



Enhancing Students' Narrative Writing Skills Through Mind Mapping Technique at Grade XI-3 SMA

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Abstract

Writing skill is a crucial component of English language learning; however, it remains one of the most challenging skills for many senior high school students, particularly in narrative writing. In the current classroom context, students of grade XI-3 SMA experience specific difficulties in generating ideas, developing coherent story plots, and organizing events logically. Many students struggle to construct complete narrative structures, including clear orientation, complication, and resolution, which often results in fragmented and incoherent texts. Common problems include poor event sequencing, limited vocabulary, weak paragraphs, and low cohesion. These difficulties are closely related to instructional practices that emphasize the final written product rather than the writing process. Students are frequently asked to write narrative texts without sufficient guidance on planning, organizing, and developing ideas systematically. Consequently, students feel confused, unmotivated, and anxious, which negatively affects their writing performance. This situation indicates the urgent need for an effective instructional technique. Mind Mapping was selected to address these issues because it helps students brainstorm ideas, organize story elements, and maintain narrative coherence. This Classroom Action Research involving 34 students showed improved writing achievement, with mean scores increasing from 65.21 to 82.46 and more students reaching Good and Very Good categories overall.

Keyword: Narrative Writing; Mind Mapping; Technique Writing Skill

Received: 4 Des 2025; Revised: 26 Des 2025; Accepted: 28 Des 2025; Available Online: 28 Des 2025

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INTRODUCTION

Writing is a crucial yet challenging skill in English language learning at the senior high school level. Within the Indonesian curriculum, writing is one of the four core language skills that students must master; however, it is often considered the most difficult due to its cognitive complexity. Writing requires students to generate ideas, organize them logically, apply appropriate vocabulary and grammar, and present thoughts coherently. Many Indonesian high school students experience difficulties in these areas, resulting in poorly structured and less meaningful texts. Previous studies highlight that limitations in vocabulary, grammar mastery, and idea organization remain major obstacles in students' writing development, emphasizing the urgent need for effective instructional strategies to enhance writing skills in the EFL classroom (Cheung & Jang, 2020; Andriyaningsih et al., 2023; Masrul et al., 2023). Within senior high school curricula, narrative writing represents a key genre that students are expected to master. These narrative forms often aim to entertain or instruct, requiring an understanding of critical components such as character development, setting establishment, and conflict resolution. With the curriculum delineating generic structures and language attributes for narrative writing, many students, as observed in grade XI-3 at SMA YP HKBP Pematangsiantar, struggle to weave cohesive narratives effectively, producing stories that lack coherence and creativity. This disconnect frequently results in narratives that are not only grammatically incorrect but also fail to captivate, severely affecting students' confidence and motivation to write (Bhandari, 2024).

To tackle these challenges effectively, it is essential to utilize instructional strategies that promote idea generation and proper organization of thoughts. The Mind Mapping technique emerges as a potent approach in this regard, facilitating students in visualizing the relationships between ideas surrounding a central theme. This

technique acts as a scaffold for students, allowing for the exploration of ideas that can lead to richer narratives. Prior research supports that Mind Mapping could significantly aid students in developing complex plots and vivid character descriptions necessary for engaging narrative compositions (Ngoc, 2023). This study, entitled “Enhancing Students’ Narrative Writing Skills through the Mind Mapping Technique at Grade XI-3 SMA YP HKBP Pematangsiantar,” is designed to examine the effectiveness of mind mapping in improving students’ narrative writing skills. Based on empirical classroom observations, students of grade XI-3 SMA YP HKBP Pematangsiantar demonstrate persistent difficulties in narrative writing. These difficulties are evident in their limited ability to generate ideas, frequent grammatical errors particularly in the use of past tense forms and weak organization of narrative structure. Many students fail to construct narratives that clearly consist of orientation, complication, and resolution, resulting in incoherent and underdeveloped texts. Findings from previous studies indicate that mind mapping is an effective instructional technique for supporting students’ writing development. Research has shown that Mind Mapping helps learners organize ideas visually, improve text coherence, and enhance grammatical accuracy by providing a clear framework before writing (McKeown et al., 2021; Tambi et al., 2022). These studies suggest that Mind Mapping can reduce cognitive overload and facilitate a more systematic writing process, particularly in narrative text composition.

