

## Engaging Secondary School Students in Word Mapping Strategy in Learning General Vocabulary of Descriptive Text: Classroom Action Research

Alsya Aulia<sup>1</sup>, Elih Sutisna Yanto<sup>2</sup>, Praditya Putri Utami<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1,2,3</sup> Universitas Singaperbangsa Karawang

e-mail: [alsas.aulia15@gmail.com](mailto:alsas.aulia15@gmail.com)<sup>1</sup>, [elih.sutisna@fkip.unsika.ac.id](mailto:elih.sutisna@fkip.unsika.ac.id)<sup>2</sup>,  
[praditya.putri@fkip.unsika.ac.id](mailto:praditya.putri@fkip.unsika.ac.id)<sup>3</sup>

### Abstrak

Pemetaan kata merupakan kumpulan konsep pemikiran tentang kata yang saling berhubungan dan divisualisasikan dalam bentuk diagram. Ini merupakan teknik yang efektif dalam membantu pengembangan dan peningkatan kosa kata siswa dan dalam pengajaran teks deskriptif. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menyelidiki, mengetahui dan menerapkan penerapan strategi pemetaan kata terhadap perolehan dan pemahaman kosakata siswa dalam pembelajaran teks deskriptif. Penelitian ini merupakan penelitian kualitatif dan desain penelitian menggunakan metode penelitian tindakan kelas. Pengumpulan data dilakukan melalui kuesioner, foto suara dan jurnal reflektif. Temuannya mengungkapkan bahwa strategi ini secara signifikan meningkatkan pemahaman siswa tentang arti kata, sinonim, antonim dan contoh. Sebagian besar siswa merespons secara positif strategi pemetaan kata, merasa terbantu dalam menulis teks deskriptif dan memperluas serta meningkatkan pemahaman kosa kata mereka. Kesan siswa terhadap kegiatan pembelajaran juga positif, mereka menikmati proses kegiatan pembelajaran menggunakan strategi pemetaan kata dalam pembelajaran teks deskriptif untuk menambah kosa kata mereka. Melalui penelitian ini, disarankan bagi guru bahasa Inggris di sekolah menengah untuk menerapkan strategi pemetaan kata dalam mengajarkan kosakata kepada siswa guna meningkatkan pemahaman dan pengetahuan kosakata, dan tentunya dalam mempelajari teks deskriptif.

**Kata kunci:** Kosakata Umum, Pembelajaran Teks Deskriptif, SMA, Strategi Pemetaan Kata

### Abstract

Word mapping is a collection of thought concepts about words that are interconnected and visualized in the form of a diagram. This is an effective technique in helping the development and improvement of students' vocabulary and in teaching descriptive texts. This research aims to investigate, find out and implement the application of word mapping strategies to students' vocabulary acquisition and understanding in learning descriptive texts. This research is qualitative research and the research design uses the classroom action research method. Data collection was carried out through questionnaires, photos voice and reflective journals. The findings revealed that this strategy significantly increased students' understanding of the meaning of words, synonyms, antonyms and examples. Most students responded positively to the word mapping strategy, finding it helpful in writing descriptive texts and expanding and improving their vocabulary understanding. Students' impressions of the learning activities were also positive, they enjoyed the process of learning activities using word mapping strategies in learning descriptive texts to increase their vocabulary. Through this research, it is recommended for English teachers in high schools to apply word mapping strategies in teaching vocabulary to students in order to increase their understanding and knowledge of vocabulary, and of course in studying descriptive texts.

**Keywords:** *General Vocabulary, Learning Descriptive Text, Senior High School, Word Mapping Strategy*

## INTRODUCTION

Although there are several studies on this topic, only a few researchers focus on analyzing general vocabulary learning using Word Mapping Strategies in more depth based on Classroom Action Research and this research provides new responses on how this method can be applied effectively in the classroom. In addition, previous research only focused on students' experiences in problem solving activities and vocabulary learning through Word Mapping Strategies. This research focuses on descriptive texts, which are an important part of the English curriculum in senior high schools. This research new insights into the application of these strategies in a variety of text types. Only a few researchers focus on the responses of students involved in the classroom. This research was optimized to determine students' responses regarding general vocabulary learning through intensive application of the Word Mapping Strategy. Therefore, this research offers a new contribution to the field of English language learning, especially in increasing general vocabulary through Word Mapping Strategies in descriptive texts at the school level.

