

A Study On The Use Of Mind Mapping In Teaching Writing

Fani Nurhasanah¹, Konder Manurung¹, Agussatriana¹

¹Universitas Tadulako Palu, Indonesia

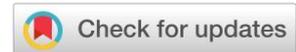
*Correspondence: faninurhasanah4@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

This research aims to investigate the use of mind mapping as a teaching technique to enhance students' writing skills in descriptive text. Using a qualitative library research approach, data were gathered from secondary sources, including theses, journals, and articles published between 2012 and 2024. The analysis focused on identifying teaching procedures, outcomes, and effectiveness across five selected studies. The findings indicate that mind mapping significantly improves students' ability to generate, organize, and connect ideas, resulting in more coherent and creative descriptive texts. It also enhances vocabulary, grammar, and students' motivation to write. Across the reviewed studies, post-test scores consistently showed substantial improvement, demonstrating the technique's effectiveness in both secondary and tertiary educational contexts. Mind mapping's use of colors, images, and keywords makes the writing process more engaging and accessible, supporting active learning and critical thinking. Based on these findings, the study recommends that English teachers adopt mind mapping as a strategy to improve descriptive writing skills and suggests further exploration of its application to other genres of writing.

ARTICLE HISTORY

Published December 20th 2025



KEYWORDS

Mind Mapping, Descriptive Text, Teaching Writing, Qualitative Research, Writing Skills.

ARTICLE LICENCE

© 2025 Universitas Hasanuddin
Under the license CC BY-SA
4.0



1. Introduction

Writing, along with speaking, reading, and listening, is one of the four fundamental language skills in English. It plays a crucial role in enabling learners to communicate their thoughts, ideas, and feelings in written form. Sharples (1999) states that writing provides students with opportunities to express, explore, and explain ideas about themselves and the world around them. Through writing, students can transform abstract ideas into meaningful texts that allow readers to understand the intended message and engage in critical thinking. Therefore, improving students' writing ability is essential for developing overall English proficiency, particularly in Indonesia, where writing is often considered difficult due to the complex process of organizing and translating ideas into coherent written language (Said et al., 2021; Anggawirya et al., 2021; Weda et al., 2022).

However, many students struggle with writing in English due to limited vocabulary, grammatical difficulties, and challenges in organizing ideas. Bahri (2009) states that some students struggle with grammar and have a limited vocabulary. So, they have difficulties in doing their writing tasks and reduces students' motivation to learn. Teachers also face obstacles such as limited time, diverse student abilities, and difficulties in engaging learners during writing activities. Therefore, the problems faced by the students in learning writing make the teachers difficult to teach writing. According to Waloyo (2017), the problems that teachers have when teaching writing skills are difficulty in motivating their students, students of diverse levels, difficult with materials, and time constraints to teach students. So, to increase the students' writing abilities, the teacher needs to use the right methods to handle the issues and make the students interested and enthusiastic (Karubaba & Rahman, 2025; Adinda et al., 2025; Latief et al., 2024).

To address these problems, teachers need innovative strategies that can help students organize their thoughts and express them more effectively. One such technique is mind mapping, which allows learners to generate, connect, and arrange ideas visually before transforming them into coherent written texts. According to Buzan (1993), the mind map is an expression of radiant thinking and is therefore a function of the human mind. It is an effective graphic approach that provides a universal key to unlocking the brain's full potential. Mind mapping techniques can help students remember topics they want to explain easily. It can be supported by a variety of objects, including an image, paper, and a colored pencil. Then, it can be connected with lines in order to make their imagination colorful and interesting toward writing skill

(Purnomo, 2014). By using colors, images, and keywords, mind mapping not only makes learning more engaging but also enhances memory and creativity in the writing process. In teaching descriptive text, mind mapping can be particularly useful. According to Anderson and Anderson (1997), a descriptive text describes a particular person, place, or thing. The purpose is to tell about the subject by describing its features without including personal opinions. Through mind mapping, students can identify key features, develop vocabulary, and structure their descriptions logically, resulting in clearer and more creative writing outcomes.