Based on these empirical conditions and theoretical insights, the author assumes that the implementation of the mind mapping technique can significantly improve students’ narrative writing skills. Therefore, the main research question guiding this study is: Can the Mind Mapping technique significantly improve the narrative writing skills of grade XI-3 students at SMA YP HKBP Pematangsiantar in the academic year 2025/2026? This study aims not only to measure the extent of improvement in students’ narrative writing performance but also to enhance their engagement and confidence in completing narrative writing tasks. The findings are expected to contribute theoretically to the field of English language teaching and practically to provide teachers with an effective instructional strategy for addressing students’ writing difficulties. For clarity, writing is defined as the structured expression of ideas to convey meaning in written form. Narrative texts are texts that tell stories for the purpose of entertaining or informing readers. Writing skills refer to the ability to organize ideas coherently, apply grammatical rules accurately, and use appropriate vocabulary. A technique is a specific instructional strategy used to achieve learning objectives, while Mind Mapping is a brainstorming technique that begins with a central idea and develops related ideas through visual connections, thereby supporting the writing process (Tambi et al., 2022).

This research underscores the transformative potential of the mind mapping technique to elevate narrative writing proficiency among high school students. Supporting evidence from relevant literature will provide insights into effective instructional practices that can improve students’ engagement and skill in writing, thus laying a solid foundation for further inquiries into writing pedagogy. The targeted focus on enhancing narrative writing through this specific technique reflects a commitment to equipping students with the necessary tools for proficient written expression, ultimately enabling them to become more adept communicators. Addressing the deficiencies in narrative writing among high school students, especially in the Indonesian context, calls for innovative teaching approaches. The utilization of mind mapping as an instructional tool presents an opportunity to facilitate students’ cognitive engagement and idea organization, which are paramount in crafting compelling narratives. Additionally, the pedagogical implications of this study will not only be instrumental for students at SMA YP HKBP Pematangsiantar but could also serve as a model for broader educational practices aimed at improving writing skills across various educational settings.

Literature Review

Narrative writing is an essential genre that serves as a means of storytelling and the conveyance of events, deeply rooted in human communication across cultures. As articulated in existing literature, narrative writing is structured through various components that work together to form a coherent story. The initial component, often referred to as the orientation or setting, introduces key elements, including characters, time, and place. This introduction establishes the groundwork for reader engagement and contextual understanding of the narrative at hand. For example, Kirby et al. emphasize that recognizing the relationship between the structure of oral narratives and written forms is pivotal to fostering literacy in young learners, indicating that early exposure to narrative conventions can enhance overall writing proficiency (Kirby et al., 2021). A critical aspect of narrative writing is the complication or problem, which introduces the central conflict that propels the story forward. This complication is essential as it creates tension and drives the plot. Without this element, narratives may lack the

dynamism that captures reader interest. Zahra et al. illustrate how executive functions play a role in managing these narrative complexities, whereby students' cognitive resources are activated to navigate through narrative challenges and plot developments (Zahra et al., 2023). Actions and reactions unfold in a sequence as the story progresses, leading towards a climax where tension peaks, thereby enriching the reader's experience and engagement with the narrative.

As the narrative unfolds towards its resolution, readers expect clarity on how conflicts are resolved. This resolution serves not only as closure for the storyline but also as a moment of reflection for readers. Mustadi and Irvan suggest that the delivery of narrative resolutions significantly impacts a reader's ability to extract moral and ethical lessons from the text, thus enhancing comprehension (Mustadi & Irvan, 2021). In addition to engaging narratives through conflict and resolution, narratives must also exhibit cohesion and coherence, enabling logical sequencing and meaningful connections between events. This structural integrity is vital for maintaining the reader's comprehension and overall enjoyment of the narrative. The language used in narrative writing also plays an indispensable role. Features such as past tense, temporal conjunctions, and descriptive language enhance narrative depth and vibrancy. The proficient use of these linguistic elements allows writers to create vivid imagery and evoke emotions within readers, facilitating a more immersive reading experience. Wubalem discusses how varied vocabulary tailored towards narrative creation can significantly influence the emotional and sensory impacts of the story (Wubalem, 2021). The importance of language in shaping narrative perceptions cannot be overstated, as these features contribute to the style and tone of the narrative, rendering it rich and captivating.

