

English Language Education Department of a Private University Students' Perception on Using Padlet in Improving Writing Skills

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Abstract

Using Padlet in improving writing skills has been familiar since the platform was implemented in EFL classroom. Many researchers found that implementation of Padlet in improving writing skills has several advantages. Although it has some advantages, Padlet has some problems in improving writing skills. This research investigated the advantages and the problems which were faced by students at English Language Education Department of a private university. Qualitative descriptive is used as a research design. Meanwhile, the participants who are involved in this study were six students batch 2015 who implemented Padlet. The finding of this research showed that using Padlet in improving writing skills has nine advantages, namely building students' collaborative learning, facilitating lecturers' feedbacks, learning through reflection, increasing students' motivation, and increasing students' vocabulary. Besides, using Padlet in improving writing skills gave some problems, namely no folder for controlling comment, monotonous activity, and cheating in online learning.

Keywords: using Padlet in improving writing skill, qualitative descriptive, advantages, problems, English Language Education Department.

Introduction

Writing is an important skill to learn English. It plays essential roles in expressing ideas and opinions. Students are capable of sharing ideas, persuading and convincing others. They may write topics which are the most interested or some other purposes. Through writing, students can explore the matter what they have learned (Alfaki, 2015). It helps students have a chance to more

understand about the language especially when writing will be undertaken as assistance to learning. Although writing skill is very important, students face some problems in English writing exercises. One of the problems is the lack of grammar and structure knowledge so they find it difficult to use it in their writing. Albalawi and Younes (2015) stated that grammar and structure are the major weaknesses in English writing. Students often make mistakes in tenses, punctuation, syntax errors, verb agreements or articles in grammar rules.

One of the strategies that could be done to solve problems in writing is the use of technology. Harmer (2001) stated that technology is one good tool for the progress of students' in writing because it will facilitate the spell checkers for students. One of the platforms that can be used for learning is Padlet. Padlet is a free platform in the form of an online bulletin board so students can organize information on various topics they want (Sangeetha, 2016). The students and lecturers can upload their notes on the platform's wall by adding links, videos, comments, and pictures.

Padlet provides several benefits for students. First, students can use Padlet to have virtual classes where they can write, share, and comment the ideas on the Padlet wall. Deni and Zainal (2015) revealed that activities using Padlet can increase students' knowledge because it allows them to comment on it, visit links, and view their inputs directly. Second, Padlet has special features for students, therefore, can be used to enhance student writing.

Although Padlet has several advantages, students face some problems in using Padlet. First, the platform can be used only when there is an internet connection. The internet connection is unpredictable and sometimes even gets trouble. As suggested by Sherif (2015), students' problem on using Padlet is the error internet connection. When the internet connection is problematic, students may find it difficult to seek information to work their college assignments.

Secondly, Padlet holds a feature to put some comments on the same wall that cause students feel confused by the difference between teacher feedback and student writing (Deni & Zainal, 2015).

Literature Review

Padlet

Padlet is one of the platforms as the social network used to communicate and interact with users. Nowadays, people not only use the platforms as a communication tool in the social environment but in the educational field too. Deni and Zainal (2015) stated that Messenger, Facebook, Blog, Twitter, and Padlet are recommended to be used as social networks in the educational field.

The Features of Padlet

Padlet is created with innovative features that support teaching and learning. According to (Fister & Green, 2016), Padlet allows the lecturers and the students to communicate, discuss, and post depend on classroom purposes. Although the platform facilitates to post something in and can be seen everyone, it has a secure feature which can protect from unknown people to join the group so, the lecturers and the students only can connect the group. The features only focus on assisting writing practice and there are the box, invite people, share, and privacy.

Writing at English Foreign Language (EFL) Students

Writing is a skill that must be mastered by EFL students because it is a way the students to communicate. The skills offer permanent recorders to store information, opinions, feelings, arguments, and theories. Students will remember their events by using writing. Huy (2015) explained that writing is an expression of human language across time and space. Writing allows people to share information, not only with people who live today but also in future, so writing holds an important role in our life. Writing also describes as a "mirror" for intellectual people. It

can determine the level of people's expression of something that people use to express their thought and feeling in "hardcopy" forms (Sadiku, 2015).

Some experts note that in writing, EFL students may face some difficulties such as lack of grammar and structure knowledge, low motivation, lack organization, and spelling mistake. First, the lack of grammar and structure knowledge is one of the writing problems for students. They find it difficult to use the correct grammar and spelling in their writing. Albalawi and Younes (2015) revealed that grammar and structure are the main weaknesses in writing. Second, some students have low learning motivation. Motivation can also affect students' writing skills. If students have low motivation in writing, they will perceive writing is difficult. Tuan (2012) argued that motivation affects students' enthusiasm to participate in learning writing. Third, students find it difficult to organize their ideas in writing. Students have problems in paragraph arrangement, topic development, and theme arrangement in writing. The most problematic paragraph is when the topic sentence not limited to a single topic in each paragraph (Alfaki, 2015).

