IMPROVING THE STUDENTS' ABILITY IN WRITING REPORT GENRE THROUGH MIND MAPPING AT JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOLS IN SOUTH SUMATERA, INDONESIA

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Abstract

This research was conducted to improve the IX-5 grade students' ability in writing report genre by using mind- mapping strategy. The population of this research were the IX-5 students of SMP Negeri 17 Palembang. The total samples were 43 students. In taking the data, the researcher used classical approach which was taking in three ways, observation, questionnaire and test. In doing the observation data the researcher was helped by two English teachers to know the students' improvement from cycle to cycle. The result of the research showed that there is good impact to the students' achievement and ability in writing report genre through mind-mapping technique. In conclusion, mind-mapping technique is a suitable strategy to improve the students' ability in writing report genre.

Keywords

Mind-Mapping, Teaching Writing, Genre, Report Genre

1. Introduction

Language is the most important knowledge to be learnt since it is used to get all of the information we need in life. As we learn a second or a foreign language, means we learn to communicate with other people: to understand them, talk to them, read what they have written, and write to them.

English as an international language has an important role in the global era of all over the fields. There are four skills included in the curriculum should be taught to the students, they are listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills. These four skills are divided into two parts, receptive and productive skills. Receptive skill include of listening and reading, while productive skill include of speaking and writing.

Even the curriculum wants us to focus on our students' ability in speaking skill which always be used in the daily life, we may wonder that it is not enough. Of course, they then need to be skillful in writing. Learning to write is not as natural as learning to speak. All people who can write in any language can be ensured that he/she can speak in that language any way, but not all people who can speak have a good or average ability in writing, especially in writing academic writing discourse.

Most people found that writing is the most difficult skill of the four language skills. Raimes (1983:4-5) shows some differences between speaking skill to writing:

• Speech is universal; everyone acquires a native language in the first few years of life. Not everyone learns to read and write.

  • The spoken language has dialect variations. The written language generally demands standard forms of grammar, syntax, and vocabulary.

  • Speakers use their voices (pitch, stress, and rhythm) and bodies (gestures and facial expressions) to help convey their ideas. Writers have to rely on the words on the page to express their meaning.

  • Speakers use pauses and intonation. Writers use punctuation.

  • Speakers pronounce. Writers spell.

  • Speaking is usually spontaneous and unplanned. Most writing takes time. It is planned. We can go back and change what we have written.

  • A speaker speaks to a listener who is right there, nodding or frowning, interrupting or questioning. For the writer, the readers' response is either delayed or nonexistent. The

writer has only that one chance to convey information and be interesting and accurate enough to hold the readers' attention.

• Speech is usually informal and repetitive. We say things like, "What I mean is …" or "Let me start again." Writing, on the other hand, is more formal and compact. It progresses logically with fewer digressions and explanations.

• Speakers use simple sentences connected by a lot of and's and but's. Writers use more complex sentences, with connecting words like however, who, and in addition. While we could easily say, "His father runs ten miles every day, is very healthy."

Based on those differences, of course teachers need to pay special attention and find interesting and brilliant way in teaching the writing skill to their students in order to help them to be able to write well, since the fact shows that students find so many difficulties in producing a written text. Government tried to make it easier by doing some revisions on the curriculum. The 2006 curriculum (KTSP) which is developed based on the 2004 curriculum used genre-based approach instead of theme-based approach. There are five genres should be presented for SMP students: descriptive, recount, narrative, procedure and report genres. However, still the students found difficulties in developing a witten text based on those genres because of their lack of knowledge in organizing their ideas.

Based on the problem above the researcher was interested in doing classroom action research by using mind-mapping strategy. The researcher assumed that this strategy could solve the problem that was encountered by the students in writing report genre. The result of this research is hopefully can be benefit as reference and information about one of the strategies in helping the students' ability in writing, especially report text. For all of the teachers, especially English teachers, can use it as feedback to improve their teaching strategy or technique. The writer also hopes that this research can motivate the students in developing as many written text as possible, especially in report genre.

