

AN ANALYSIS OF MIND MAPPING TECHNIQUE TO IMPROVE STUDENTS' SPEAKING SKILLS AT MA WALISONGO GENDING

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Abstract

This study examines the effectiveness of the mind map technique in improving students' speaking skills. In today's globalized world, mastering English is very important, especially since English has been recognized as an international language since 1100. Many Indonesians study English as a foreign language. Speaking is an important component of language acquisition, yet students often struggle with it due to anxiety, limited vocabulary, or poor organization of thought. Mind mapping, a visual method of organizing information, helps students structure their ideas in an organized and creative way, facilitating better verbal expression. The results show that students' speaking skills improved, especially their confidence, suggesting that mind mapping is an effective strategy for language teachers to improve speaking skills. This study used a classroom action research approach (PTK) to help teachers evaluate and reflect on various aspects of teaching and learning and implement strategies for improvement. The purpose of this study is to find out whether the mind mapping technique can improve students' speaking skills with a particular focus on students at MA Walisongo Gending.

Keywords: *mind mapping, technique, improve speaking, skill*

INTRODUCTION

In the era of globalization, learning English is important, as stated by Ari Welianto (2015), especially since English was established as an international language after 1100. Indonesians are among those who study English as a foreign language. Estiningrum (2015) explains that speaking is a productive skill and involves a two-way social communication process, using verbal and nonverbal language to express meaning. During conversations, people are involved in producing language

and understanding messages. Speaking is an important part of communication.

Speaking is a crucial skill that students need to develop when learning a foreign language. It encompasses the ability to convey and share feelings, ideas, or messages through spoken language. Nunan (1991; 2003, p.48) emphasizes that speaking is a productive oral skill, involving the systematic production of verbal utterances to communicate meaning. By acquiring speaking skills, students learn to express themselves communicatively and meaningfully. Thus, mastering speaking is

essential for students studying foreign languages, alongside reading, listening, and writing. In English language learning, the four skills listening, speaking, reading, and writing are integrated and equally important. However, speaking is often regarded as the most complex of these skills. Nunan (2003) notes that speaking encompasses various oral productions, such as reading poetry, engaging in debates, participating in class discussions, and leaving voice messages; perhaps the most common form is casual conversation. The ability to communicate effectively in English will prove highly beneficial for students in the future.

Teachers, as educators, play a crucial role in enhancing students' speaking skills. They need to be aware of effective strategies for developing students' English-speaking abilities in the classroom. While it is important to focus on speaking skills, other language skills such as reading, writing, and listening should not be neglected, as all four are interconnected. It's also essential to recognize that students often face challenges when speaking English, such as unfamiliar pronunciation, limited vocabulary, and a lack of confidence, which can hinder their ability to speak. Therefore, a teacher's primary task is to motivate students to speak English. Selecting the right teaching method or technique is key to improving students' speaking abilities. One effective method for building these skills is the Mind Mapping Technique.

A mind map is a visual representation of ideas, concepts, or information, where each idea or concept is placed in a box and connected through organized lines or links. Budd (2004) explains that mind mapping involves a central topic branching out into smaller, interconnected subtopics. In other words, a mind map outlines a central theme, with major categories branching from it and

smaller categories branching off from those. Learning models that use concept maps can include images and key terms that cover the entire topic, helping students to further elaborate on the material. This makes it easier for students to follow and understand the discussion topics, as the mind map serves as a guide. As a result, students can discuss topics in a more structured way, making their speaking activities more focused and easier to grasp.

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English is one of the most important language subjects because language is a social phenomenon that is closely related to society. Language is needed by people to establish relationships, as a means of communication in fulfilling life needs, and as a cultural identity. English, as an international language, has a wide range as a world language of information, science and technology, and serves as a medium of communication between nations.

In the advancement of science and technology, which involves a lot of communication in English, English language skills are important to be empowered.

Therefore, it is fair to say that the ideal Indonesian human resources are those who equip themselves with English language skills.

Based on the available data, students' English proficiency is generally still unsatisfactory. Although they have studied English for at least six years from junior high school to senior high school, and some since elementary school, most students still have difficulty speaking English well (Nurdin Somantri, 2003: 1). In addition, the less pleasant learning atmosphere shows that there are obstacles in the process of learning English. In addition, the students' performance at the beginning of their schooling still does not show a good command of English. Therefore, in learning English, it is important to understand that every teaching process must include the concept of learning activities. Effective teaching must take into account the conditions and different aspects of learners. In this case, teachers play an important role in the success of the teaching and learning process, especially in English subjects.