The Use of Padlet and Its Effect toward Writing

Based on previous research, the researcher discovers that Padlet can facilitate students in writing. Those are Padlet as an educational platform, to give motivation to students, and to facilitate them to improve their writing. First, Padlet facilitates a group discussion in online learning. Padlet used to share ideas, assignments, and comments on Padlet group. Second, Padlet can give some motivation to the students. Long, Ming, and Chen (2013) stated that motivation has a significant role to learn writing because motivation supports learning writing activities which have been conducted in internal process of learning writing. Students who have high motivation will be active to learn writing, express their understanding about writing, and focus

on attention in class to master writing as well as regular learning in the classroom (Guzer & Caner, 2013; Dewitt, 2015). Third, Padlet has shown significance in improving writing where the platform gives an opportunity to share students' assignments and receive feedbacks. Students can post their own work and instantly they give some contents such as comments, feedback, opinions, and additional information about a topic which is explaining in group discussion. Students will share the contents with their lecturers. Using Padlet to improve English writing can control and plan students confident to develop their own writing and to have more enthusiasm for learning language through technology (Wiangsima, 2013).

Problems of using Padlet toward writing skills

In previous explanation, the researcher has already explained about the significance of Padlet toward writing skills. The most content shows the benefits of using the platform in language learning. Although Padlet has some benefits, the platform has the problems too. Those problems are the error internet connection, limited to organize input and cheating in online learning. First, main problem using Padlet is error the internet connection. Not all students can access the internet due to the connection error. Sherif (2015) explained that the connection error as one of the problems when students join in an online learning activity. Second, Padlet has its limitation to organize input on the wall. Students often find some files in the crowded walls as they write on Padlet. The wall will look messy and disorganized. It is supported by Deni and Zainal (2015), the arrangement of posting on the wall is disorganized and its effect of the posting will be unreadable. Third, students can cheat other students' works. According to Raines and Brown (2011) revealed that a clear majority of students in online learning want to be dishonesty. Students may have motivation to increase their scores through seeing other students' work. Their perception when they want to be dishonest, they will get higher score than no cheating. The

reason can be supported on using Padlet because it cannot identify who person is cheating. Lecturers can also be difficult to detect who students are honest or dishonest.

Methodology

This research investigated about students' perception on using Padlet in improving writing skills at ELED of a private university in Yogyakarta. Based on the research purpose, the researcher used qualitative design to collect, gather, analyze and interpret the data. Cresswell (2014) defined that qualitative design as a design to reveal peoples' behavior, attitude, perception which enables the researcher to identify specific population to collect data. In collecting the data, the researcher used six participants at batch 2015. In this study, open-ended question was used to make the participants give opinions without pressure.

When collecting data with interview, the researcher followed some steps. First, the researcher identified students who were involved in this research. To identify the participants, the researcher asked recommendation from the lecturers who implemented Padlet in their teaching and learning. The researcher asked an approval to access their Padlet's address and chose six students who were involved in categories of this study. Those categories were high, medium, and low implement of Padlet. The researcher also considered their English writing skill levels. After the participants had selected and they agreed to become interviewees, the researcher made an appointment about time and place to interview. Next, the researcher did interview with the participants. In this step, the researcher explained the purpose of this research, why the participants could be chosen, and described in detailed view of the research (Boyce & Neale, 2006). After the participants understood, the researcher conducted the interview. The place and time were chosen based on the agreement between the researcher and the participants. The

interview was conducted at the campus. The researcher started collecting the data on March 2018. The data was collected from 10th to 15th March 2018.

In analyzing the data, there were several steps employed in the study. The research asked to the participants about the transcription that they agreed about the original form of the statement. The process was called as member checking technique. The technique can explore reliability of results and check accuracy with the participants' experiences (Harper & Cole, 2012). After that the researcher did a coding. The types of coding are open, axial, and selective coding. Lastly, the researcher reported and analyzed the finding and discussion. The coding process assists the researcher to collect and find the result of the data easier. Giving a symbol in that process make the researcher finds some specific statements for supporting this study. The researcher also used a note, pen, and recorder to make this data more accurate.

Findings

In this study, the researcher will use pseudonym to mention participants' name in reporting the findings in order to keep their privacy. The researcher used pseudonym name for each participants such as Mega for participant 1, Maya for participant 2, Langit for participant 3, Pelangi for participant 4, Fajar for participant 5, and CeraH for participant 6.

Advantages of Using Padlet in Improving Writing Skills

Based on the data gained from six participants who were involved in this study, there seven main findings found related to the first research question, namely the advantages of using Padlet in improving writing skills. Those were building students' collaborative learning, facilitating lecturers' feedbacks, learning through reflection, increasing students' motivation, and increasing students' vocabulary. In first finding, the researcher found that Padlet can support collaborative learning. It can be used to communicate, brainstorm, and also giving opinions on

Padlet group. The participants explained that they used Padet to discuss together about a problem. It can make students learn to give a critical thinking about a problem especially when they learn to write with a topic. In writing improvement, collaborative learning assisted students to enhance writing through project work like giving a picture for students in learning activity. This process helped different formal aspects of language and supported to be critical thinking. Critical thinking offers students' view about a topic which is discussed. They gained some ideas for making an essay after they shared and discussed together with their friends

