emanating outward and connected by lines. This visual representation aids writers in discerning relationships between various concepts, thereby streamlining the development of content. According to Sulaiman, clustering allows students to explore their ideas without the limitations of conventional linear writing, which can reduce anxiety associated with the writing process and foster creativity (Sulaiman, 2023). The technique proves particularly advantageous when planning for more extensive or intricate writing projects, as it provides a holistic view of the topic prior to the drafting phase. Clustering is versatile and applicable across various writing genres, including narrative, descriptive, expository, and argumentative texts.

▪ Steps of Using Clustering Technique

The implementation of the clustering technique involves several straightforward steps that guide students from ideation to writing:

a) Choose a Clear and Focused Topic:

Starting with a specific topic enables students to maintain their focus throughout the clustering process. Examples may include “My Favorite Holiday” or “Pollution in the City,” which provide clear boundaries for exploration.

b) Write the Topic in the Center of the Page:

By placing the chosen topic at the center and encircling it, students create a focal point from which to branch out, promoting a visual schema that enhances engagement.

c) Draw Branches Outward to List Related Ideas:

As students expand from the central idea, it is essential to identify and draw branches that include related concepts. For instance, under the topic of “My Favorite Holiday,” branches could encompass aspects like “Place,” “Activities,” “People,” and “Feelings.”

d) Add More Details to Each Branch:

Further developing each branch with specific examples and ideas assists in enriching the cluster. In the “Activities” branch, students might incorporate details such as “Swimming,” “Shopping,” or “Taking Photos,” thus broadening their narrative scope.

e) Review and Highlight the Best Ideas:

Students should critically evaluate their clusters and highlight which ideas will most effectively contribute to their writing. This step encourages selective thinking and prioritization.

f) Organize the Selected Ideas into an Outline:

Finally, arranging highlighted ideas into a logical sequence prepares students for the writing phase, facilitating a smoother transition from brainstorming to drafting. Sulaiman reinforces that clustering provides a structured approach to idea aggregation, aiding in the effective organization and coherence of written work (Sulaiman, 2023).

By following these systematic steps, students can visually gather ideas and plan their writing more effectively. The clustering technique not only enhances the brainstorming experience but also mitigates the common intimidation associated with the preparation of written outputs.

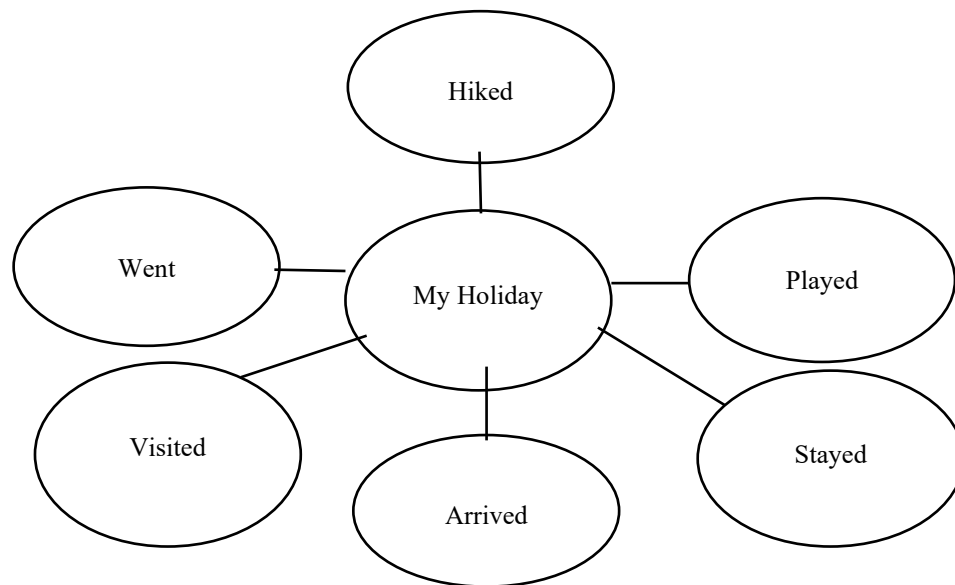


Figure 6: Sample of Clustering words of “My Holiday”

4. Implementation of Clustering Technique in Teaching Writing

The application of clustering in writing instruction is particularly beneficial for students developing their writing skills. It serves as an effective introductory activity in writing lessons, helping students to consider their topics in depth. For instance, if tasked with writing about “A Memorable Day,” students can begin by centering the topic and subsequently branching out into related ideas such as “Where it Happened,” “Who Was Involved,” “What Happened,” and “How I Felt.” By mapping these concepts visually, students are more likely to recall details, leading to better structure and coherence in their writing.