2. Literature Review

• Teaching-Writing

When we talk about teaching the four language skills (listening, speaking, reading, and writing), writing usually comes last. Why? There is no doubt that writing is the most difficult skill

to be mastered. It is not only on the generating and organizing ideas, but also in translating the ideas into readable text. As Richards and Renandya (2005:303) states that the skills of writing are highly complex, since L2 writers have to pay attention to higher level skills of spelling, punctuation, word choice and so on. The difficulty becomes even more pronounced if their language proficiency is weak.

Seow in Richards and Renandya (2005:315-320) says that the writing process as a private activity may be broadly seen as comprising four main stages: planning, drafting, revising, and editing. It is shown on the following figure
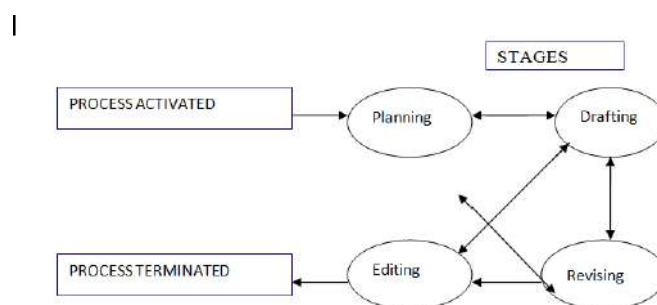

Figure 1

For realizing that writing is not an easy skill to be learnt, the teacher of course first should have good way of teaching it. First, of course she/he should know the reason of teaching writing itself. Harmer (2003:79) states that the reasons for teaching writing include of reinforcement, language development, learning style and the most important is writing as a skill.
There are many reasons to teach writing to the students, both inside and outside of the classroom.

Harmer (2007:112) states that writing gives the students more 'thinking time' than they get when they attempt spontaneous conversation. In addition, this allows them more opportunity for language processing – that is thinking about the language – whether they are involved in study or activation.

Next, even though many teachers feel that writing is too difficult for their students, but it depends on the method, technique or strategy used. So, teachers have to know what kind of writing they want their students do first, and they have to find an appropriate approach or strategy can be used to the students' level.

• **Genre**

According to curriculum 2004, genre is a kind of text, which functions as communicative purpose. Harmer (2003:113) defines genre as a type of writing which members of a discourse community would instantly recognize for what it was. Genre has its own structure and linguistic characteristics. Curriculum divided genre in some parts, for SMP level. There are five genres should be mastered by the students, they are descriptive, procedure, recount, narrative, and report genres.

When teachers concentrate on genre, students study texts in genre in which they are going to be writing before they embark on their own work. Thus, if we want them to write any text, we have them study real examples to discover facts about construction specific language use which are common to that genre. This is one of pre-writing phase.

Students who are writing within a certain genre need to consider a number of different factors. They need to have knowledge about the topic, the conventions and style of genre, and the context in which their writing would be read, as well as by whom.

One of our decisions about what to get students to write will depend on what genres we think they need to write in. When a person listen about "short story" (one of narrative genre) he hopes that the story entertain him/her. With its generic structure makes genre very different with scientific language. It is very important for the students to learn about genre in order they can communicate in English culture. Genre is also brings linguistic implication that should be understood by the students.

• **The Purpose of Report Genre**

Derewianka (1990: 51) says that reports classify and describe the phenomena of our world. We use them when we talk about a whole class of things, like bikes.There are some opinions about the purpose of report genre states in the book of "Materi Pelatihan Terintegrasi" (2005: 18): to document, organize, and store factual information on a topic … classify and describe the phenomena of our world … about a whole class of things … [not about] one specific thing … about living things like phones, bikes, or oceans. (Derewianka: 1990).To describe the way things are, with reference to a whole range of phenomena, natural, synthetic and social in our environment. (Callaghan and Rothery: 1988).To describe the way things are, with reference to a range of natural, fabricated and social phenomena in our environment. (Gerot and Wignell: 1994)

