CLUSTERING TECHNIQUE IN TEACHING WRITING DESCRIPTIVE TEXT FOR EFL CLASSES: IS IT EFFECTIVE?

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Abstract

The objective of the research is to find out whether there is a positive and significant effect of using clustering technique in teaching writing descriptive text for EFL classes at a secondary school. The researchers used quantitative research. This research used quasi-experimental class by using experimental class and control class. The population of this research was all of the students in EFL classes at a secondary school, and the sample of this research is class IPA 2 and IPA 3. To collect the data, the researchers used written test and observation. The research instrument used in this study was an essay test. The researcher used pre-test and post test to determine the effect of Clustering Technique. In analyzing the data, the researchers used the formulation of chi-square and t-test. The result of this research shows hat df is 70 with t-table 5% is 1,667 with the t-observation is 12,1 it is means that t-observation > t-table or it can be written 12,1>1,667. Therefore, it can be concluded that Ho is rejected. It means there is positive and significant, so the Clustering Technique was effective in teaching writing descriptive text on EFL classes at a secondary school.

Keyword: Clustering Technique, Descriptive Text, Writing

INTRODUCTION

Writing skill becomes very important for the students because it is an essential activity for them in their future lives. Writing is usually regarded as the most difficult skill to learn, not only because of the need to master many skills of English such as reading, speaking, and listening, but also because of the difference between the learners' native language rules and that of the language being learned. Writing is categorized as one of the most difficult skills for the students because they must have capabilities in the writing process and components of writing such as organization, vocabulary, grammar, and mechanics.

According to Harmer, writing is one of productive skills which should be produced by students (Jeremy Harmer, 2007, p. 265). Writing is the way how to share ideas, feelings, thoughts, and experiences to the reader in written form. The purpose of writing is to express something, to persuade the reader, to create a work, and also to provide information. Therefore, the students need more practice in order to have a good writing skill. Based on the basic competence of the eighth grade of junior high school, the students will deal with many kinds of the texts, such as descriptive text, recount text, narrative text, and procedure text (Prawerti, 2015).

Descriptive text is a paragraph that is defined as a group of sentences that aree closely related in thought and which serve one common purpose often used to describe what a person looks like and acts like, what a place looks like, and what an object looks like (Siburian, 2013). The key to write a good description is to use details that help the reader imagine the person that the writer has described. The generic structure of descriptive text are identification and description. Identification contains the identification of matter that will be described. Description contains the explanation or description of the thing or person to mention a few properties. For example, when a student wants to describe his house, then he should have background knowledge about parts of his house, such as how many rooms that this student has? What is the color of the wall? How wide or how high the house is. In descriptive text, the students should organize their thinking logically and they can communicate to the other people in detail when they want to describe people, places or things.

There were some difficulties that the students faced during writing the descriptive paragraph. First, the students find it difficult to develop and generate ideas. The students wrote many main ideas in one paragraph; the idea of the paragraph was still ambiguous. The idea of the paragraph was still not clear. Second, the students find it difficult to organize the ideas in writing a descriptive text. A paragraph needs more than a unified point; it needs a reasonable organization or sequence. The students have to organize their ideas into good paragraphs, the students have to make their writing readable. To write a descriptive paragraph, the students can organize their ideas by identifying the topic and giving the descriptions about the topic. Third, the students found difficulties in grammar. Grammar difficulties will influence certain patterns of how words are put together to form the correct sentences. Fourth, the students lack of vocabulary and they also have difficulties in developing their ideas related to their topic. Developing ideas is the most important thing to the students in writing descriptive text. By developing the ideas, the students can make a good writing text and develop their ideas clearly in each paragraph. In organizing ideas, students have to identify the name of the place and describe the details of the place in the supporting paragraph (Septiyana, 2017).

