

Research Article

The Use of Mind Mapping in Teaching Writing of Recount Text

(A Qualitative Study at SMK Diponegoro Karanganyar)

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Abstract. Writing is an essential component of learning English as a foreign language that allows learners to communicate ideas, experiences, and information effectively through written texts. Despite its importance, many students encounter difficulties when writing recount texts, particularly in generating ideas, organizing information, and presenting events in chronological order. Mind mapping has been widely applied as a visual pre-writing strategy to assist learners in planning and developing their ideas before composing a text. This study explored the use of mind mapping in teaching students to write recount texts and examined students' opinions of its strengths and weaknesses. A qualitative approach was employed involving 28 tenth-grade students of SMK Diponegoro Karanganyar in the 2025/2026 academic year. Data were gathered using classroom observation, questionnaires completed by all participants, and semi-structured interviews with 11 students chosen through purposive sampling. The data were analyzed through the stages of data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. The findings indicate that the use of mind mapping successfully supported students during the planning stage by helping them generate ideas, organize information, and arrange events systematically before writing. Students also perceived the strategy as engaging and beneficial because it increased their confidence and participation during classroom activities. Nevertheless, several challenges were identified, including the additional time needed to construct mind maps, difficulties in determining appropriate keywords, and students' reliance on teacher guidance during the initial stages of implementation. Overall, the study suggests that mind mapping is a valuable instructional strategy for facilitating their writing ability to produce recount texts.

Keywords: EFL Learners; Mind Mapping; Qualitative Research; Recount Text; Writing Instruction.

1. Introduction

Writing is regarded as an essential means of communication through which learners convey their thoughts, experiences, and information in English. Unlike speaking, effective writing requires careful planning, logical organization, appropriate vocabulary, grammatical accuracy, and coherence. Consequently, developing writing proficiency is often considered one of the greatest challenges encountered by learners of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) (Brown, 2001; Harmer, 2004).

Under Indonesia's Merdeka Curriculum, high school learners are required to master different genres of writing, one of which is the recount text. Recount writing focuses on describing previous experiences in a logical sequence while applying the appropriate organizational structure and linguistic characteristics (Anderson & Anderson, 2003). Although students receive instruction on these characteristics, many still encounter obstacles when composing recount texts. Difficulties commonly arise during the planning stage, where students struggle to generate relevant ideas, organize events logically, elaborate supporting details, and maintain coherence throughout their writing. Such problems frequently affect the overall quality of students' written work and reduce their confidence in expressing ideas through writing (Nurhalima et al., 2023).

A preliminary classroom observation conducted at SMK Diponegoro Karanganyar revealed similar challenges. Discussions with the English teacher and classroom observations indicated that many tenth-grade students struggled during the planning stage of writing.

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Several students hesitated because they could not decide what ideas to write, while others found it difficult to arrange their experiences into a clear sequence of events. Consequently, some students produced recount texts that lacked complete information and logical organization. These findings suggest that students need an instructional strategy that can support them in planning and organizing ideas before beginning the writing process (Majid & Handayani, 2024).

Among various instructional strategies used in writing instruction, mind mapping has gained considerable attention because it assists students in organizing ideas visually before writing. Buzan (2006) explains that mind mapping enables learners to connect a central topic with related ideas through branches, keywords, colors, and images. Instead of relying on a linear list of ideas, students are encouraged to visualize relationships among concepts, making it easier to organize information before transforming it into a complete piece of writing. As a result, the writing process becomes more structured and manageable.

A considerable number of previous studies have reported positive outcomes regarding the application of mind mapping in writing instruction. Yusrah and Fitria (2024) found that the strategy effectively assisted students in generating and organizing ideas before writing. Similarly, Harefa et al. (2023) reported that mind mapping increased students' classroom participation while improving the organization of their written work. Asror et al. (2024) also concluded that students were able to produce more coherent paragraphs after applying mind mapping during the writing process. Furthermore, Xueting and Alias (2025) emphasized that visual planning strategies contribute to greater creativity and self-confidence in writing activities. Comparable findings were reported by Laeliyah (2021), Glorya (2022), and Kusumayanthi and Malik (2022), who highlighted the contribution of mind mapping to improving idea organization, classroom engagement, and writing coherence.

Although previous research has consistently demonstrated the effectiveness of mind mapping in supporting students' writing performance, many studies have primarily focused on measuring learning outcomes using quantitative approaches. Comparatively fewer studies have examined how mind mapping is implemented throughout classroom instruction and how students perceive its advantages and challenges from a qualitative perspective. Investigating these aspects is important because students' learning experiences provide valuable insights into how the strategy functions during the writing process rather than merely evaluating the final product.