Several previous studies have investigated the use of mind mapping in teaching writing skills. For example, Purnomo (2014) found that mind mapping helped junior high school students generate ideas more easily and improved their organization of paragraphs in descriptive writing. Similarly, a study by Rahmawati (2018) reported that students became more motivated and showed better vocabulary use after learning to write through mind mapping techniques. These studies are similar to the present research in that they highlight the positive impact of mind mapping on students' idea development and writing organization. However, the difference lies in the research context and focus. While previous studies mainly examined general improvements in writing performance or motivation, the present study specifically focuses on the use of mind mapping in teaching descriptive texts and explores students' writing difficulties in greater detail. Therefore, this research extends earlier findings by providing a more focused analysis of how mind mapping supports descriptive writing in the Indonesian EFL context.

2. Methodology

In this research, the researchers used a qualitative library research design. Library research was chosen because it allows the collection and analysis of secondary data from published academic works related to the research problem. According to George (2008), library research is a method of collecting data by studying and understanding data that is closely related to problems from books, theories, and documents. The researchers collect data and information using a variety of library resources, like: theses, journals, and articles.

Sources of the data in this study were drawn from secondary sources, such as theses, journals, and articles published between 2012 and 2024. The selected literature focused on the use of mind mapping techniques in teaching writing, particularly in improving students' ability to compose descriptive texts. Data collection was carried out through document analysis from the library or the internet. Data collection was conducted by reviewing and extracting information from relevant documents available in libraries and online databases. The documents were screened to ensure their relevance to the research focus. Only studies that investigated mind mapping as a teaching technique in writing descriptive text were included for further analysis.

In analyzing the data, the researcher used the content analysis method. According to Wilson (2016), content analysis is an analysis that can be used both quantitative and qualitative to systematically analyze written, verbal or visual documentation. Content analysis was a technique to collect data from documents. The researchers followed the following steps:

1. Read and identify the data sources such as thesis, journals, or articles to find the information needed.
2. Understand the content and key information of the data sources such as year of publication, researcher's name, title, method, and result.
3. Describe the information found in the data sources and the results will be presented in a descriptive form.
4. Organize the information and explanations into their classifications of mind mapping technique.
5. Make conclusion of the data sources' descriptions which are obtained.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1 Results

In collecting the data, the researchers used secondary data sources such as theses, journals, or articles from 2012-2024. The literature that has been collected focuses on the use of the mind mapping strategy in teaching writing skills conducted by other researchers.

Based on the data source, the researchers focused on reviewing five studies about the implementation of clustering technique in teaching writing recount text as a representative. Those five studies are as follows : Kusuma, Rachman, and Mauriyat (2024); Vera Agustia (2023); Basri and Syamsia (2020); Helli Nofrita (2019); and Alma Prima Nurlaila (2013).

Furthermore, the data reviewed in this research were organized into their classifications based on technique of the data analysis which included researcher names, title, method, years, settings, procedures and results. The researchers provided findings in table 1:

Table. Summary of Previous Studies on the Use of Mind Mapping in Teaching Descriptive Writing

No	Researchers	Title	Procedure(s)	Result
1	Linda Kusuma, Arif Rachman, and Arham Mauriyat (2024)	Teaching Mind Mapping Technique to Improve Students Descriptive Text.	The researcher adapted procedures of mind mapping technique from Buzan (1993) <i>The Mind Map Book: How to Use Radiant Thinking to Maximize Your Brain's Untapped Potential</i> . In implementing procedures of the mind mapping technique, the researcher explained how to use mind mapping and gave an example. Students then made their own mind maps based on a topic and used them as a guide to write descriptive texts. The researcher helped and guided them in organizing their ideas into clear writing.	The use of mind mapping technique was effective for students to improve their writing skill in teaching writing descriptive text. Proven by the pretest's mean is 55.80; after the treatment using mind mapping technique, the post-test mean is 75.35, which means that there was a significant improvement when the mind mapping method was being applied.
2	Vera Agustia (2023)	The Effectiveness of Using Mind Mapping Technique to Improve Writing Descriptive Text of Grade Eight Students at MTs Al-Khairaat Tondo	The researcher adapted procedures of mind mapping technique from Buzan (2005) <i>The Ultimate Book of Mind Map</i> . In applying the mind mapping technique, the researcher applied the mind mapping technique by explaining descriptive text, introduced how to make a mind map, and guided students to place a topic in the center with related keywords around it. Students then used the keywords to write sentences and develop them into a descriptive text. This was practiced with different topics, while the researcher gave feedback and concluded each lesson.	The mind mapping technique effectively improved the students' descriptive writing skills of grade eight students in descriptive text. It can be seen that the study found the pre-test and post-test results showed a significant difference, indicating that the intervention had a positive impact on the students' writing abilities. It was proved by the result of t-counted (11.4) was higher than t-table (1.659).
3	Nurmala Basri and Syamsia (2020)	The Effect of Applying Mind Mapping Method in Writing Descriptive Text	The researcher adapted procedures of mind mapping technique from Buzan (2008) <i>Buku Pintar Mind Map</i> .	The study concludes that the mind mapping method has a significant positive effect on students' descriptive writing abilities.