Table 1 The Results Data of Pre-Survey

No.	Grade	Explanation	Frequencies
1.	<73	Failed	25
2.	>73	Passed	11
Total			36

Source: students writing text at EFL classes at a secondary school

Based on the table above, it can be seen that 36 students in EFL classes at a secondary school as sample in this pre-survey, which the standard minimum requirement (SMR) is 73, in reality,11 students who have their writing abilities test are classified as "passed," and 25 students who have their writing abilities are classified as "failed."

To overcome this problem, the teachers need to use appropriate techniques that make students interested and enthusiastic in writing. After the researchers read a lot of research on idea development techniques when writing, the researchers found a technique that is widely used by other researchers in improving students' ability to develop ideas, the technique is the clustering technique. (Langan, 2008a) defined that Clustering Technique also known as diagramming or mapping, is another strategy that can be used to generate material for a paper. This method is helpful for people who like to do their thinking in a visual way. In Clustering Technique, the students can use lines, boxes, arrows to make the relation among the ideas from the students' mind based on topic. Clustering is a technique in the early stage to help students in finding their various ideas. Rico explains that clustering technique is a technique for quickly

making the idea and suggestion that we have about the topic explicit (Campbell & Rico, 1992). To make it clearly, students can use a clustering technique by making a circle with a big idea in it. After that, the students can connect it by a line with the other ideas and also circle it as the ideas flow in students' minds, they can do it continuously as many as times possible. Clustering technique is used in the prewriting stage of the writing process. Because in prewriting stage, the students develop their ideas first before they apply a whole paragraph in written form. Clustering technique can be used for any kind of text.

Based on the explanation above, the researchers have motivation to conduct research on the effect of using clustering technique in exploring the ideas in students' writing descriptive text. The researchers want to make experimental research to know whether clustering technique is effective in students' exploring or generating ideas.

Therefore, the objective of this research was to find out whether there is a positive and significant effect of using clustering technique in teaching writing descriptive text in EFL classes at a secondary school.

LITERATURE REVIEW
Concept of Writing

Writing is one of language skills which have to be possessed by the language learners. Besides, writing also will never be separated in education. Without some abilities to express yourself in writing, you do not pass the course. Writing is one of the important skills to be mastered by the students. They use it to communicate to each other, as means of ideas and emotional expression, because when they write their ideas and emotion creatively, they are communicating on paper in their very best way and purposes (Meiranti, 2012). Brown also describes written products as the result of thinking, drafting, and revising procedures that require specialized skills, skills that not every speaker develops naturally (Brown, 2007). In other words, writing is an integrated intellectual activity that involves the entire English language skills. It is one of the many ways to convey ideas.

There are many different definitions about writing that were given by experts from many resources. Lines and Nunan in (Murray, 2012) states that writing is the combination between process and product. The process is the collection of the ideas which could create products that can be ready for the readers. As a result, writing is not only the activity of setting down some words or sentences into the written language, but also the activity of arranging words into a one well-organized writing. It can be seen that writing is more complex than other language skills since it involves ideas clearly and correctly (Septiyana & Firmansyah, 2020).

According to Hywel, the sub-skills of writing such as descriptive skill (description of people, places and things), narrative skill (narrating stories, incidents, events with proper sequence in chronological order), and expository skill (writing with the purpose to justify, explain, define, classify, compare and contrast) (Javed et al., 2013). One thing that students can learn to write different writings effectively when teachers give them encouragement to express their ideas, thoughts, experience, and feelings into written language (Sukmawati & Nasution, 2020).

Writing is very different, except that you take more time to think about your subject, the person or people you will be discussing. In addition, you also have a think about goal you hope to achieve in that discussion and you also take more time to revise your work. The explanation above shows that writing is a process to produce language. It is like our conversation or dialogue we usually perform in our daily life. However, we can have more time to correct and revise our statement after we reread the draft.