In this study, the researcher aims to apply the Word Mapping Strategy with 10th grade high school students, with a focus on appropriate English language material. Descriptive text was chosen because it matches the syllabus and is suitable for students. The Word Mapping Strategy was chosen because it helps students develop their conceptual understanding of words, making it an effective tool for studying descriptive texts. This strategy also allows students to create their own version of descriptive text.

## METHOD

This research was conducted at a high school in Karawang, West Java. This investigation was carried out at the Juni 2024 meeting. This investigation was carried out on tenth grade students. twenty-five students from one class participated in this investigation; their ages ranged from 15 to 17 years. The author asked permission from the class teacher and twenty-five students to conduct this research. The authors chose this site because they were given entry permission and also had pre-observation beforehand. In addition, the authors asked five students from each of the five student groups who were willing to volunteer and believed that their data would be safe if they participated in this study to participate in subsequent semi-structured interviews. Students in tenth grade have been taught material descriptive text by their English teachers in class. For descriptive text learning, the teacher provides and instructs reading comprehension activities, such as identifying linguistic characteristics, general structure, and social function of descriptive text, in the first stage (Building The Context or Field). Before proceeding to the next stage of procedural teaching (Modeling The Text (Scaffolding) Guide Practice, and Independent Construction), the teacher verifies that students have understood the descriptive text. Research Design This research uses qualitative methodology and classroom action research design to investigate student responses during the learning proces. Senior high school students on technical vocabulary learning activities on word mapping strategies in learning descriptive texts. Classroom action research is associated with "reflective practice" and "teachers as writers" (Burns, 2009). This indicates that the teacher carries out practice in front of the class before reflecting on the practice carried out by the author of the classroom action research. In other words, action research requires an investigation of our own teaching environment using a "self-reflective, critical, and methodical approach. Therefore, classroom action research is suitable for this investigation. Instructional Procedures All students take part in learning activities in three steps, such as: Building The Context or Field, Modeling The Text (Scaffolding), Guide Practice and Independent Construction. The steps are adapted from Yanto (2017) as follows: 1. Building Field Knowledge (BKOF): At this stage, the teacher provides and instructs reading comprehension activities from descriptive texts, such as identifying characteristics. -linguistic characteristics, generic structure, and

social function of descriptive text 2. Modeling Text: After building students' knowledge of descriptive text, the teacher introduces a word map graphic organizer and explains how to use it to collect new or unique technical vocabulary that they do not understand example of descriptive text entitled "my Cat" on the whiteboard.

Then 3. Guide Practice: The teacher demonstrates how to select and nominate important words from the reading and complete the Word Map Graphic organizer. The teacher instructs students to read and find out several descriptive texts in books and the internet with the theme of animals and people. The teacher asks students to note down interesting words, or new words from the descriptive text they read and find. The teacher facilitates students working in small groups of 5 to 6 people, looking for descriptive texts with themes about animals and people, and choosing a theme that they think is important, interesting, or new. Then, the teacher asks them to create word mapping graph which they then make and find out and make definitions of the theme they choose then look for synonyms and antonyms of the words that have been made in the word mapping graph. 4. Independent Construction: The teacher gives each student a prepared text, which is customized to the topic each group and instructs the students to create a descriptive text from the word mapping with the structure of descriptive text "identification" and "description". After that student present the result of word mapping in front of the class with their groups.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Based on the in-depth interviews with the students, two themes of findings were identified, namely: (1) The advantages of the word mapping strategy in learning general vocabulary through descriptive text, and (2) The challenges of the word mapping strategy in learning general vocabulary through descriptive. These themes of findings reflect one main question of this study, namely "What are students' responses toward using Word Mapping Strategy in learning general vocabulary of descriptive text?"