Despite its foundational nature, many students encounter significant challenges in narrative writing. These challenges often stem from problems in idea generation alongside cognitive overload, which can hinder fluency in narrative expression. For instance, Mustika et al. noted that when students struggle to generate coherent ideas, it can lead to deficiencies in narrative organization and segmentation, impeding their ability to craft an engaging story (Mustika et al., 2025). Furthermore, students may demonstrate limited use of cohesive devices and temporal markers crucial for fluid narrative progression, leading to disjointed storytelling. The linguistic confidence required to employ descriptive and engaging language might also be lacking, thereby constraining expressive capacity in narrative construction. These challenges can be compounded by low motivation and heightened anxiety associated with writing tasks, ultimately complicating the narrative development landscape faced by learners. To address these challenges, educators are compelled to adopt effective instructional strategies that empower students in their narrative writing endeavors. Pre-writing strategies, including scaffolding, modeling, and process-oriented approaches, highlight the importance of planning and revising prior to drafting (Olmos-Ochoa et al., 2021). By emphasizing these stages, educators can cultivate an environment where students actively engage from the conception of their narratives to the articulation of ideas on paper. The application of mind mapping an increasingly popular visual pre-writing tool has been shown to significantly alleviate some of the cognitive burdens associated with narrative writing processes.

Mind Mapping operates on the principle of visually centralizing ideas, with branches representing sub-ideas related to characters, events, settings, and stylistic elements. This visual representation not only enhances organizational clarity but also fosters meaningful spatial relationships among narrative components. Sopian (2023) demonstrated that mind mapping contributes to improved narrative writing by helping students structure their ideas, thereby facilitating clearer sequencing of events and greater narrative fluency. Through this technique, students are able to manage complex relationships among narrative elements, streamlining the composition process and producing narratives with improved clarity and coherence. In addition, mind mapping stimulates idea generation by encouraging associative thinking, which helps alleviate writer's block commonly experienced in narrative writing. This associative process is particularly beneficial during the planning stage, as it allows students to explore ideas freely without the constraints of linear writing.

The flexibility of mind mapping also enables efficient revision during the pre-writing phase and accommodates diverse learner needs in collaborative classroom contexts. Furthermore, the integration of vocabulary prompts and language cues within the mind map supports students in developing richer dialogues and more descriptive expressions, thereby enhancing the imaginative quality of their narratives. The theoretical foundation supporting the effectiveness of visual mapping techniques in writing is grounded in cognitive and educational theories. Schema theory explains that mind mapping activates learners' prior knowledge related to narrative structures, which facilitates the organization and integration of narrative information (Mas'amah et al., 2024). Despite these established findings, previous studies have largely focused on the general effectiveness of

mind mapping for writing improvement without closely examining its application in addressing specific grammatical challenges particularly past tense usage within narrative texts at the senior high school level. Therefore, the novelty of the present study lies in its focused investigation of mind mapping as a targeted instructional technique to simultaneously enhance idea organization, narrative structure, and grammatical accuracy among Grade XI students in a real classroom context.

In parallel, cognitive load theory posits that externalizing thoughts through visual maps reduces the working memory load, allowing learners to devote more cognitive resources toward complex language choices and higher-order planning. These theoretical models underscore the importance of integrating mind mapping into structured writing processes, illuminating the potential for significant gains in narrative writing proficiency. Empirical evidence supports the use of mind mapping as a beneficial intervention in various educational contexts. Research has indicated that students utilizing mind maps during pre-writing activities often produce narratives characterized by greater complexity, coherence, and overall quality (Ramasamy et al., 2023). Such findings reinforce the necessity for educators to explore innovative instructional methods, including mind mapping, as tools for enhancing narrative writing capabilities within diverse student populations. The positive correlation between mind mapping activities and improvements in writing effectiveness highlights the potential for increased student engagement and success in narrative forms.

In the specific context of Grade XI Indonesian senior high school students, effective narrative writing instruction is particularly important, given its assessment in both national and school-based examinations. Consequently, educational institutions confront challenges that arise from large class sizes and heterogeneous language proficiencies, thereby necessitating the need for adaptable instructional strategies such as mind mapping (Andriani et al., 2022). This low-cost teaching technique can greatly benefit students by enhancing spatial and organizational skills in narrative writing while fostering collaborative classroom experiences. Nonetheless, despite the encouraging findings surrounding mind mapping methodologies, gaps persist within the existing literature, particularly concerning its applicability in localized contexts such as Indonesian secondary education. The limited focus on geographical localization restricts the understanding of how contextual factors, such as cultural narratives, influence the efficacy of Mind Mapping strategies (Madu, 2024). Addressing these gaps requires careful consideration of instructional designs, especially those regarding explicit modeling and feedback cycles tied to the mind mapping process.