There are five components of writing; they are organization, content, grammar, mechanics, and vocabulary. The five components above are: (Brown, 2006, pp. 244–245)

1) Organization

It consists of introduction, body, and conclusion. It's about how the writer makes a good relationship between the titles, introductory paragraph, and the topic, the body of paragraph, generalization, and conclusion. It is about whether all of the components above are supporting each other and are composed orderly by the writer or not.

2) Content

Content here is about logical development of ideas. Whether the ideas are concrete and thoroughly developed or not, whether the essay addressed the issue or not, is there any extraneous material present or not in the text.

3) Grammar

It is about all the language rules application used by the writer. For example, nativelike fluency English grammar, correctness of using relative clause, prepositions, modals, articles, verb forms, and tense sequencing, etc.

4) Mechanics

It is about the punctuation, spelling, and all of the graphic convention of the language. It is about correctly using English writing conventions; all needed capitals, paragraph intended, using comma, full-stop, etc.

5) Vocabulary

It is about style and quality of expression. How the writer uses precise vocabulary, parallel structures, word choosing, etc.

Concept of Descriptive Text

Descriptive text is one of texts in English to describe about a person, places, and thing in a paragraph. A paragraph is a short paper of around 150 to 200 words. It usually consists of an opening point, called a topic sentence, followed by a series of sentences that support that point (Langan, 2008a). Description is writing about how something (or someone) looks and uses space order (Oshima, 2001). The trick to writing a good description is using details. (Means & Lindner, 1998) stated that to make readers interested in reading a descriptive text, it has to contain the deatils and information which may lead readers' five sense; seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting, and touching. According to (Langan, 2008b), descriptive text is a text which describes someone or something by using words. To convince the readers, in a descriptive text, the picture is put as real as possible, students have to give a description just like as the real object, and it is possible to make the readers capture the object using their five senses (Langan, 2008a). Furthermore, descriptive text is a text type that is used when we want to tell how something looks, smells, feels, acts, tastes, sounds, etc (Jayanti, 2019).

According to the opinion of several experts above, it can be concluded that descriptive text is a text that is used to describe something in detail and based on facts which aims to give an understanding to the readers about something, namely; person, places, thing, and etc.

Descriptive text is a text that is used to describe something in detail and based on facts. Its purpose is to make scholars capable of describing a specific person, place, or thing into written form. Furthermore, there are three purposes in writing descriptive text, here as follows (Axelrod & Cooper, 2010): (a) to give readers an impression of a person, place or thing; (b) to illustrate abstract ideas; (c) to make information memorable, or to support an argument.

It can be concluded that the purpose of descriptive text is to assist the reader in imagining a thing, namely; place, person, or thing in a text. Like other kinds of text, descriptive text also has its structure or steps. According to Mayer in Sari, Wahyuni "Descriptive paragraph has the generic structures namely; identification, description, and conclusion" (Sari & Wahyuni, 2018, p. 167).

a. Identification

Identification is the part to identify or write the recognition; moreover, it can be a general statement about a place person, or thing that one wants to describe.

b. Description

Descriptions or main body of the paragraph are vivid details of place, person, or thing that are described so that the reader can easily imagine or picture the object, or they can feel the object through the five senses (seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting, and touching). In writing descriptive text, students need to understand the generic structures and be able to differentiate which is the identification or description in a text description.

Concept of Clustering Technique

In the writing process, there is a prewriting step. One of the prewriting steps is clustering. There are a lot of definitions about clustering stated by experts, according to Baroudy in (Sari & Wahyuni, 2018) defines clustering as a non-linear brainstorming process that generates ideas, images, and feelings around a stimulus word until a pattern becomes discernible. This technique is helpful for people who like to think in a visual way. In clustering, students can use lines, boxes, arrows, and circles to show the relationships among the ideas and details that occur to them. It means that clustering is a technique that can help students to narrow the subject especially for visual learners.