According to Sugiono (2014:15), both external factors (such as students' environment) and internal factors (such as intelligence, interest, motivation, and personality) play a role in successful English language learning. In response to the challenges faced by students, teachers are encouraged to reflect on their own teaching methods. By critically evaluating the way they present material, teachers can better ensure that students understand instructions and are able to respond effectively. In addition, teachers can use consistent techniques to improve students' speaking skills. This process of self-reflection and adaptation helps to overcome learning barriers and optimize teaching strategies.

The effectiveness of using mind mapping as a teaching technique to improve students' speaking skills, especially in foreign language learning such as English. According to Ferry Kurniawan (2017), speaking should be communicative and natural, and using mind maps can help students organize their thoughts and prepare concepts before speaking. This leads to clearer and more structured communication.

Mind mapping serves as a visualization tool that allows students to systematically organize ideas, understand relationships between concepts, and express thoughts in an organized manner. This technique also increases student motivation, as it makes learning more interactive and creative. Shahab (2019) added that mind mapping has several benefits, such as helping the brain focus, making information more interesting, and improving memory retention.

The researcher aims to further explore the impact of this strategy, particularly in the context of improving students' English language proficiency at MA Walisongo, in the belief that the method has the potential to address common problems students face in learning to speak effectively.

The overall aim of this study is to investigate how the use of mind mapping can promote better speaking skills in students, improve their cognitive organization and confidence in language use.

METHODS

This study adopts a Classroom Action Research (CAR) approach, which is intended to assist teachers in evaluating and reflecting on different elements of the teaching and learning process, as well as implementing steps for enhancement. The research aims to determine whether the

mind mapping technique can enhance students' speaking skills, particularly focusing on its application among students at MA Walisongo Gending.

Data collection relies primarily on questionnaires and observations as the key methods for gathering information. The questionnaire includes 10 statements that students respond to based on their experiences, indicating whether they agree or disagree with the statements provided.

In the initial phase, the researchers conducted a preliminary investigation to identify the difficulties students encountered in the classroom. They observed the current learning activities and handed out questionnaires to collect students' feedback on the use of mind maps in learning English.

This study follows a qualitative approach. As stated by Sugiyono (2012), qualitative research is a method used to explore objects in their natural settings. In this type of research, the researcher serves as the primary instrument, with an emphasis on meaning, comprehension, and interaction.

The researchers examined data collected from field notes, interviews, and questionnaires, using purposive sampling with 107 students as the study participants. Sampling involves selecting individuals with specific traits relevant to the study. This method is employed to streamline the research process by ensuring that the chosen sample meets the necessary criteria and aligns with the study's goals.

This research took place at MA Walisongo Gending, located on Sebaung, Gending, Probolinggo. The subjects of the study were 107 students enrolled at MA Walisongo during the 2024-2025 academic year. The population of the study consisted of students from five classes at MA Walisongo Gending, with each class having

between 17 and 32 students, resulting in a total population of 107 students.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Before starting the learning process, there are some tools needed to create a Mind Map, such as paper or notebook, pen, pencil, and eraser if needed. The first step is to create a concept map. Learners listen to the author's explanation, then draw or write the main theme at the centre of their concept map according to the example. Before starting to take notes or draw, the author tells learners that they can choose the pen colour they want and are free to design their concept map according to their taste. After the main theme is written down, the author proceeds to create the first branch that contains personal information, such as name, origin, and status. The second branch relates to what learners plan to do in the future, while the third branch contains learners' hopes for the future.

The final step is to ensure that each student understands and understands the meaning of the mind map they have created. Although creating mind maps can be done in groups, this time students were asked to work on them individually. Next, the author asked students to present their mind maps and explain themselves based on the map. The purpose of this activity is to measure students' speaking ability through mind mapping technique.

In the mind mapping learning technique, students are directed to create a mind map based on a given topic, and then draw it according to their favourite colour or shape preferences, thus helping the remembering process. The concept of mind mapping is based on how the brain works. The working potential of one's brain is combined and developed through mind mapping. By involving both the right and left hemispheres of the brain, a person will find it easier to remember various

information, both written and spoken. The use of colours, symbols and shapes help the brain to absorb information better. The mind maps that students create produce a variety of images and shapes, where the different colours, tastes, emotions and feelings during learning affect the diversity of their notes.

According to Buzan's theory of Mind Mapping, this note-taking technique has benefits such as improving understanding of knowledge, focusing attention, and helping to recall information. The author's findings after applying Mind Mapping showed that students were able to explain the life mapping they had created.