			<p>In applying the mind mapping technique, the researcher taught students by first letting them choose a topic, then making a mind map with the main idea in the middle and branches for supporting ideas using words, pictures, or colors. After that, students used the mind map as a guide to write a descriptive text. If new ideas appeared, they could add more branches. This helped students organize their thoughts, be creative, and enjoy the writing process</p>	<p>It helped students be more creative, focused, and enthusiastic. The technique enabled better organization of ideas and encouraged students to participate more actively in the learning process. The results clearly showed an improvement. The average pre-test score was 51.3, while the average post-test score rose to 90.6. Additionally, a multiple-choice final test related to descriptive text and mind mapping yielded an average score of 91.6.</p>
4	Helli Nofrita (2019)	<p>Improving Students Ability in Writing Descriptive Text By Using Mind Mapping Technique at Grade X SMA Negeri 1 Angkola Selatan</p>	<p>The researcher adapted procedures of mind mapping technique from Buzan (2011) <i>Mind Maps for Kids</i>.</p> <p>In implementing the procedures, the researcher taught students by first introducing the topic and explaining how to make a mind map. Students wrote the main idea in the center, added branches with keywords, colors, or pictures, and then used the mind map to write a descriptive text. After that, the researcher discussed the results, gave feedback, and reflected with the teacher to improve the next lesson.</p>	<p>The mind mapping technique could enhance students' descriptive text-writing skills at SMA N 1 Angkola Selatan. Based on the research result, indicated the mean writing ability scores of the students in the first cycle were 62.97 and 73.16, followed by 80.15 and 85.83 in the second cycle.</p>
5	Alma Prima Nurlaila (2013)	<p>The Use of Mind Mapping Technique in Writing Descriptive Text</p>	<p>In this study, the researcher applied one group pretest-posttest pre-experimental research design. The researcher adapted procedures of mind mapping technique from Buzan (1993) <i>The Mind Map Book</i>.</p> <p>The researcher taught students to write by first giving them a topic, then asking them to make a mind map with the main idea in the center and details on the branches. The mind map helped students collect ideas, arrange sentences, and</p>	<p>The data shows that the mind-mapping technique effectively increases students' scores in writing descriptive texts. It can be seen that the students' mean pretest score was 45.83, while the mean of the post-test increased to 58.53 after applying the mind mapping technique. This shows that this technique has a positive effect on students' writing abilities.</p>

organize their writing. Students then used it as a guide to write a descriptive text. To save time, the researcher gave clear instructions and set time limits. Most students said that this technique made writing easier and more enjoyable

This table presents a synthesis of five previous studies that investigated the use of mind mapping techniques in teaching descriptive text writing. The studies were selected from research conducted between 2013 and 2024 and were carried out in various educational contexts within Indonesia. Each study applied the mind mapping strategy based on Tony Buzan's framework, though slight variations in procedure were noted depending on the level of students and the instructional settings. The procedures generally included introducing mind mapping to students, guiding them to create visual maps around central topics, and using these maps as a foundation for organizing and writing descriptive texts. The results from all five studies consistently showed that the mind mapping technique had a positive impact on students' writing performance, including improvements in content organization, vocabulary usage, idea development, and student motivation. These findings support the use of mind mapping as an effective method to enhance writing instruction, especially in helping students overcome common difficulties in generating and structuring ideas. The consistent improvement in pre-test and post-test scores across the studies further highlights the technique's effectiveness in developing descriptive writing skills.