In short, the purpose of report genre is to inform, to classify, to describe, and/or to provide factual information, natural and non-natural phenomena of a whole class of things.The generic structure of report genre has two main elements, classification and descriptions. It has been explained more clearly in Depdiknas (2005: 24) as follow:

- **General Classification: tells what the phenomenon under discussion is**

    Description: tells what the phenomenon under discussions like in terms of parts (and their functions), qualities, habits or behaviors, if living, uses, if non-natural. (Gerott and Wignell: 1994)

- **Short Report:**
    o   classification (can also begin with definition)
    o   description of subtopics, in sequence given in the question

- **Long Report:**
    o   Classification or definition
    o   Description of features in order of importance. (Hardy and Klarwein: 1990)

- **Opening general statement/general classification.**

    Sometimes the opening statement may also indicate a particular aspect of the topic that is being treated (e.g., There are many different types of bike in Australia)

    Facts about various aspects of the subject (color, shape, habits, behavior, etc.) Giving examples, comparing and contrasting, describing components and their function. (Derewianka: 1990).

    While the significant lexicogrammatical features of this genre is that: it focused on generic participants (groups or a whole class of things); use of simple present tense (unless extinct); action verbs (especially when describing behavior), use the descriptive language (factual and precise); use the expressions for defining, classifying, comparing and contrasting; no temporal sequence; use 'being' and 'having' processes; technical vocabulary; and use formal and objective language (personal pronouns 'I' and 'we' and the writer opinions are not generally appropriate. Report genre is also often accompanied by diagrams, photos, illustrations, maps, etc.

- **Mind Mapping**

A mind map is a diagram used to represent words, ideas, tasks, or other items linked to and arranged around a central key word or idea. Mind maps are used to generate, visualize, structure, and classify ideas, and as an aid in study, organization, problem solving, decision making, and writing. (Source: http://www.wikimediafoundation.org/).

Buzan states in his blog that Mind map is simply a visualization tool that helps to think and learn more proficiently. A mind map is a graphic diagram used to represent thoughts and ideas, tasks, or other items linked to a central key idea or theme. It is used to generate, visualize, structure and classify ideas. Mind maps are used as an aid in study, organization, problem solving, and decision making. Mind Mapping is the most effective, "brain-friendly" way for you to turn your unorganized, linear, fleeting ideas and thoughts into a structured, visual "map". Mind Map represents the best of both worlds by resembling the visual aspects of a flow chart and the organizational structure of an outline. (http://www.mindmapper.com/mind/mind.asp).

The elements of a given mind map are arranged intuitively according to the importance of the concepts, and are classified into groupings, branches, or areas, with the goal of representing semantics or other connections between portions of information. Mind maps may also aid recall of existing memories.

By presenting ideas in a radial, graphical, non-linear manner, mind maps encourage a brainstorming approach to planning and organizational tasks. Though the branches of a mind map represent hierarchical tree structures, their radial arrangement disrupts the prioritizing of concepts typically associated with hierarchies presented with more linear visual cues. This orientation towards brainstorming encourages users to enumerate and connect concepts without a tendency to begin within a particular conceptual framework.

The mind map can be contrasted with the similar idea of concept mapping. The former is based on radial hierarchies and tree structures denoting relationships with a central governing concept, whereas concept maps are based on connections between concepts in more diverse patterns.

Mind mapping is a technique for organizing ideas and information in visual form. Mind maps have a single topic as a main focus and the name of this topic is typically placed in the middle of the sheet of paper for hand-drawn mind maps or of the computer screen for those made with

computer software. Branches naming related topics radiate out from the central topic. The main structure is a tree, but lines from any topic to any other topic may be added, to show non-hierarchical associations that the mind-mapper finds helpful.

Tony Buzan is an author and proposed the term "Mind Map" in the 1970s. He specified rules or guidelines for drawing them, but the use of mind maps has grown beyond the learning-support and creativity tool that Buzan's writing presented. Now, mind maps are also used to facilitate meetings, present ideas, manage projects, brainstorm, organize information and plan future activities.