Clustering technique is a prewriting technique used by writers to produce ideas (Oshima, 2007). When you cluster, you start by writing your topic in a circle in the middle of your paper. As you think of related ideas, be you write these ideas in smaller circles around the first circle. The related idea in each small circle may produce even more ideas, and therefore more circles, around it (Oshima, 2001). Think of ideas and details related to this subject. This technique will help the students to organize their ideas before they develop a paragraph of descriptive writing.

A clustering technique developed by Rico is used to improve writing skill. Rico explains that "Clustering technique is a technique for quickly making explicit the idea and associations we have about the topic (Campbell & Rico, 1992)." In other words, we can say that clustering is an effective technique in free writing because it seems to be a reflection of the way the design mind naturally.

Blanchard and Root define clustering technique as another prewriting technique. It is a visual way of showing how some ideas are connected using circles and lines when the students draw a diagram based on their knowledge. To make clusters follow the steps (Karen Blanchard & Christine Root, 2022):
1) Write the topic in the center of a blank piece of paper and draw a circle arou iit.
2) Write any ideas that come into the mind about the topic in circles around the main circle.
3) Connect these ideas to the center word with a line.
4) Think about each of the new ideas, write more related ideas in the circle near the new ideas, and then connect them.
5) Repeat this process until one runs out of ideas.

METHOD

The researchers had conducted quantitative research. The researchers determined the effect of using the clustering technique on students' abilities in writing descriptive text. This research used quasi-experimental design by using pre-test and post-test control group design. This research was conducted to students in EFL classes at a Secondary School.

In this research, the independent variable is Clustering Technique. The implementation of Clustering Technique as a technique in the class for the first meeting, the researchers give handouts of descriptive text for the students. Dependent Variable in this research is the students' writing ability that the students' ability is to write and understand words, sentences, or phrases. In this study, what is meant by the population is the entire subject of the study, namely students of EFL Classes as a secondary school of MAN 1 Lampung Tengah with a total of 396 students from X IPA 1-6 and X IPS 1-5. The researchers used a sample class X IPA 2 as a controlled class sample consisting of 36 students and X IPA 3 as an experimental class sample consisting of 36 students. The researchers conducting this research used purposive random sampling

technique because the use of this sample is simple. Two tests have been used in this study namely pre- test and post-test.

In this study, researchers used a simple statistical formula to compare the results pre-test and post-test of students who conducted the survey. The data will be analyzed using the T-test formula to investigate whether there is any positive and significant effect of possible sentence strategy on students' ability in writing descriptive text in EFL classes at a secondary school.

FINDING AND DISCUSSION
The Data of Pre-Test and Post-Test in Experimental Class

Based on the result of the pre-test from the experimental class, it was found that the highest score was 78 and the lowest score was 32, the mean score was 55,7. Meanwhile in the post-test from the experimental class, it was found that the highest score was 96 and the lowest score was 66 with the mean score was 83,3.