3.2 Discussion

This library research discusses the use of the mind mapping technique in teaching students to write descriptive texts, based on five selected studies published between 2013 and 2024. The discussion focuses on the effectiveness of the technique, similarities in implementation, and its contribution to students' writing development. Overall, the findings from the five reviewed studies show consistent and strong evidence that the mind mapping technique has a positive effect on students' writing skills, especially in writing descriptive texts. All studies reported improvements in students' writing scores after the implementation of mind mapping, as shown by higher post-test results compared to pre-test results or improvements across learning cycles.

One important finding is that mind mapping helps students organize ideas more clearly. In all studies, students were asked to place the main topic in the center and develop supporting ideas using branches. This process guided students to structure their ideas before writing. As a result, students were better able to develop paragraphs, maintain focus on the topic, and avoid disorganized writing. This finding supports the theory proposed by Buzan, which states that mind mapping reflects the natural way the brain organizes information.

Another key point is that the mind mapping technique reduces students' difficulty in starting to write. Several studies, such as those by Nurlaila (2013) and Nofrita (2019), reported that students felt writing became easier and more enjoyable. This indicates that mind mapping can reduce anxiety and hesitation, which are common problems in writing classes. By having keywords and ideas prepared in advance, students were more confident in transforming ideas into sentences and paragraphs.

In addition, mind mapping was found to increase students' motivation and participation. Basri and Syamsia (2020) highlighted that students became more enthusiastic and creative during the learning process. The use of colors, pictures, and keywords made learning more engaging. This suggests that mind mapping does not only improve cognitive aspects of writing but also supports affective aspects such as interest and motivation.

From a methodological perspective, although the studies used different research designs—such as experimental, pre-experimental, and classroom action research—they all showed significant improvement in writing outcomes. This consistency strengthens the reliability of the conclusion that mind mapping is an effective technique for teaching writing descriptive texts across different educational levels, from junior high school to senior high school.

However, this review also indicates that most studies focused only on descriptive texts and used short-term interventions. Therefore, future research may explore the use of mind mapping in other genres of writing, such as recount, narrative, or argumentative texts, and examine its long-term effects on writing development. In conclusion, based on the reviewed literature, the mind mapping technique is proven to be an effective, practical, and student-centered strategy for

improving students' writing skills. It helps students organize ideas, increases motivation, and leads to significant improvement in writing achievement. Therefore, mind mapping is highly recommended for English teachers as an alternative technique in teaching writing, especially descriptive text.

4. Conclusion

Based on the study's findings and discussions, it can be concluded that implementing the mind mapping technique is an effective strategy for teaching writing, particularly in developing students' skills in writing descriptive texts. Mind mapping helps students organize their ideas, enhance their creativity, expand their vocabulary, and improve their grammar and writing skills. It also made them more interested and active during the learning process. Mind mapping makes writing easier and more fun because it uses pictures, colors, and keywords to help students think and plan before writing. Therefore, it can be concluded that the mind mapping technique is not only an effective instructional strategy for teaching writing but also a powerful tool for improving students' writing competence. It encourages active learning, critical thinking, and creativity, making it a recommended technique for English teachers in enhancing students' descriptive writing skills.