Clustering also proven effective in collaborative settings, where it can be employed as a group activity. For example, when addressing the topic “Protecting the Environment,” students can collectively develop a cluster that includes ideas like “Recycling,” “Planting Trees,” and “Saving Water.” Each group member can then write from different aspects of the cluster, which promotes discussion and teamwork. Sulaiman notes that this group dynamic enhances learning through peer interaction and fosters a richer understanding of the topic as students debate and contribute diverse perspectives (Sulaiman, 2023). The clustering technique stands as a versatile, effective tool in enhancing students' writing abilities. By enabling idea generation and organization through a visual mapping process, it reduces writing anxieties and paves the way for more structured and insightful narratives. As emphasized by Sulaiman, employing clustering



techniques in writing instruction yields substantial benefits across diverse writing styles, fostering engagement and promoting creativity.

Figure 7: Implementation Clustering Tehnique

5. Practice and Application

After explaining the concept of recount text and its structure, the session continued with a practical activity where students were guided to write a simple recount based on the topic “**An Unforgettable Event.**” The writing process used the **clustering technique** to help students generate vocabulary and organize ideas.

- Identifying a personal and memorable experience
- Generating relevant vocabulary (verbs and events) using the clustering technique
- Composing a short recount text based on their cluster map. This structured task helped students visualize the logical sequence of their text and apply appropriate verb forms. As a result, most students demonstrated improved organization and greater coherence in their writing, particularly in structuring events chronologically and using past tense verbs correctly.

a) Clustering Key Vocabulary (Verb 1)

Each student selected a personal unforgettable event (e.g., school trip, birthday celebration, winning a competition). In the center of a blank page, they wrote the title “**An Unforgettable Event**” and created clusters by drawing circles outward containing related **base-form (V1)** verbs.

Example words included:

- ✓ go
- ✓ see
- ✓ play
- ✓ meet
- ✓ eat
- ✓ take
- ✓ feel

b) Converting V1 to V2

After brainstorming, students transformed the list of **verbs 1** word into their **simple past (V2)** forms to be used in writing.

Examples:

- ✓ go → went
- ✓ see → saw
- ✓ play → played
- ✓ meet → met
- ✓ eat → ate
- ✓ take → took
- ✓ feel → felt

This step helped students prepare grammatically accurate vocabulary for their writing.

c) Writing a Short Recount Text (20–60 words)

Using their clustered vocabulary in past tense, students then wrote a simple recount paragraph about their chosen unforgettable event. They were encouraged to apply the generic structure: **orientation, events, and reorientation**.

Sample of Recount Text: My Trip to the Beach

Last Sunday, my family and I went to Samosir Beach. It was a sunny and beautiful day. We left the house at 8 a.m. and arrived at the beach around 10 a.m. When we arrived, I was so excited. The water was clear and the sand was soft. My little brother ran to play with the sand, while my parents prepared some food. First, I swam in the water with my brother. We had so much fun! After that, we made a big sandcastle together. Then, we ate lunch. My mother cooked fried rice and brought some fruits. It was delicious. In the afternoon, we took many pictures and watched the sunset. It was so beautiful. At 5 p.m., we packed our things and went home. It was a wonderful day. I felt happy and I will never forget that trip.

3. Phase 3. Evaluation

Evaluation was conducted through observation, analysis of student writing products, and student participation throughout the activity.

a. Evaluation of Material Delivery

- Students participated actively in lectures and responded to guiding questions during discussions.
- Most students demonstrated a sound understanding of the generic structure and linguistic elements of recount texts.
- The clustering technique facilitated clearer idea development and more detailed writing outputs.

b. Evaluation of Writing Outcomes

- Approximately 80% of students successfully completed the recount text with improved structure and use of vocabulary.
- Students' texts exhibited clear chronological ordering, accurate use of V2 verbs, and logical progression of ideas.

- Students who previously exhibited limited vocabulary showed marked improvement after using clustering to scaffold their thinking.

c. Reflection on Challenges

Some students initially lacked confidence and had a limited vocabulary base. However, through scaffolding techniques, modeling of examples, and motivational feedback, these challenges were gradually overcome. The integration of the Genre-Based Approach with clustering effectively supported students from the modeling stage to independent writing. It fostered not only language skills but also learner autonomy.

4. Challenges in Implementing

During the implementation of the writing program using the clustering technique, several challenges were encountered. One of the most prominent issues was students' limited vocabulary, which affected their ability to generate ideas fluently. Many students struggled to recall appropriate verbs in English, especially in past tense (V2) forms, which are essential in recount texts. Another challenge was students' lack of confidence in writing. Some students hesitated to express their ideas in written form due to fear of making mistakes or uncertainty in grammar. This was especially common among those who had minimal experience writing full texts in English. Additionally, a few students had difficulty organizing their ideas logically, which made their recounts fragmented and unclear.

The technical aspect of using clustering as a prewriting tool also required additional guidance. Some students were unfamiliar with visual brainstorming methods, and needed step-by-step modeling to understand how to convert clusters into coherent writing structures.

5. Steps to Overcome the Challenges

To address these challenges, the teaching team adopted several targeted strategies.