Therefore, this study investigates the implementation of mind mapping in teaching recount text writing at SMK Diponegoro Karanganyar and explores students' perceptions regarding its strengths and weaknesses. The findings are expected to enrich existing literature on mind mapping in English language teaching while providing practical recommendations for teachers seeking effective strategies to facilitate students' writing development.

2. Method

This study employed a qualitative approach to explore how mind mapping was implemented in teaching recount text writing and to understand students' perceptions of its strengths and weaknesses. A qualitative design was considered appropriate because it allows researchers to obtain comprehensive descriptions of participants' experiences and classroom practices (Rahmawati et al., 2025).

The study was conducted at SMK Diponegoro Karanganyar during the 2025/2026 academic year. The participants were 28 tenth-grade students. Classroom observation and questionnaires involved all students, whereas semi-structured interviews were conducted with 11 students selected through purposive sampling. This sampling technique was employed to obtain more detailed information from participants who were actively engaged throughout the learning process (Sugiyono, 2022).

Data was collected by employing three research instruments. Classroom observation was conducted to examine the teaching and learning activities, including the application of mind mapping, students' engagement, and classroom interaction. In addition, all participants completed a questionnaire consisting of ten Likert-scale items designed to explore their views on the strengths and weaknesses of mind mapping. To gain deeper insights into students' experiences, semi-structured interviews were carried out with 11 purposively selected participants.

The obtained data were processed using the interactive analysis model introduced by Miles et al. (2020), which includes data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. Findings from classroom observation, questionnaires, and interviews were then integrated to

provide a comprehensive understanding of the implementation of mind mapping and students' perspectives. To improve the trustworthiness of the study, triangulation across the three data sources was applied.

3. Results

The findings of this study are presented according to the two research objectives. The first part explains how mind mapping was implemented during the teaching of recount text writing, while the second part focuses on students' perspectives on its strengths and weaknesses. These findings were derived from classroom observations, questionnaires, and semi-structured interviews.

Observation

The classroom observation revealed that mind mapping was incorporated into the pre-writing phase as a strategy to help students organize and develop their ideas before composing recount texts. The lesson began with an explanation of the learning objectives, followed by a review of the main characteristics of recount texts, including their social function, organizational structure, and language features. Following the explanation, the teacher demonstrated how a mind map could be used to organize ideas visually before students created their own mind maps.

Students were then instructed to create individual mind maps based on their personal experiences. They began by determining a central topic and subsequently added branches containing keywords related to important events, supporting details, and chronological sequences. Throughout the activity, the teacher monitored students' progress, provided feedback, and offered guidance whenever students experienced difficulties in generating or organizing ideas.

After completing the mind maps, students developed them into complete recount texts by arranging the information into orientation, events, and reorientation. Most students were able to follow the writing process more systematically because the ideas had already been planned during the pre-writing stage. Classroom observation also indicated that students participated actively throughout the lesson and demonstrated greater confidence when discussing and developing their ideas.

Overall, the observation indicated that the implementation of mind mapping supported the writing process effectively. Students became more engaged during classroom activities because they had a clear framework before writing. They participated actively throughout both learning tasks and demonstrated greater confidence when developing their ideas into recount texts. Although several students still required guidance in selecting keywords and expanding supporting details, the classroom atmosphere remained interactive, and the teacher continuously provided feedback throughout the writing process.

Questionnaire

The questionnaire results showed that students responded positively to the use of mind mapping in learning to write recount texts. The questionnaire contained ten statements grouped into two categories, namely the perceived strengths and weaknesses of mind mapping. The results of students' responses are summarized in the following tables.

Table 1. Students' responses towards the strengths of mind mapping.

Indicator	SD	D	N	A	SA
Mind mapping helps me generate ideas for writing recount texts.	1	1	4	14	8
Mind mapping helps me organize my ideas before writing a recount text.	1	-	3	16	8
Mind mapping helps me arrange events in chronological order.	-	1	7	11	9
Mind mapping helps me develop my ideas into a complete recount text.	-	1	4	15	8
Mind mapping makes me more interested and motivated to write recount texts.	-	1	14	8	5

As presented in Table 1, most participants chose either Agree or Strongly Agree for each statement related to the advantages of mind mapping. This pattern suggests that students generally considered the strategy beneficial during the writing process. Many participants reported that organizing ideas became easier after preparing a mind map, allowing them to develop recount texts in a more systematic way.