The Distribution Test of Pre-Test and Post-Test of Experimental Class

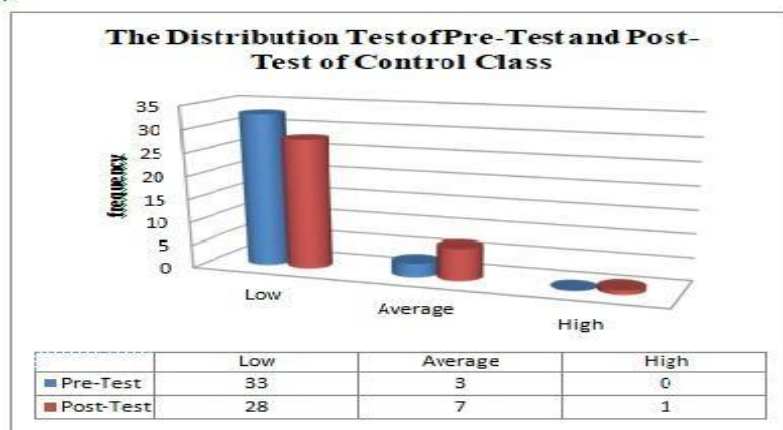|	Low	Average	High
Pre-Test	32	4	0
Post-Test	3	8	25
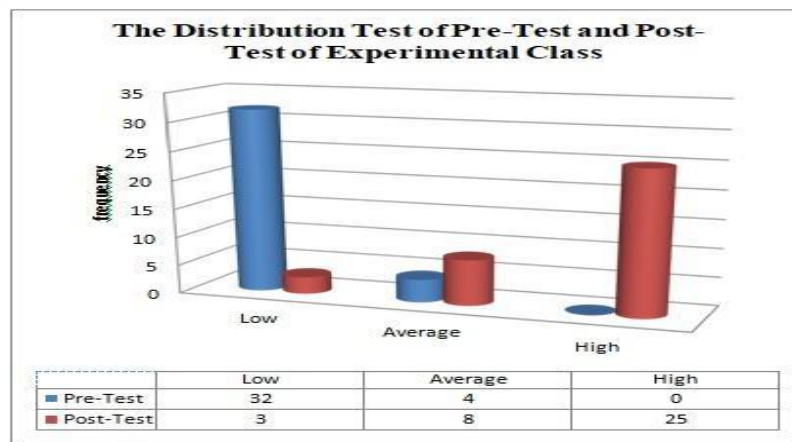
Graph 1. Students' Pretest and Posttest Score Distribution in the Experimental Class.

The students' score distribution in Graph 1 showed that on the pre-test of the experimental class, no students were in high category, thirty-two students were in the low category, and four students were in average category. The distribution score of the students' scores in the post-test which was shown in Graph 1 had increased. In the posttest, there was a change in some categories. There were three students in the low category, eight students in average category, and twenty-five students in high category. It can be concluded that clustering technique can help students in writing descriptive text since most of the students got high scores in writing.

The Data of Pre-Test and Post-Test in Control Class

Based on the result of the pre-test from the experimental class. It was found that the highest score was 78 and the lowest score was 36, the mean score was 49. Meanwhile in the post-test from the experimental class, it was found that the highest score was 82 and the lowest score was 45 with the mean score was 63,6.

Graph 2. Students' Pretest and Posttest Score Distribution in the Control Class.

The students' score distribution in Graph 2 showed that on the pre-test of control class, no students were in high category, 33 students were in the low category, and 3 students were in average category. The distribution score of the students' scores in the post-test which was shown in Graph 2. There were 28 students in low category, 7 students in average category, and only one student in high category.

Hypothesis Testing

In this study the researchers analyzed the data by using t-test formula in order to prove whether there was any positive and significant effect of clustering technique on students' writing ability in writing descriptive text.

(Ha) is accepted, if there is any positive and significant effect of clustering technique in teaching descriptive text for EFL classes at a secondary school.

(Ho) is rejected, if there is no positive and significant effect of clustering technique in teaching descriptive text for EFL classes at a secondary school.

In order to prove whether there is any difference between the experimental class and control class in EFL classes at a secondary school. The researchers used the table as the authentication of effect between experiment class and control class in EFL classes at a secondary school. Table 1 shows the differences in scores of pre-tests and post-test of the students' writing.

Table 1. The differences score between pre-test and post-test of students' ability in   writing descriptive text at students of EFL Classes as a secondary school of MAN 1 Lampung Tengah

No	Experimental Class				Control Class			
	Name	Pre- test score (X1)	Post- test score (X2)	Different X	Name	Pre- test score (Y1)	Post- test score (Y2)	Different Y
1.	AD	70	75	5	AK	38	68	30
2.	AI	75	87	12	AN	78	75	-3
3.	AA	68	81	13	AR	36	70	34
4.	AH	73	73	0	AF	48	73	25
5.	AN	43	82	39	AA	68	75	7
6.	AP	55	90	35	CG	51	82	31
7.	AS	48	88	40	CD	55	80	25
8.	AF	51	86	35	DA	73	78	5
9.	AN	55	69	14	EN	48	60	12
10.	AR	32	75	43	EA	50	50	0
11.	AP	36	88	52	EM	45	50	5
12.	AS	73	78	5	FA	45	48	3
13.	BC	69	96	27	FM	67	70	3