Second finding, Padlet facilitates lecturers' feedback. The researcher found some participants support for this statement. They revealed that feedback helps students to maximize their potential at different stages of training, increase the awareness of strength for improvement. This is in line with Bijami, Kashef and Nejad (2013) revealed that students can learn more about feedback by reading their writing draft and they are aware what makes writing successful and effective to be enriched. The statement means that gaining feedback makes students evaluate and revise their own writing and their writing ability will be increased directly after getting feedback

Third finding, Based on the data gathered the two participants have the same views about the advantages of using Padlet in improving writing skills in terms of learning through reflection. Reflection is a way to allow students to step back from their learning to develop critical thinking from their learning experience and increase for their next performance by analyzing their experience. This statement in line with Swineey (2014), reflection encourages the students to seek out deeper information what they have learnt, observed, and analyzed. This is in line with Duijnhouwer, Prins, Stokking (2012), who said that reflection builds students to increase understanding about grammar and structure.

Four finding, the researcher found three points about Padlet that can increase students' motivation in writing improvement. There are increase motivation with group interaction, gain motivation from positive comment, and overcome negative feeling towards writing. First, students perceived that Padlet in writing improvement can increase writing motivation with group interaction. Second, the researcher found some points from the participant's statement which expresses to gain positive comment from the lecturer. Students obtain motivation to practice writing more. Third, the researcher demonstrated that Padlet has a significant role to overcome negative feeling towards writing. To deal with Padlet can avoid negative feeling for students, the found some participant who revealed that Padlet is interesting to use and students feel enjoy learning writing with using the platforms.

Fifth finding, the researcher found that the participants support for Padlet as a platform to increase English vocabulary. They admitted that Padlet can improve students' vocabulary that they never heard before. This is in line with Salehi (2015), vocabulary is a key element of English proficiency serving as building for writing. Vocabulary can be described as input and writing is output. The statement means that writing product will depend on students' comprehension about vocabulary.

Beside of investigating the advantages of using Padlet in improving writing skills, the researcher also attempted to reveal problems of using Padlet in improving writing skills. At this point, there are several points to reveal the problems. The statement revealed that sometimes they feel uninterested in looking setting of Padlet because its design is untidy. They feel unmotivated to practice more when using the platform. Because of no folder, Padlet do not provide separated folder to divide between comment folder and upload folder. The effect is that students are reluctant to share opinions on Padlet. They are afraid to share the opinions because they do not

want to make Padlet group looking disorganized design. Their practice writing will be limited because they are afraid to express what they feel while using Padlet.

Another finding revealed that, the researchers discovered two participants have similar statement about the problem of using Padlet in improving writing in terms of monotonous activity. The activities only upload, download, and obtain a feedback. This problem makes students uninterested in joining on Padlet group activity. Padlet has limited to make students more creative writing practice because the learning activity just shares uploads, and downloads file from Padlet.

Last finding, Padlet cannot detect a plagiarism from students' writing. The participants revealed that students can see other students' works and sometimes they do a cheating. Padlet does not provide students or member cheating each other on Padlet group, so the lecturers cannot diagnose who students do a cheating on the dashboard. Sometimes students do successful plagiarism because the lecturers do not find the mistake and students can do this activity again and again. Their creativity also can be limited because they only do copy-paste other people's works. They do not gain a new knowledge for supporting their writing because they depend on seeing other writing topic.

Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to find the advantages and problems on using Padlet in improving writing skills from students' perspective. The finding indicated that six participants mentioned that Padlet gives some advantages for assist students' English writing. Those were building students' collaborative learning, facilitating lecturers' feedbacks, facilitating students' to publish, learning through reflection, increasing students' motivation, increasing students' vocabulary, and increasing students' writing skills. There were three main findings found related

to the second research question, namely the problems of using Padlet in improving writing skills. First, no folder for controlling comment. Second, monotonous activity. Third, cheating in online learning.

After gaining the data of English language education department students' perception on using Padlet in improving writing skills, the researcher provides some suggestions for the students, the lecturers, and other researchers.

Recommendation

Based on the finding found in this study, there are several suggestions regarding to drama implementation in English classroom. These suggestions are for students, lecturers, and for other researcher. ***For Students***, This research will be beneficial for English students who will be a teacher in the future. Because this study provides advantages and problems from using Padlet in improving writing skills, the students know how to handle Padlet if they apply the platform in the classroom, they will know the problems from this research to minimize their mistakes when they implement Padlet. They also will implement Padlet more optimal. ***For Lecturers***, Meanwhile Padlet was implemented in online learning activity. This platform is suggested to increase collaborative learning, vocabulary and writing skill between students and lecturers. Besides, the platform can be used students to cheat other students' assignments and also it has monotonous activity. This research explained advantages and problems to give lecturers a suggestion to implement Padlet more effective in learning activity. They can also encourage the platform for their students to facilitate and practice English writing. ***For Other researchers***, this research is expected to be a decent reference for other researchers who have the same topic and related to this research. This study can help other researchers to seek some

information especially about perception of using Padlet. They may compare this research perception with other platform such as Edmodo, Schoology, and Storybird.

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