- **Guided modeling** was used to demonstrate the clustering process. The teacher presented clear examples of how to create idea maps from a central topic, and how to transform those ideas into simple past-tense verbs.
- **Scaffolding techniques** were employed, such as providing word lists, sentence starters, and vocabulary prompts to help students overcome their initial hesitation. Students were also encouraged to work in pairs during the clustering stage to discuss their ideas and build confidence.
- **The integration of the Genre-Based Approach (GBA)** supported students in moving step-by-step from understanding text structure, to joint construction with guidance, and finally to independent writing. Interactive discussions and peer sharing were also used to build motivation and reinforce learning.
- **By using relatable topics such as "An Unforgettable Event" and allowing students to write about personal experiences**, the program promoted engagement and creativity. These steps helped students transition from idea generation to paragraph construction more effectively.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The implementation of the writing workshop using the clustering technique within the Genre-Based Approach (GBA) yielded several noteworthy outcomes. The primary finding indicates that students showed improvement in their ability to organize ideas and construct coherent recount texts, particularly through the structured prewriting activity using clustering. The integration of GBA stages—BKOF, MOT, JCOT, and ICOT—offered a scaffolded learning experience that gradually built students' confidence and writing fluency. This section presents the outcomes, key insights, and relevant interpretation of the findings.

1. Improved Vocabulary Retrieval and Use of Past Tense Verbs

A significant development was observed in the students' ability to recall and apply appropriate past tense (V2) verbs in recount writing. During the clustering activity, students actively generated base verbs (V1) associated with personal experiences, which they then transformed into V2 forms to construct grammatically accurate sentences. This process helped reduce hesitation in verb usage and increased lexical diversity. Students who initially struggled

with word retrieval were notably assisted by the visual and thematic organization enabled by clustering. These results are aligned with prior classroom action research that supports clustering as an effective strategy for vocabulary generation and fluency development in EFL contexts.

2. Enhanced Coherence and Chronological Structure in Writing

In the writing phase, students successfully structured their recounts using the generic elements of recount texts—orientation, sequence of events, and reorientation. The clustering maps served as a visual blueprint that guided students in arranging their thoughts logically, resulting in clearer narrative flow and chronological coherence. Approximately 80% of student texts displayed correct use of V2 verbs, time markers (e.g., then, after that, finally), and personal pronouns, which are key features of recount texts. The GBA stages, particularly JCOT and ICOT, facilitated this improvement by enabling gradual transition from guided construction to independent writing. This shows how the method supports the learning objective of empowering students to write meaningful and structurally sound recounts.

Table 2. Summary of Students' Writing Performance

| Indicators | Pre-Activity (Observed) | Post-Activity (Observed) |
|------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Use of Past Tense Verbs (V2) | Limited and inconsistent | Improved and consistent |
| Idea Organization | Fragmented | Chronologically coherent |
| Vocabulary Range | Narrow | Expanded via clustering |
| Confidence in Writing | Low | Increased |

3. Learning Gains Through Clustering

The clustering technique emerged as a highly effective prewriting tool. Students reported that it helped them "see the structure" of their writing before starting to compose. This aligns with the pedagogical premise that visual mapping facilitates higher cognitive engagement and reduces writing anxiety. In some cases, clustering also fostered creativity by allowing students to draw personal and emotionally significant experiences into their work. These insights confirm findings by Sulaiman (2023), who identified clustering as a strategy that enhances learner autonomy and ideational fluency, especially in low-intermediate learners.

4. Addressing Initial Challenges in Writing Instruction

Despite the gains, some challenges were encountered during implementation. Students with lower initial vocabulary levels struggled in the early stages, particularly in verb selection and idea development. However, through the use of modeling, scaffolding (e.g., word banks and sentence frames), and collaborative brainstorming, these difficulties were gradually addressed. Furthermore, students unfamiliar with visual strategies required explicit instruction on how to convert clustering outputs into structured paragraphs. The GBA framework was instrumental in this regard, offering a step-by-step progression from input to output, which mitigated cognitive overload.

5. Interpretation and Implications

The results of this program support the hypothesis that combining GBA and clustering techniques creates a productive environment for second language writing instruction. This integration offers both structure and flexibility two critical elements in language development. From a pedagogical standpoint, the visual mapping of ideas enabled by clustering complements the GBA's emphasis on modeling and practice, reinforcing both form and content in students' writing. This finding differs from more traditional writing instruction methods, which often rely heavily on linear composition processes and do not sufficiently engage students in the planning phase.

In summary, this study contributes to ongoing discussions in EFL writing instruction by demonstrating that structured scaffolding paired with creative thinking strategies like clustering can produce measurable improvements in writing performance. The approach implemented in this activity aligns with constructivist principles and highlights the importance of learner-centered strategies that foster active participation, linguistic accuracy, and narrative coherence.



Figure 8: Documentation with students after socialization



Figure 9: Documentation with the principal and students after socialization

CONCLUSION

This community service program demonstrated that integrating the clustering technique within the Genre-Based Approach (GBA) effectively supports junior high school students in developing coherent and structured recount texts. The activity advanced students' vocabulary uses and confidence in English writing by fostering idea generation and organized expression. Scientifically, this confirms clustering as a valuable prewriting tool in EFL contexts. For sustained impact, such programs should be continued and expanded with regular implementation, while further exploration can assess long-term outcomes and adaptation across diverse writing genres.

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