This technique is a visual method of note making than a linear approach. This approach uses arrows and circles to connect keywords/phrases and should lead to the creation of a spreading pattern in all directions, rather than just words which start at the top of the page and work down.

According to Tony Buzan (2005), we need to make more use of note-making forms, which use the right side of our brain. The left side of the brain works in a linear way; it deals with lists and sequences. On the other hand, the right side builds and stores images and patterns.

Buzan introduced the concept of mind mapping, which involves making notes with patterns and by using images. He believes that these images and patterns can be important aspects of our learning processes and provide effective routes to understanding.

The main features of pattern note-making/mind mapping include:
- Starting with a central heading/concept in the centre of the page
- Noting keywords, ideas and/or concepts which surround the central idea/concept
- Heading and sub-headings highlighted with boxes/circles
- Underlined or highlighted key points
- Conciseness
- Use of symbols such as $,*,+ etc., images and color as necessary
- Arrows/lines to link keywords, ideas and/or concepts and to show developments/process e.g., 'this leads to...' These branches should radiate from the central topic/idea
- Semi-structured layout using a page sideways (landscape), and the notes are restricted to this page Pattern notes/mind mapping can take many forms, but may look something like this:
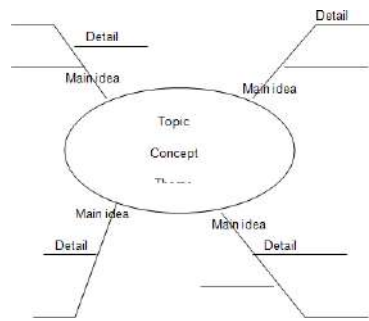
Figure 2

When using a pattern/mind mapping technique, you are

▪ Aiding your understanding of the information by thinking through connected points.

▪ Demonstrating the relative importance of an idea; the closer it is to the centre, the more important it is

▪ Creating a unique visual image which is easier to recall than a verbal or written one

▪ Able to add new information easily

▪ Summing things up briefly, helping your long-term memory to retain the information

▪ Helping your ideas to flow

▪ Undertaking a plan, such as for an assignment or revision, or to make a topic summary

"Mind map" as a term is widely used today and is often applied to diagrams that others have called bubble diagrams, spider diagrams, business maps and idea maps. If we accept that Buzan is the originator of the term, and defines what makes a mind map, then we would have to use these other names. It seems, though, that these other types are now well entrenched in the vocabulary of the majority of mappers as "mind maps".

The important and distinct type of map that is not a mind map but is closely related to it is the concept map. Here are the most important differences: Concept maps emphasize and describe the relationships between concepts - mind maps do not; concept maps do not need to have a central topic - mind maps usually do; concept maps have a non-hierarchical net structure - mind maps take the form of a modified tree diagram.

▪ The Implementation of Mind Mapping in Teaching Report Genre

Mind mapping can be applied in all subjects. It means that we can also apply it in language teaching. In writing there are many occasions the primary curriculum when students need to learn about the characteristics of something – what it is (or was) like, include of history (e.g. aspects of daily life in any historical period), science (e.g. characteristics, general life patterns and habitats of plants and animals), geography (e.g. descriptions of localities and geographical features). The mind mapping (one of the example is spider gram) is a suitable strategy for organizing information for a simple report genre.

Mind maps can be used for a multitude of purposes. Here is the outlines how they can effectively be used to help support and develop students' writing skills.

A mind map, or spider gram, is a strategy for making notes on a topic, prior to writing. It is a structured strategy, which shows the (hierarchical) relationship of ideas, as opposed to an unstructured strategy, such as brainstorming, in which students produce notes at random on paper. Having an organized display of information from the outset of the writing process may help some students, as it is more easily converted into a draft, whereas in brainstorming, the random recording of ideas might lead to problems with the structure of students' texts. Making a mind map should be a spontaneous pre-writing activity. Students start with a topic at the centre and then generate a web of ideas from that, developing and relating these ideas as their mind makes associations.