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14.	DM	70	83	13	LF	70	66	-4
15.	DA	45	75	30	LR	36	68	32
16.	DD	48	91	43	LS	38	49	11
17.	FA	68	89	21	MA	45	50	5
18.	HO	65	91	26	MF	37	51	14
19.	IR	70	87	17	ML	36	68	32
20.	IK	45	83	38	MR	38	55	17
21.	LZ	48	90	42	MA	75	75	0
22.	LP	38	78	40	MZ	50	45	-5
23.	MA	56	86	30	NS	38	60	22
24.	MV	51	88	37	NT	55	75	20
25.	MG	51	92	41	NN	37	63	26
26.	NA	48	88	40	PR	48	62	14
27.	NN	50	87	37	QF	37	51	14
28.	RA	68	88	20	RF	40	55	15
29.	RU	69	70	1	RY	45	65	20
30.	RK	70	76	6	RA	45	66	21
31.	RN	58	89	31	SR	44	69	25
32.	RA	38	78	40	SN	51	62	11
33.	SA	40	66	26	SP	41	68	27
34.	SF	50	81	31	TM	45	68	23
35.	SV	36	86	50	ZN	50	51	1
36.	TR	78	88	10	ZA	70	70	0
Total		**2.008**	**2.998**	**990**		**1.783**	**2.291**	**518**
Average		**55,7**	**83,3**	**27,5**		**49**	**63,6**	**14,4**

So, the researchers used the formula as follows:

$$M_X = \frac{X}{N} \qquad\qquad M_Y = \frac{Y}{N}$$

$$= \frac{990}{36} \qquad\qquad\qquad = \frac{518}{36}$$

$$= 27,5 \qquad\qquad\qquad = 14,4$$

$$\Sigma X^2 = \Sigma X^2 - \frac{\Sigma X^2}{N} \qquad\qquad \Sigma Y^2 = \Sigma Y^2 - \frac{\Sigma Y^2}{N}$$

$$= (990)^2 - \frac{(990)^2}{36} \qquad\qquad = (518)^2 - \frac{(518^2}{36}$$

$$= 980.100 - 27.225 \qquad\qquad = 268.324 - 7.453,4$$

$$= \sqrt{952.875} \qquad\qquad\qquad = \sqrt{260.870,6}$$

$$= 976,1 \qquad\qquad\qquad\quad = 510,75$$

Furthermore, the researcher counted by using t-test formula as follows:

$N_X = 36 \qquad N_Y = 36$

$M_X = 27,5 \qquad M_Y = 14,4$

$\Sigma X = 976,1 \qquad \Sigma Y = 510,75$

$$t = \frac{M_X - M_Y}{\sqrt{\left(\dfrac{\sum X^2 + \sum Y^2}{N_X + N_Y - 2}\right)\left(\dfrac{1}{N_X} + \dfrac{1}{N_Y}\right)}}$$

$$t = \frac{27,5 - 14,4}{\sqrt{\left(\dfrac{976,1 + 510,75}{36 + 36 - 2}\right)\left(\dfrac{1}{36} + \dfrac{1}{36}\right)}}$$

$$t = \frac{13,1}{\sqrt{21,24 \times 0,055}}$$

$$t = \frac{13,1}{\sqrt{1,17}}$$

$$t = 12,1$$

Therefore, $t^{observation}$ is 12,1 as the result of the counting by using t-test formula above to know the critical value of t-test (t^{table}) the researcher firstly counted *df. Df* is the degree of freedom.