The steps of distributing questionnaires are Questionnaires are distributed to students after the mind mapping technique is completed. Students are required to fill in each statement whether they agree or disagree with the statements in the questionnaire. Before students fill out the questionnaire, the teacher reads the questionnaire and what instructions are in the questionnaire, if students do not understand, they can ask the teacher. From the results of the students' questionnaire, which included ten statements and statements between agree and disagree, many students said that the mind mapping technique was fun, and some disagreed that the mind mapping technique was fun. The statements in the questionnaire include students' interest in mind mapping, mind mapping can make boredom disappear while learning, mind mapping can make students more active in the learning process, mind mapping is suitable for improving speaking skills, and mind mapping is more interesting than the lecture method.

According to Sugiyono (2017), a questionnaire is a data collection technique that is carried out by giving a set of written questions to respondents to answer.

Riduwan (2012) states that a questionnaire is a data collection instrument that is done by giving questions or written statements to respondents to get answers in accordance with the research objectives. In general, experts agree that questionnaires are an important data collection tool that is used to obtain information directly and efficiently from respondents.

Many students are interested in mind mapping technique because they can conceptualize learning by drawing and explain in front of their friends. And the mind mapping learning model can eliminate boredom during the process of teaching and learning activities. The mind mapping model makes students more active in learning. Because after completing mind mapping, students have to explain the mind mapping they have made. Students agree that the mind mapping learning model is very suitable to be applied to improve language speaking competence, and the mind mapping learning model is more interesting than the lecture method. And students agree that mind mapping can increase their confidence in speaking English.

In this study, the students of MA Walisongo Gending showed that the teaching method tested was well received. This can be seen from their enthusiasm when listening to the researcher's explanation, doing the tasks given, and seeing the results, which shows the success of the application of the method.

This study highlights students' speaking skills, in contrast to previous studies. Some previous studies have examined the use of mind mapping techniques. Buran and Filyukov (2015) stated that the mind mapping technique is very suitable for English language learning because it allows students to be more creative, visualise and organise information with interesting ideas. In addition, Sholeh's

(2016) research shows that this technique is effective in improving students' abilities so that information is easier to remember, process, and convey systematically. Mind mapping also helps students develop speaking skills by making it easier to develop ideas, think more clearly, and speak fluently and structured (Mirza, 2016).

Several other studies have been conducted on the use of mind maps in English language learning, covering all skills. However, few have specifically examined the use of mind mapping to improve speaking skills, and the benefits that students perceive from this technique are rarely discussed. As a result, we have limited knowledge about how mind mapping techniques can be used to improve speaking. The purpose of this study is to find out about the use of mind mapping to improve speaking in English as a foreign language. Students use this technique as a strategy to help them practice speaking and become more engaged in the English learning process. The results of this study are expected to motivate students to be more interested and improve their speaking skills. Therefore, it is important to investigate students' perceptions of using the mind map technique and the challenges they face when using it.

The use of mind mapping techniques to improve speaking skills can be done by developing relevant concepts. One important aspect that must be prepared before speaking is ideas. By applying mind mapping when practising speaking, ideas can be organised quickly and efficiently, thus preventing loss of ideas when speaking (Kurniawan, 2017). In addition, students need to prepare concepts before speaking. Through mind mapping techniques, students can easily organise concepts and apply them when speaking (Sulastri, 2020).

In addition, the use of mind maps as an improvement strategy or technique in

speaking can help and motivate students, especially in descriptive speaking. It is important to note that one of the keys to successful learning is students' desire to have fun while learning. Students can learn in a way that is fun, easy to understand, and convey their ideas through the mind map technique. Thus, they can apply it more easily (Murni, 2017).

CONCLUSION

This method has proven effective in helping MA Walisongo students improve their speaking skills and organize ideas and information in a more structured way. The use of mind mapping makes it easier for them to plan, remember, and convey ideas when speaking. Some of the conclusions of this study include: First Improved Structure and Coherence: Mind mapping helps speakers design the flow of speech so that the delivery is more structured and logical, which affects speaking fluency and message clarity. Second, Increased Confidence: With a clear visual guide, students feel more confident when speaking because they can easily follow the sequence of ideas they have organized. Third, increased creativity and flexibility of thinking: Mind mapping allows students to think more freely and find connections between ideas, so creative ideas can emerge and be delivered more interestingly. Fourth, effectiveness for different ability levels: Mind mapping is effectively used by students at different levels, both upper and lower grades, as it can be adapted to the learning needs of each class. Overall, mind mapping is rated as an effective tool to help develop speaking skills through increased planning, organization, and confidence in oral communication.

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