Mind maps work well as their visual design enables students to see the relationship between ideas, and encourages them to group certain ideas together as they proceed. Mind maps work especially well when created in groups, since the discussion this engenders aids the production of ideas, and makes the task livelier and more enjoyable.

How to make mind maps with your students?

First, choose a topic. Traditionally, students are given a topic to write on by the teacher. However, with certain classes, students may prefer to nominate the topic themselves. This can lead to greater interest in the task on the part of the student, as well as, perhaps, greater knowledge of the topic under study. The mind map strategy can be used to explore almost any topic, though discursive essays and narrative work particularly well as they front students' ideas and let them discuss their ideas in groups. The teacher usually starts by writing the topic on the board. In the last writing class, she/he taught, with a group work, she/he chose a genre as we had recently been looking at the language used to give reasons and explanations. The report text is useful in

highlighting this feature of English, and in raising awareness of the ability of the students in writing.

Secondly, note making; once the topic has been introduced, the teacher encourages her/his students to close their eyes and think about it for a minute or two, in silence. They then have two minutes in which to note down their ideas. If they do not know a word in English, they can write it in L1 at this stage, as dictionaries or too much teacher intervention tend to halt and inhibit the creative flow. Then, working in groups, they can compare and discuss their ideas, perhaps adding to their mind maps as they go. This stage also provides the opportunity for peer teaching, as other students may be available to provide the English word for the idea that was noted down in L1.

At last, feedback. The next stage, in which the teacher makes a collective mind map on the board, is optional, but is useful for students who are new to the idea of mind maps, or for weak classes. It is also in this feedback stage that any remaining language problems can be ironed out. As the teacher elicits students' ideas, and reformulates expressions or corrects, students will learn how to express their ideas in English. Such personalization is said to aid vocabulary learning. Here is the example of the use of mind mapping to develop writing: The map is fluid and changeable, and new connections or subgroups can be made, or branches added, as the students make suggestions. The end result should be an organized display of information, showing the central topic, and a number of subtopics and further points that stem from it.

In the next stage, the students organize their mind maps into a linear format to decide the best way in which to present their points. They should first think about the overall structure, i.e. the order in which to relay the information, and then focus on the precise function each paragraph will have in their final text, as this helps to clarify their writing. This can be done in groups or as a class with the teacher leading the discussion.

However, it is carried out, it is important to provide a context and audience. The teacher told her/his class, who were writing about report genre, that they were writing for their school wall magazine. Having an audience in mind helps students to decide which ideas are most important, and also helps students to choose the appropriate style. The students should then begin to write their compositions, working in pairs if they wish. After two paragraphs, they should exchange their compositions, so they become readers of each other's work. This allows for feedback, and possible re-writing. Once they have finished, they should again exchange their texts. This gives their texts a communicative purpose, as well as developing an awareness of the fact that a writer is always

producing something to be read by someone else, rather than for the display of writing alone.

Once students are familiar with the idea of making mind maps, they can be encouraged to use this skill for further writing activities. It is a useful technique and often improves the clarity and organization of student texts.