Therefore, formulation of *df* $= N^X + N^Y - 2$

$$df = N^X + N^Y - 2$$
$$= 36 + 36 - 2 = 70$$

To *df* 70 with *df* 5% is 1,667 and 1% is 2,380. Then, the data confirmed that to 12,1> t-^{table} 1,667. Because t-^{observation} is bigger than t-^{table} both *df* 5% = 1,667 and 1% = 2,380.

After the statement above were formulated, the researcher consulted t-^{observation} to t-^{table} as follows:

If t-^{observation} > t-^{table}, Ha is accepted and Ho is rejected.

If t-^{observation} < t-^{table}, Ha is rejected and Ho is accepted.

Finally, the data confirm that t-^{observation} is > t-^{table} in 5% and 1% with the significant 1,667<12,1>2,380. Therefore, it can be inferred that Ha is accepted and Ho is rejected.

It means that there is a positive and significant effect of clustering technique in exploring the ideas of students` writing descriptive text in EFL classes at a secondary school.

Discussion

a. Interpretation t^{observation}

The researcher has formulated the alternative hypothesis (Ha) and null hypothesis (Ho) as follows:

1) There is any positive and significant effect of Clustering Technique in teaching writing descriptive text in EFL classes at a secondary school.

2) There is not any positive and significant effect of Clustering Technique in teaching writing descriptive text in EFL classes at a secondary school.

After Ha and Ho above were formulated, the researcher consulted T- observation to T-table as follows:

- If $t\text{-}^{observation} > t\text{-}^{table}$, Ha is accepted and Ho is rejected.
- If $t\text{-}^{observation} < t\text{-}^{table}$, Ha is rejected and Ho is accepted.

Finally, the data confirmed that $t\text{-}^{observation} = 12,1$ is higher than $t\text{-}^{table} = 2,380$. Therefore, it can be inferred that Ha is accepted and Ho is rejected. It means that there is any positive and significant effect of Clustering Technique in teaching writing descriptive text in EFL classes at a secondary school. During the research, the researchers observed that the students are interested in learning to write descriptive text through Clustering Technique. They were enthusiastic about the learning process. They were also active in the class during writing descriptive text by using Clustering Technique. They were able to understand the writing descriptive text and explore their ideas through using Clustering Technique more easily. The researchers assumed that teaching and learning by using Clustering Technique can influence students' ability to write descriptive text well. Through using Clustering Technique as a technique, the students can learn to write descriptive text in an easier way, because the students can generate and explore their ideas while writing descriptive text easily and effectively. It supports the previous study which was conducted by (Hanafiawi et al., 2020) that using clustering technique can improve the students' ability in writing and the atmosphere of the class was more alive. The next previous study which was conducted by (Adriati, 2013) showed that the students' responses to the technique was positive and this technique makes the students more enjoy in teaching learning process. In the previous study, the previous researcher used narrative text as a genre of the writing, while, in this study, the researchers used descriptive text. Therefore, it has been proven that using Clustering Technique can influence the students' ability on writing descriptive text more than the other technique or strategy, especially for students in EFL classes at a secondary school. Furthermore, the result of this research confirmed the effect of Clustering Technique in teaching writing descriptive text. This research also clarified the theory of the effect of Clustering Technique in teaching writing descriptive text in EFL classes at a secondary school.

CONCLUSION

Based on the result of the research, the researchers concluded that Clustering Technique had a positive and significant effect, the data confirmed that "t- observation" was higher than "t-table." Clustering Technique can explore the students` ideas on writing descriptive text in EFL classes at a secondary school. It can be used as a strategy in learning writing descriptive text and it can help the students to generate and explore their ideas in writing descriptive text. In addition, Clustering Technique is simple to be applied. In implementing this technique, the teacher has to manage the time well because this technique takes longer time for the students to finish their writing, compared to their usual writing routine.

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