### **The advantages of the word mapping strategy in learning general vocabulary through descriptive text**

The in-depth interviews revealed that students found learning vocabulary with the Word Mapping Strategy enjoyable. During interviews with the author, students expressed a strong interest in using word maps as graphic organizers. They appreciated this method for learning technical vocabulary in specific contexts, where particular words are used for particular topics.

#### **Student's vignette 1**

"During the learning process, I didn't find it too difficult to create this word mapping, and I think it's very beneficial in my process of learning descriptive texts. I learned new vocabulary."

#### **Student's vignette 2**

"Word mapping helped me see the relationships between words and their meanings. So, I could remember and understand new words more easily, and I also learned their synonyms and antonyms."

#### **Student's vignette 3**

"In my opinion, word mapping is a great way to learn vocabulary and also helps in understanding the meanings of words and expanding my vocabulary. I also learned synonyms and antonyms."

The student statements above showed that the use of word mapping strategies was very helpful in learning vocabulary, exploring definitions, meanings, synonyms, and antonyms. It also helped students understand how one word could be connected to another word.

Furthermore, regarding the use of word mapping strategies in learning vocabulary through descriptive texts, to which students responded positively, all students stated that the use of word mapping in descriptives made it easier for them to compose descriptive texts about a topic or theme. The students also explained

what happened in class when learning vocabulary using the word mapping strategy. This was based on the following interview responses:

**Student's vignette 4**

"In class, I learned English, and the subject was about descriptive texts. Then, I learned about descriptive texts using word mapping, which I didn't know about before. I chose the theme of animals to describe in that word mapping."

**Student's vignette 5**

"I am happy because I got to learn English with a different teacher and about descriptive texts because this times we learned about descriptive texts using word mapping. We were asked to choose a theme about animals or people to create in the word mapping later. Then, we looked for synonyms and antonyms."

**Student's vignette 6**

"While in class, I learned English about descriptive texts and learned vocabulary using word mapping. I was in a group and chose the theme 'Jokowi'. We described Jokowi in that word mapping. Then, we looked for synonyms and antonyms within the descriptive text box of the word mapping."

**Student's vignette 7**

"I felt an improvement in understanding vocabulary and context in the descriptive text, and I also enjoyed learning using this word mapping because it made learning English easier for me. We also felt more involved in the learning process because we could see our work results directly."

The student's statement above showed that using the word mapping strategy was very helpful in learning vocabulary through descriptive text.

**The challenges of the word mapping strategy in learning general vocabulary through descriptive.**

The student vignette below shows how students found the use of word mapping strategy challenging to improve their vocabulary in descriptive text learning.

**Student's vignette 1**

"Sometimes I was confused about which words to put into the boxes, but the benefit is that it's easier for me to remember new words. To overcome this, I collaborate with classmates or ask for help from the research assistant."

**Student's vignette 2**

"Difficulty: It took time to create the boxes. How to overcome it: Keep learning and practicing consistently."

**Student's vignette 3**

"I found it difficult when using the word mapping because it was my first experience learning with this word mapping and I understood the concept of word mapping beforehand."

**Student vignette 4**

"I previously did not know and was not familiar with this word mapping. so currently using a little difficulty to make word mapping"

**Student's vignette 5**

"It was the first time we used this word mapping and it was a little difficult to make the word mapping so we should practice more in learning technical vocabulary using the word map organizer"

Students found it challenging to learn technical vocabulary with word maps, as it was their first time using this strategy in a descriptive text class. They mentioned that the unfamiliarity with word mapping made it difficult. Additionally, they noted the need for more frequent practice with word maps to better learn technical vocabulary. The process of selecting words to include in the word mapping box also caused confusion among the students.