The questionnaire results also revealed that mind mapping assisted students in generating ideas before they started writing. Several students stated that they often found it difficult to determine what they wanted to write when they did not use a planning strategy. By creating a mind map, they were able to identify the main topic, supporting ideas, and important events before developing them into complete paragraphs. This finding shows that mind mapping functioned as an effective brainstorming strategy during the pre-writing stage.

Furthermore, the responses showed that students considered mind mapping helpful in arranging the sequence of events in their recount texts. Since the ideas had already been organized into branches, students could write the orientation, events, and reorientation more systematically. In addition, many students agreed that mind mapping increased their confidence because they already had a clear outline before beginning the writing task.

Overall, the findings presented in Table 1 demonstrate that students perceived mind mapping as a beneficial learning strategy. The positive responses suggest that mind mapping supported students in generating ideas, organizing information, remembering the sequence of events, and completing their recount texts more confidently.

Table 2. Students' Responses toward the Weaknesses of Using Mind Mapping.

Indicator	SD	D	N	A	SA
Creating a mind mapping takes too much time before writing.	4	9	8	6	1
I find it difficult to create a mind mapping on my own.	6	7	11	3	1
I have difficulty selecting appropriate keywords for my mind mapping.	8	6	11	3	-
I find it difficult to turn my mind mapping into a complete paragraphs.	5	12	9	2	-
I still need the teacher's guidance when using mind mapping to write recount etexts.	2	6	5	6	2

Although the students generally expressed positive perceptions toward mind mapping, the questionnaire results also revealed several challenges experienced during its implementation. As presented in Table 2, some students agreed that creating a mind map required additional time before they could begin writing. This indicates that the planning stage was considered longer than writing immediately without using a mind map.

Another difficulty identified from the questionnaire was selecting appropriate keywords and determining the information to include in each branch. Some students admitted that they were still uncertain about how to simplify their ideas into short keywords while maintaining the main meaning. As a result, several students needed guidance from the teacher during the process of constructing their mind maps.

In addition, a few students felt that creating a mind map was initially confusing because they were not yet familiar with the technique. However, despite these challenges, most students still gave positive responses toward the use of mind mapping. This suggests that the difficulties were relatively minor and could be reduced through continuous practice and teacher assistance.

Overall, the findings indicate that although students encountered several practical challenges when using mind mapping, they still believed that the advantages of the strategy were greater than its weaknesses. The positive responses in Table 1 further support this conclusion.

Interview

To obtain more detailed information, semi-structured interviews were conducted with 11 students selected through purposive sampling. The interview findings supported the questionnaire results and provided a deeper understanding of students' experiences during the implementation of mind mapping.

Most participants stated that mind mapping made it easier for them to determine what they wanted to write before starting the writing task. They explained that the visual organization of ideas helped them remember the sequence of events and organize their recount texts more systematically. Several students also mentioned that they became more confident because they already had a clear outline before writing.

However, some participants acknowledged that constructing a mind map was initially challenging. They experienced difficulties in selecting appropriate keywords, expanding supporting ideas, and deciding how to connect different branches. A few students admitted that creating a mind map required more time than writing directly. Nevertheless, they agreed

that the additional planning stage eventually made the writing process easier and helped them produce more organized recount texts.

Overall, the interview findings confirmed that students perceived mind mapping as a useful instructional strategy despite several practical challenges encountered during its implementation.

4. Discussion

The present study investigated the implementation of mind mapping in teaching recount text writing and explored its strengths and weaknesses from students' perspectives. The findings demonstrate that mind mapping provided meaningful support throughout the writing process, particularly during the planning stage. The observation, questionnaire, and interview data consistently showed that the strategy enabled students to organize ideas more systematically, develop recount texts more confidently, and participate more actively in classroom activities. Despite these advantages, several challenges were also identified, including the time required to construct mind maps and students' dependence on teacher guidance during the initial implementation.

The Implementation of Mind Mapping in Teaching Recount Text Writing

The classroom observation demonstrated that mind mapping was implemented through a structured sequence of pre-writing activities. Students began by identifying the main topic, followed by supporting ideas, important events, and relevant keywords based on their personal experiences. After completing their individual mind maps, they transformed the visual framework into complete recount texts consisting of orientation, events, and reorientation. This procedure provided students with a clear plan before they started composing paragraphs, allowing them to organize their ideas more systematically.

The findings further indicate that mind mapping functioned as an effective pre-writing strategy because it encouraged students to generate and arrange ideas visually before beginning the writing task. Rather than writing sentences immediately, students first explored relationships among ideas through keywords and interconnected branches. This planning process reduced students' uncertainty during writing and helped them construct their recount texts in a more organized manner. These findings are consistent with Buzan (2006), who explains that mind mapping enables learners to organize information visually through keywords and branching patterns, thereby facilitating idea generation and text development.