3. Result

3.1 The Result of the First Cycle

Based on the implementation of cycle one, there were two conclusions can be drawn: the result of the formative test and the result of observation.
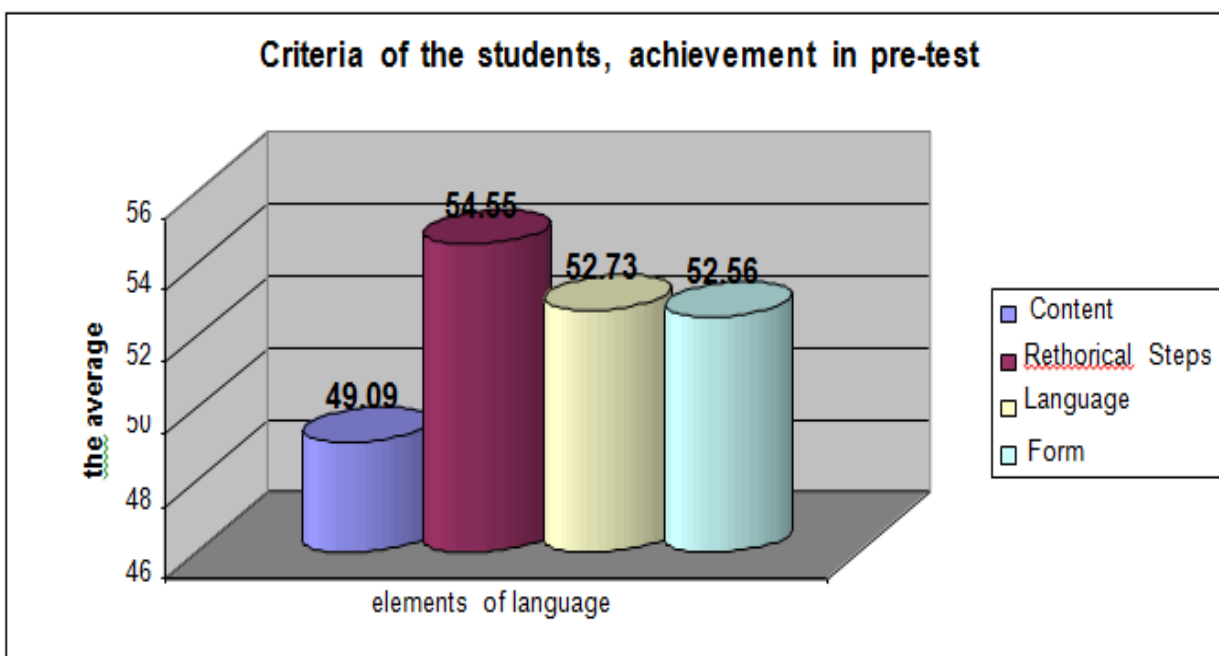
3.1. 1. Test Result

Figure 3: *Criteria of the students, achievement in pre-test*

The graph showed that in pre-test the students reached only 49.09% in content, 54.55% in rhetorical steps, 52.73% in the language use ability, and 52.58% for the form of the report genre. After getting treatment through mind-mapping, the result of post-test 1 showed a good increase in the students' achievement, that they could reach 69.3% of the content, 61.86% of the rhetorical steps, 61.4% for the use of the language and the form of the report genre as shown in the following
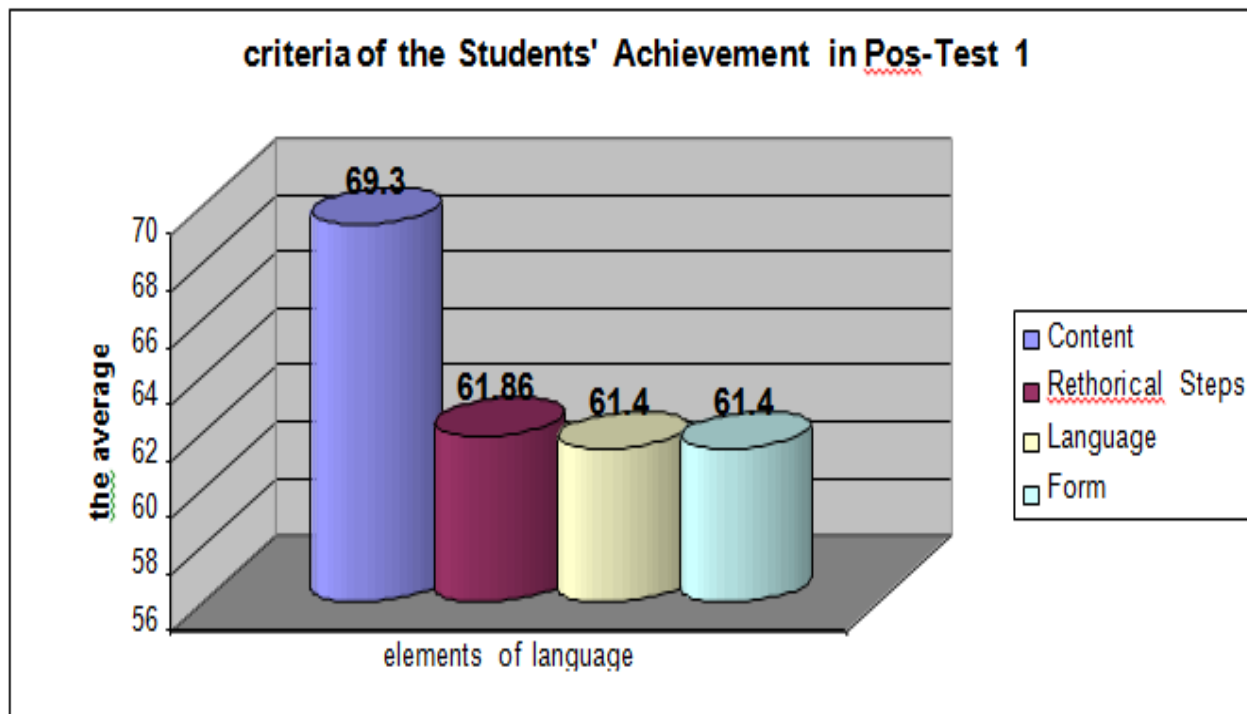
graph.