References

- Adinda, R., Sosrohadi, S., Syafitri, B. A., & Andini, C. (2025). Cognitive And Cultural Barriers In Synonym Acquisition: A Psycholinguistic Study Of Indonesian Learners Of Korean. *TPM–Testing, Psychometrics, Methodology in Applied Psychology*, 32(4), 881-888.
- Agustia, V. (2024). *The Effectiveness of Using Mind Mapping Technique to Improve Writing Descriptive Text of Grade Eight Students at MTS Al-Khairaat Tondo* (Doctoral dissertation, Universitas Tadulako).
- Anderson, M. and Anderson, K. (1997). *Text Types in English*. South Yarra: Macmillan Education Australia PTY LTD.
- Anggawirya, A. M., Prihandoko, L. A., & Rahman, F. (2021, December). Teacher's role on teaching English during pandemic in a blended classroom. In *International Joined Conference on Social Science (ICSS 2021)* (pp. 458-463). Atlantis Press.
- Bahri, S. (2009). Difficulties in Writing in Vocabulary and Grammar of the Second Year Students of SMPN I Selong East Lombok West Nusa Tenggara in the School Year 2008/2009. *Educatio*, 4(2), 136-159.
- Basri, N., & Syamsia, S. (2020). The Effect of Applying Mind Mapping Method in Writing Descriptive Text. *Langua: Journal of Linguistics, Literature, and Language Education*, 3(2), 36-56.
- Buzan, T. (1993), *The Mind Map Book: How to Use Radiant Thinking to Maximize Your Brain's Untapped Potential*. New York: Plume.
- Buzan, T. (2005). The Ultimate Book of Mind Maps, 542. Retrieved from http://books.google.com/books?id=v4-D6Pu_9bAC&pgis=1.
- Buzan, T. (2008). *Buku Pinta Mind Map*. Jakarta: PT Gramedia Pustaka Utama.
- Buzan, T. (2011), *Mind Maps for kids*, Jakarta: PT Gramedia Pustaka Utama.
- George, M. W. (2008). *The Elements of Library Research: What Every Student Needs to Know*. New Jersey: Princeton University Press.
- Karubaba, S., & Rahman, F. (2025). Code-Switching and Code-Mixing in Indonesian EFL Classrooms: Teacher-Student Interactions in North Biak. *Dialectica Online Publishing Journal*, 1(1), 107-115.
- Kusuma, L. A., Rachman, L. A., & Mauriyat, A. (2024). Teaching Mind-Mapping Technique to Improve Students Writing Descriptive Text. *Project (Professional Journal of English Education)*, 7(4), 743-748.
- Latief, M. R. A., Jumari, R., Ardiansya, A., Lauren, C., & Derin, T. (2024). Digital Conversation Analysis on Screen-Captured Data: Comparing Instagram Online Discourse on Smartphone vs Laptop. *Elsya: Journal of English*

Language Studies, 6(1), 78-91.

- Nofrita, H. (2019). *Improving Students' Ability in Writing Descriptive Text by Using Mind Mapping Technique at Grade X SMA N 1 Angkola Selatan* (Doctoral dissertation, IAIN Padangsidempuan).
- Nurlaila, A. P. (2013). The Use of Mind Mapping Technique in Writing Descriptive Text. *Journal of English and Education*, 1(2), 9-15.
- Purnomo, A. (2014). Improving Descriptive Writing Skill Through Mind Mapping Technique. *Register: Language and Language Teaching Journals*, 7(2), 245–262.
- Said, M. M., Rita, F., Weda, S., & Rahman, F. (2021). English Language Performance Development Through Extracurricular Activities At Faculty Of Teacher Training And Education Tadulako University Palu. *PalArch's Journal of Archaeology of Egypt/Egyptology*.
- Sharples, M. (1999). *How We Write; Writing as Creative Design*. London: Routledge.
- Waloyo, E. (2017). The Implementation of Mind Mapping Technique in Teaching Writing: A Case Study at MAN 13 Jakarta. *ELT Echo: The Journal of English Language Teaching in Foreign Language Context*, 2(1), 72-83.
- Weda, S., Rahman, F., Atmowardoyo, H., Samad, I. A., Fitriani, S. S., Said, M. M., & Sakti, A. E. F. (2022). Intercultural Communicative Competence of Students from Different Cultures in EFL Classroom Interaction in Higher Institution. *International Journal of Research on English Teaching and Applied Linguistics*, 3(1), 1-23.
- Wilson, V. (2016). Research Methods: Content Analysis. *Evidence Based Library and Information Practice*, 11(1 (S)), 41-43.