Moreover, the long-term retention and transferability of skills developed through mind mapping techniques warrant further investigation. Understanding how students transfer narrative writing skills beyond immediate classroom scenarios is critical for informing educational practices and ensuring the sustainability of writing improvements over time (Asror et al., 2024). Therefore, a localized classroom-based study focusing on the adaptation and implementation of mind mapping techniques in a Grade XI Indonesian context presents an opportunity to fill these notable gaps and contribute valuable insights to the field of English language instruction. The proposed conceptual framework for this investigation delineates the relationship between mind mapping as the independent variable and its anticipated effects on improving pre-writing processes among students. The expected outcomes encompass enhanced idea generation, planning, and organizational capabilities, leading to substantial improvements in narrative writing skills. In this framework, contextual factors such as the quality of teacher modeling, frequency of practice, and students' varying language proficiencies will also be considered, providing a comprehensive understanding of how these elements interact to influence narrative writing outcomes. Ultimately, a focus on innovative pre-writing strategies, specifically through mind mapping, not only aids in the organization and coherence of students' narratives but also nurtures a deeper connection between students and their storytelling. Enhancing narrative writing through such targeted instructional approaches can foster creativity and confidence in writing, setting a robust foundation for future literacy development across various genres and academic disciplines.

METHOD

This study employed a Classroom Action Research (CAR) design aimed at improving students' narrative writing skills through the use of the mind mapping technique. The research was conducted at SMA YP HKBP Pematangsiantar with 34 students of Grade XI-3 during the 2025/2026 academic year. The CAR procedure followed the cyclical model proposed by Kemmis and McTaggart (1988), consisting of four stages: planning, acting, observing, and reflecting, which were implemented in two cycles. In the planning stage, the researcher

identified students' difficulties in narrative writing, particularly in idea generation, organization, and appropriate language use. Based on these findings, lesson plans, teaching materials, and research instruments were prepared. During the action stage, the Mind Mapping technique was applied as a pre-writing strategy to guide students in organizing ideas and developing coherent narrative texts. Observation and reflection were conducted at the end of each cycle to evaluate the effectiveness of the instructional strategy and to make necessary improvements in the subsequent cycle.

Data were collected through observation, writing tests, and documentation to ensure methodological triangulation. Observations and field notes were used to record students' participation, engagement, and classroom interactions during the learning process, while documentation included lesson plans, students' worksheets, and written products. Writing tests administered at the end of each cycle served as the main quantitative data to measure students' improvement in narrative writing skills. Students' compositions were assessed using an analytical scoring rubric adapted from Hughes (2003), focusing on idea organization, language use, and overall writing quality. Qualitative data were analyzed descriptively to interpret changes in classroom behavior and learning processes, whereas quantitative data were analyzed by calculating the mean score and the percentage of students who achieved the minimum mastery criterion (KKM) of 75. This integrated analysis provided clear evidence of the effectiveness of the mind mapping technique in enhancing students' narrative writing skills.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Research Findings

This section presents the results and analysis of the research conducted to examine the effectiveness of the Mind Mapping Technique in improving students' narrative writing skills at Grade XI-3 of SMA YP HKBP Pematangsiantar in the 2025/2026 academic year. The findings are organized chronologically in accordance with the research procedures, which included the pre-test, treatment (Cycle I and Cycle II), and post-test. The presentation of findings combines both quantitative and qualitative data to provide a comprehensive understanding of students' improvement throughout the research process. (1) Pre-Test Results: Before the implementation of the Mind Mapping Technique, a pre-test was conducted to identify students' initial ability in writing narrative texts. In this pre-test, 34 students were asked to compose a short narrative text based on given topics. Students' writing was assessed analytically using five explicit indicators content, organization, vocabulary, language use, and mechanics adapted from Hughes (2003). The analysis of the pre-test results shows that students' difficulties can be clearly identified according to these assessment indicators. In terms of content, many students failed to develop ideas sufficiently; their narratives lacked details and depth, resulting in incomplete story development. With regard to organization, most students were unable to construct a clear narrative structure consisting of orientation, complication, and resolution, which caused weak coherence and illogical sequencing of events. Regarding vocabulary, students relied heavily on limited and repetitive word choices, which reduced the expressiveness and clarity of their narratives. In the aspect of language use, frequent grammatical errors were found, particularly in the use of past tense verbs and sentence construction, indicating inadequate mastery of narrative language features. In mechanics, errors in spelling, punctuation, and capitalization were observed, although these were less dominant compared to weaknesses in content, organization, and language use.