From the findings described above, there were several important points that resulted. First, the word mapping strategy helps students in exploring the meaning and definition of a word or topic, as well as helping them understand the relationship between one word and another. Michael F. Graves (2006) mentioned that word mapping provided a visualization of word relationships, enhancing students' ability to remember and use vocabulary in descriptive texts.

Additionally, the word mapping strategy helps students increase their general vocabulary, understand synonyms and antonyms, and add new vocabulary. According to Robert J. Marzano (2004), word mapping helps students develop a deeper understanding of vocabulary by connecting new words to their existing knowledge. Michael F. Graves (2006) further stated that word mapping provided a visualization of word relationships, improving students' ability to remember and use vocabulary.

In this study, the author focuses on the use of descriptive text in the context of students' study in senior high school. The purpose of this study is to investigate students' responses to vocabulary improvement through the use of word mapping strategy in descriptive text learning. In addition, this study aims to explore whether the use of word mapping strategy can improve students' ability in learning technical vocabulary using word map media. The results of the classroom action research showed that most of the students were actively involved in expanding their technical vocabulary through the use of word maps in their descriptive text learning.

The advantages/benefits of the word mapping strategy according to student responses include 1). Effective use of word mapping in language learning and descriptive text. 2). Word mapping really makes it easier to describe and is also fun and exciting. 3). It's easier to know how to describe animals because you only use boxes, it is line with the advantages of word mapping strategies stated by Robert J. Marzano (2004) Word mapping helps students develop a deeper understanding of vocabulary by connecting new words with existing knowledge, thereby strengthening long-term memory. Michael F. Graves (2006): With a landscape of words and ideas, students are invited to think more critically and creatively in connecting different concepts. while the disadvantages/challenges of word mapping strategy according to students' responses include 1). Confused about deciding what words to put in the boxes. 2). The challenge because it is first time used word mapping. 3). it takes time to make the boxes. It is line with the advantages of word mapping strategies stated by Isabel Beck (2002) Word Mapping can require more time and preparation compared to more traditional vocabulary teaching methods, which can be challenging in a time-constrained classroom environment.

## CONCLUSION

The word mapping strategy effectively improves students' general vocabulary and understanding of descriptive texts. Students enjoyed using word maps and found them beneficial for learning new words, their meanings, synonyms, and antonyms. Initial challenges, such as unfamiliarity and the complexity of creating word maps, were overcome with practice and teacher assistance.

## DAFTAR PUSTAKA

- Agustin, H. H., & Yanto, E. S. (2004). Modeling text: Facilitating descriptive text understanding using word mapping strategy. *Journal of Educational Research and Development*, 8(2), 123-135.
- Agnes, S., Lucy, T., & Donohue, J. (2015). Mobile pedagogy: Perspectives on integrating mobile learning in language education. *Language Teaching Research*, 19(3), 356-374. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1362168815576728>
- Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3(2), 77-101. <https://doi.org/10.1191/1478088706qp063oa>
- Burns, A. (2009). Action research: An evolving paradigm? *Language Teaching*, 42(4), 421-438. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S026144480999013X>



- Emelia, D. (2010). Defining descriptive text: Perspectives and applications in language education. *Journal of Language and Linguistic Studies*, 6(2), 45-56.
- Graves, M. F. (2006). *The vocabulary book: Learning and instruction* (2nd ed.). Teachers College Press.
- Kemmis, S., & McTaggart, R. (1988). *The action research planner* (3rd ed.). Deakin University Press.
- Marzano, R. J. (2004). *Building background knowledge for academic achievement: Research on what works in schools*. ASCD.
- Richards, J. C., & Renandya, W. A. (2002). *Methodology in language teaching: An anthology of current practice*. Cambridge University Press.
- Sharifafar, M. J. (2013). Enhancing vocabulary learning through semantic mapping. *Language Learning Journal*, 41(1), 81-97.  
<https://doi.org/10.1080/09571736.2013.767031>
- Zaid, M. (1995). Teaching vocabulary with semantic mapping: A classroom experiment. *TESOL Quarterly*, 29(2), 269-284. <https://doi.org/10.2307/3587809>