In addition to improving idea organization, classroom observation showed that students became more actively engaged throughout the learning process. Most students participated enthusiastically in developing their mind maps and demonstrated greater confidence when discussing their ideas with the teacher and classmates. The learning activities became more interactive because students were encouraged to exchange ideas and seek feedback before writing their final drafts. This finding supports Harefa et al. (2023), who reported that mind mapping promotes students' active participation and increases their involvement during writing instruction.

Another important finding was the improvement in the organization of students' recount texts. Since the sequence of events had already been planned during the mind-mapping stage, students experienced fewer difficulties in arranging ideas logically when writing their paragraphs. As a result, the completed texts were generally more coherent and followed the chronological structure expected in recount writing. This result is in line with Asror et al. (2024), who concluded that mind mapping helps students organize ideas systematically and produce more coherent written texts.

The Strengths and Weaknesses of Using Mind Mapping in Teaching Recount Text Writing

The questionnaire and interview findings revealed that students generally held positive perceptions of the use of mind mapping in writing instruction. Most participants agreed that the strategy made it easier for them to generate ideas before writing. By identifying keywords and connecting related information visually, students found it easier to determine what they wanted to write and how their ideas were connected. These findings suggest that mind mapping provides an effective framework for brainstorming before students begin composing their texts. This result supports Yusrah and Fitria (2024), who found that mind mapping facilitates idea generation and helps students organize information before writing.

Another strength identified in this study was the improvement in the organization of students' writing. Students reported that arranging keywords into branches helped them determine the sequence of events and maintain logical connections among ideas.

Consequently, they were able to produce recount texts that were more coherent and easier to develop into complete paragraphs. Similar findings were reported by Majid and Handayani (2024), who concluded that mind mapping assists students in organizing information systematically before writing.

The interview data also indicated that mind mapping increased students' confidence during the writing process. Several participants explained that having a visual outline reduced their anxiety because they no longer had to think about all of their ideas while writing. Instead, they could concentrate on developing sentences based on the information already presented in their mind maps. This finding is consistent with Xueting and Alias (2025), who reported that visual planning strategies contribute to students' confidence and creativity during writing activities.

Despite these advantages, the findings also revealed several weaknesses associated with the implementation of mind mapping. Some students stated that creating a mind map required additional time, particularly when they were still unfamiliar with the technique. Others experienced difficulties in selecting appropriate keywords or expanding them into complete paragraphs. Several participants also admitted that they still relied on the teacher's guidance during the early stages of implementation. These challenges indicate that although mind mapping offers considerable benefits, students require sufficient practice and continuous support before they can apply the strategy independently. Similar observations were reported by Laeliah (2021), who noted that some learners initially encountered difficulties when using mind mapping because they were unfamiliar with organizing ideas visually.

Overall, the findings suggest that the advantages of mind mapping outweigh its limitations. The strategy not only helped students generate and organize ideas more effectively but also increased classroom participation, confidence, and the overall quality of recount writing. Although several challenges emerged during implementation, these obstacles can be minimized through regular practice and appropriate teacher guidance. Therefore, mind mapping can be considered an effective instructional strategy for supporting students in learning to write recount texts.

5. Conclusions

This study examined the use of mind mapping in teaching recount text writing at SMK Diponegoro Karanganyar and explored students' views regarding its strengths and weaknesses. The findings demonstrated that mind mapping was successfully incorporated into the pre-writing stage through activities that required students to create individual mind maps before developing them into complete recount texts. This approach encouraged students to organize their ideas, arrange events more logically, and participate actively throughout the learning process.

The findings revealed that mind mapping was implemented through two learning activities, namely creating individual mind maps and developing them into complete recount texts. The observation showed that students actively participated throughout the learning process and were able to organize their ideas more systematically before writing. The use of mind mapping also encouraged students to arrange the sequence of events more clearly, resulting in better-organized recount texts.

The questionnaire and interview findings indicated that students generally had positive perceptions toward the implementation of mind mapping. They believed that the strategy helped them generate ideas, organize information, remember the chronological order of events, and increase their confidence during writing activities. However, several students experienced difficulties in selecting keywords, organizing detailed information, and managing the additional time required to construct mind maps. Despite these challenges, students agreed that the advantages of mind mapping were greater than its limitations.

Based on these findings, it can be concluded that mind mapping is an effective instructional strategy for teaching recount text writing because it facilitates students in planning, organizing, and developing ideas before writing. The strategy not only supports students' writing performance but also promotes active participation and positive learning experiences in the English classroom.

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