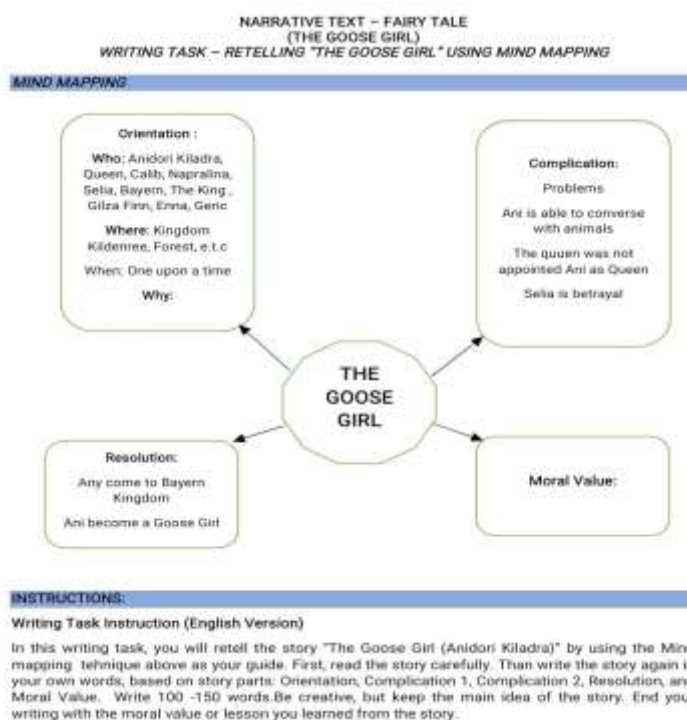
The statistical results from the pre-test are summarized as follows:

Highest score	:	85
Lowest score	:	30
Total score	:	2,105
Mean score	:	61.91
Number of students passing the KKM (75)	:	12 students (35.3%)
Number of students not passing	:	22 students (64.7%)
Category	:	<i>Fair to Low Performance</i>

The statistical summary of the pre-test results further supports these findings. The highest score was 85 and the lowest score was 30, with a total score of 2,105 and a mean score of 61.91. Only 12 students (35.3%) achieved the Minimum Mastery Criterion (KKM) of 75, while 22 students (64.7%) did not meet the standard.

Overall, students' narrative writing performance was categorized as fair to low. These results indicate that the majority of students did not meet the expected criteria in several key assessment indicators, especially organization, content development, and language use, thus confirming the need for an instructional intervention.

(2) Implementation of the Mind Mapping Technique: The Mind Mapping Technique was implemented over two cycles, each consisting of the stages of planning, acting, observing, and reflecting. The implementation was specifically designed to address the weaknesses identified in the pre-test assessment indicators. During Cycle I, mind mapping was introduced as a pre-writing strategy to improve content development and organization. The teacher modeled how to generate ideas from a central theme and organize them into branches representing narrative elements such as orientation, complication, and resolution. Although this strategy helped students generate ideas, observation results indicated that some students still experienced difficulty transforming their maps into coherent paragraphs, which affected their performance in the organization and language use indicators. Based on the reflection of Cycle I, instructional improvements were made in Cycle II to strengthen students' achievement across all assessment indicators. More explicit guidance and structured examples were provided to improve content elaboration and organization, while peer discussion and feedback focused on improving vocabulary choice and grammatical accuracy under the language use indicator. Additional attention was also given to mechanics, such as punctuation and capitalization, during revision activities. Observations in Cycle II showed increased student engagement and participation, as well as improved classroom interaction. These qualitative improvements indicate that the Mind Mapping Technique effectively supported students' progress in the targeted assessment indicators, particularly content, organization, and language use.