Figure 4: *Criteria of the students' Achievement in Pos-Test1*

3.1. 2. Observation Result

Based on the observation result we can see that the score still below of the target. Sudjana (1991) says that the score showed that the process of the teaching and learning was enough with the exception that this process needed to be revised.

3.2. The Result of the Second Cycle

In the first cycle it can be seen that there is a good improvement after treatment, but still didn't reach the minimum grade target. So the researcher tried to do some repair to the weaknesses of cycle one by trained the students to use the mind-mapping strategy as maximum as possible. At the second cycle, the researcher can make the students develop their report genre through mind-mapping optimally. It can bee seen from the result on post test 2, that all elements of language reached the grade target. It means that this strategy of mind-mapping really help the students in developing this kind of genre. In the post test two, the students can reach 76.75% on content, 71.16 on rhetorical steps, 66.05% on the language use, and 69.77% on the form of the genre. All of the percentage they reached were fulfill the standardized.

According to the observation of the researcher collaborators, the use of mind-mapping technique showed a high positive effect to the students' ability of writing report genre.

3.2.1. Discussion

Related to the analysis of the data about the results of the students' achievement in pre-test, post test 1 and 2, it shown the increasing of the achievement. It can bee seen clearly in the following table.

Table 3: *The comparison of students' achievement on Pre-test, Post-test 1 and Post-test 2*

Test	Total of students' achievement per element																			
	Content					Rhetorical Steps					Language					Form				
	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
Pre-test	5	22	11	5	0	1	25	9	8	0	3	17	21	2	0	4	16	15	8	0
post-test 1	0	4	15	24	0	0	12	15	16	0	1	10	17	15	0	0	0	26	10	0
post-test 2	0	0	7	36	0	0	1	18	22	2	0	3	24	16	0	0	1	20	22	0

The implementation of the comparison can be seen on the following graph that shows the increasing of the mark of the students.

From those analyses of the increasing results, it means that the use of mind-mapping technique or spider-gram is a suitable technique to improve the students' ability in developing the report genre writing.

4. Conclusion

From the finding of this classroom action research which was conducted in grade of IX-5 at SMP Negeri 17 Palembang in teaching report genre by using mind-mapping strategy, it can be concluded that:

• The application of the use of mind-mapping strategy can improve the IX-5 grade students' ability in writing report genre.

• The use of mind-mapping strategy in teaching writing report genre can improve the

students' motivation in writing report genre.

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