Picture 1. Worksheet - Using Mind Mapping Technique

(3) Post-Test Results: After completing the two cycles of instruction using the Mind Mapping Technique, a post-test was administered to assess students' writing improvement. The test task was similar in format to the pre-test, requiring students to write a narrative story using the main mapping as their pre-writing guide.

The statistical results of the post-test are presented below:

Highest score	:	95
Lowest score	:	65
Total score	:	2,655
Mean score	:	78.09
Number of students passing the KKM (75)	:	25 students (73.5%)

Number of students not passing : 9 students (26.5%)
Category : Good to Very Good Performance

When compared with the pre-test results, the mean score increased from **61.91 to 78.09**, showing an **improvement of 16.18 points**. The percentage of students who achieved the KKM also increased significantly from **35.3% to 73.5%**, which means that **an additional 13 students** successfully met the standard after the implementation of the Main Mapping Technique.

Table 1. Frequency Distribution of Students' Narrative Writing Scores

No	Interval	Frequency	%	Category
1	85 - 100	8	23.53	Very Good
2	75 - 84	17	50	Good
3	65 - 74	6	17.65	Fair
4	55 - 64	3	8.82	Poor
Total		34	100	

(Source: *Field Data, 2025*)

The table above shows that most students' scores are concentrated in the range of **75–84**, which falls into the *Good* category. This means that the majority of students were able to produce coherent narrative texts with clear structure, improved grammar, and appropriate vocabulary after applying the Main Mapping Technique.

Table 2. Comparison of Students' Mean Scores in Pre-Test and Post-Test

Test Type	Mean Score	Category	% of Students Passing
Pre-Test	61.91	Fair	35.30%
Post-Test	78.09	Good	73.50%

(Source: *Research Data, 2025*)

Figure 2 shows a notable increase in both the mean score and the percentage of students achieving the KKM after using the Main Mapping Technique. To examine the effectiveness more precisely, the N-Gain score was calculated using the formula:

$$N\text{-Gain} = \frac{(Post - Pre)}{(100 - Pre)}$$

Substituting the mean scores:

$$N\text{-Gain} = \frac{(78.09 - 61.91)}{(100 - 61.91)} = 0.42$$

According to Hake's (1999) criteria, an N-Gain score of 0.42 is categorized as moderate improvement. This confirms that the Mind Mapping Technique had a significant positive effect on students' narrative writing performance. The improvement was also observable across the specific aspects of writing:

- Content : Students demonstrated better idea development and relevance.
- Organization : Narrative structure became clearer and more coherent.
- Vocabulary : Students used more varied and precise words.
- Language Use : Fewer grammatical mistakes were observed.
- Mechanics : Improved punctuation, spelling, and capitalization.

Observation data supported the quantitative findings. During Cycle I, many students appeared hesitant and required step-by-step guidance to develop their maps. By Cycle II, however, they became more autonomous and enthusiastic. Students collaborated actively, helped peers refine their main maps before writing. The classroom atmosphere transformed from teacher-centered to student-centered learning. Students were more motivated to express creativity and apply what they learned to produce meaningful narratives. This behavioral change was an essential qualitative indicator of improved engagement and learning effectiveness. Overall, the findings indicate that the Mind Mapping Technique successfully improved students' narrative writing ability both quantitatively and qualitatively. The improvement in mean score and mastery level, along with the observed

increase in classroom participation, demonstrates that the technique helped students overcome major writing challenges, particularly in idea generation and organization.

The visual and structured nature of mind mapping enabled students to plan their narratives more systematically, which resulted in improved flow, coherence, and overall writing quality. This finding supports Harmer's (2004) view of pre-writing strategies, which emphasizes that visual mapping helps writers clarify ideas and establish logical relationships before drafting. In direct response to the research objective, this study confirms that the application of the Mind Mapping Technique effectively improved Grade XI-3 students' narrative writing skills, particularly in idea organization, narrative structure, and language use. The implementation of this technique led to measurable improvements in students' writing scores and also enhanced their creativity, confidence, and active participation during the writing process. Therefore, the research objective of improving students' narrative writing skills through the Mind Mapping Technique was successfully achieved.

Discussion

The findings of this study have clearly demonstrated that the application of the Mind Mapping Technique significantly enhanced students' narrative writing skills in Grade XI-3 of SMA YP HKBP Pematangsiantar. The improvement in students' writing performance evidenced by the increase in mean scores from 61.91 in the pre-test to 78.09 in the post-test indicates that the use of a visual and structured pre-writing strategy can effectively address common difficulties faced by students in organizing and developing ideas. This section discusses the implications of the results and their connection with previous studies and relevant theories of writing instruction. The first research question concerned whether the Mind Mapping Technique could improve students' ability to generate and organize ideas in narrative writing. The findings provide a positive answer. Before the intervention, most students struggled to construct a coherent narrative because they could not arrange events logically or connect ideas smoothly between sentences and paragraphs. After the use of Main Mapping, students showed notable progress in creating a structured outline of their stories that included the key narrative elements: orientation, complication, and resolution. This improvement is consistent with the view of Harmer (2004), who emphasizes that pre-writing activities, such as brainstorming and mapping, help writers conceptualize and structure their ideas before drafting, resulting in more organized and logical writing products.

The second research question focused on whether the Mind Mapping Technique could improve the overall quality of students' narrative writing in terms of language use, vocabulary, and mechanics. The post-test results and observational data support this expectation. Students not only developed better content but also demonstrated greater accuracy in grammar and vocabulary selection. This aligns with the statement of Brown (2001), who argues that effective writing instruction should balance idea generation with linguistic competence. The visual framework of main mapping helped students focus on idea development first, which then gave them more mental space to improve linguistic aspects in later drafts. In addition, the findings of this study are supported by previous research. A study by Richards and Renandya (2002) found that visual mapping techniques significantly improve coherence and creativity in students' writing because they enable learners to visualize relationships between ideas. Similarly, Al-Jarf (2009) reported that using mind maps as pre-writing tools led to increased student motivation and reduced writing anxiety. These studies align with the results of the current research, which showed that students became more active, confident, and motivated during the writing process when guided by mind mapping activities. Therefore, this study strengthens the growing body of evidence that mapping-based approaches provide an effective alternative to traditional linear teaching methods in writing classrooms.

Furthermore, the increase in classroom engagement observed during the implementation supports the pedagogical theory of constructivism, which posits that learners build knowledge actively through interaction, exploration, and reflection (Vygotsky, 1978). Through mind mapping, students collaborated, shared ideas, and learned to connect personal experiences with narrative structures. This interaction transformed the writing process from a teacher-centered to a learner-centered activity, making students responsible for constructing their own meaning through visualization and discussion. The improvement in classroom dynamics, therefore, reflects not only better writing outcomes but also a deeper engagement in the learning process. The Mind Mapping Technique offers practical value for EFL teachers, particularly in addressing students' difficulties in generating ideas during the pre-writing stage. By providing a visual framework, mind mapping helps reduce cognitive load, overcome writer's block, and support logical organization of ideas, which aligns with Raimes' (1983) view on the

role of visual pre-writing strategies in enhancing writing confidence. From a pedagogical perspective, this technique is consistent with process-oriented writing theory, as it supports planning before drafting. Previous studies have shown the effectiveness of mapping techniques in descriptive writing (Sari, 2020), and the present study extends this theoretical insight to narrative writing, which requires creativity, coherence, and logical sequencing.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results and discussion of this study entitled “Enhancing Students’ Narrative Writing Skills through Mind Mapping Technique at Grade XI-3 SMA YP HKBP Pematangsiantar,” it can be concluded that the Mind Mapping technique effectively improved students’ narrative writing skills. Prior to the implementation, most students experienced difficulties in organizing ideas, selecting appropriate vocabulary, and constructing coherent paragraphs. After the application of the technique, significant improvement was observed across all writing components, including content, organization, vocabulary, language use, and mechanics. The data analysis showed an increase in students’ mean writing score from 65.21 (Fair) in the pre-test to 82.46 (Good to Very Good) in the post-test, indicating that mind mapping helped students generate, structure, and develop ideas more logically before writing. In addition, students became more confident and motivated during the writing process, as reflected in the increased number of students achieving “Good” and “Very Good” performance categories. Therefore, it can be concluded that the Mind Mapping technique is an effective instructional strategy for teaching narrative writing and is recommended for English teachers at the senior high school level.

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