

SCHOOLGY: AN ALTERNATIVE OF LEARNING APPLICATIONS TO IMPROVE STUDENTS 'WRITING SKILLS IN THE COVID 19

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Abstract

The research objective entitled "Schoolgy : an alternative of learning applications to improve students' writing skills in the Covid 19" to is to determine the effect of Schoolgy online learning media on students' writing skills and to identify students' perceptions about the use of Schoolgy. The research method used a descriptive qualitative research. Technique in collecting the data were test, interview, questionnaire with research subject is 44 PGSD Students from Class of 2019. The content analysis method was used to analyze the data that was started from 1) data reduction, 2) data presentation, 3) drawing conclusion and verification. The results showed that 85.59% of students agreed that the use of Schoolgy improved their English language skills in general and 85.90% of students agreed it improved their writing skills. Perceptions of students using Schoolgy : 13.42% that Schoolgy is easy to use, 20.13% of students have an ordinary impression, 65.77% of students have the impression that is difficult to use. From their submitted task, there was improving of 40% of score and lessen writing error found. It is to be concluded that Schoolgy did improve writing skill because the language of instruction in Schoolgy was English with user friendly outlook hence force the students to study harder using and writing in English.

Keywords: analysis, motivation, Schoolgy, writing

Abstrak

Tujuan penelitian yang berjudul "Schoolgy: alternatif aplikasi pembelajaran untuk meningkatkan keterampilan menulis siswa pada Covid 19" untuk mengetahui pengaruh media pembelajaran online schoolgy terhadap keterampilan menulis siswa dan untuk mengetahui persepsi siswa tentang penggunaan schoolgy. Metode penelitian yang digunakan adalah penelitian kualitatif deskriptif. Teknik pengumpulan data adalah tes, wawancara dan angket dengan subjek penelitian 44 Mahasiswa PGSD Angkatan 2019. Metode teknik analisis digunakan untuk menganalisis data yang dimulai dari 1) reduksi data, 2) data presentasi, 3) menarik kesimpulan dan verifikasi. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa 85,59% siswa setuju bahwa penggunaan schoolgy meningkatkan kemampuan bahasa Inggris mereka secara umum dan 85,90% siswa setuju meningkatkan kemampuan menulis mereka dalam bahasa Inggris. Persepsi dan pendapat mahasiswa yang menggunakan schoolgy 13.42% bahwa schoolgy mudah digunakan, 20.13% mahasiswa mempunyai kesan biasa saja, namun 65.77% mahasiswa mempunyai kesan bahwa schoolgy sulit digunakan. Dari tugas yang dikumpulkan terdapat peningkatan nilai sejumlah 40% dan berkurangnya jumlah kesalahan dalam menulis. Dapat disimpulkan bahwa schoolgy memang meningkatkan keterampilan menulis karena bahasa pengantar di schoolgy adalah bahasa Inggris dengan tampilan yang ramah pengguna sehingga memaksa siswa untuk belajar lebih giat lagi dalam menggunakan dan menulis dalam bahasa Inggris.

Kata Kunci: analisis, menulis motivasi, schoolgy,

INTRODUCTION

Recently, various countries in the world are being shocked by the outbreak of a disease caused by a virus called corona or better known as covid-19 (Corona Virus Diseases-19). This virus initially began to develop in Wuhan, China. This virus outbreak is indeed very fast,

spreading to various countries in the world. So that the World Health Organization (WHO), declared the outbreak of the Covid-19 virus as a world pandemic today. There have been many people around the world who have been exposed to this virus, even become victims and then died. The spread of the covid-19 virus is the cause of the highest death rates in various countries in the world today. As a result of the Covid-19 pandemic, various policies were implemented to break the chain of spread of the Covid-19 virus in Indonesia. One of the efforts made by the government in Indonesia is by applying an appeal to the public to carry out physical distancing, namely an appeal to maintain distance between people, stay away from activities in all forms of crowds, associations, and avoid meetings that involve many people. Education in Indonesia has also become one of the areas affected by the covid-19 pandemic. With the existence of restrictions on interaction, the Ministry of Education in Indonesia also issued a policy, namely by closing schools and replacing the Teaching and Learning Activities process by using an online system. (Puspitasari, 2020)

English has become the lingua franca in the arena of international relations. Currently there are approximately 479 million native speakers of English, and more than 700 million are people who can speak English as a second language or a foreign language. This figure has a high tendency to increase given the increasing number of schools that include English in their curriculum. The importance of the current position of English made this language is indispensable in various fields of life such as education, work and social (Arini, 2013). This situation leads to the need of English learners to improve their communication skill which play an important role which they have to master. Writing skills is the last language skills that students acquire. In this stage of life, a student gradually acquires listening and speaking skills sequentially. Students will actively acquire reading skill and writing skills. Writing skill obtained at the last show the complexity of learning. Writing does not just rely on sensory abilities. However, all potential knowledge and experience of students will support the results of their writing. Unlike spoken language, written language is relatively more complicated because it is not accompanied by the context of the speech. The context of the speech will help the speech partner understand the meaning of the conversation. Therefore, in written language to replace the context of speech and to keep the meaning of the writing not misunderstood, correct grammatical is needed.

In the field of teaching and learning, both teacher and lecturer, will provide opportunities for every student to practice and write and improve their writing skills. Even though students have the same treatment in teaching and learning activities, they have different

results and performance in writing. According to Hasan in Farida (Farida, 2006) states that "there are several variables that affect the ability to learn language (1) the development stage of students which refers to the effectiveness of the learning process in the classroom, (2) the age of the students, (3) motivation, (4) personality, (5) environmental facilities that provide changes in student learning. "

Harmer (Harmer, 1988) argues that writing is a process in which we write, often very much influenced by the limitations of genre, then these elements must be presented in learning activities. This means that writing is part of learning activities that have an impact on our language style and life. On the other hand, Thomas (Kane, 2000) states that writing about us, our experiences, and feelings is expressed in writing. This means that writing is an activity to transfer information to others. In addition, by writing, people can express their ideas, experiences, thoughts, and feelings in written form. That is, writing as one of the four language skills is not an activity in itself but an activity that serves other skills.

The low writing ability of students is estimated that there are many factors that influence it, both from students (internally), from parents, from the surrounding environment, from facilities and infrastructure, from the methods used by the teacher in teaching. From the teacher's side, perhaps the cause of the low writing skills achieved by students can be identified through the less than optimal learning process being taught, the selection of learning methods and strategies that are not appropriate, and the lack of opportunities that the teacher gives students to practice intensively (Hossain, 2015). In addition, the writing assignments given by the teacher to students are still lacking, so that students feel that the writing they have written is good and correct. This can be seen in the field, most students in writing have not fulfilled provisions such as spelling, sentences, content, paragraphs, and other provisions.

Because of traditional methods have become less motivating, currently technological innovations in language learning are used as learner motivation. English learners find it easy to access various resources in terms of communication with others through technology. Since its inception, various software and applications have been the subject of discussion about how technology can play a role in motivating students to learn languages (Warschauer, 1996) and as technology becomes more sophisticated, the more use of technology increases the potential for increased motivation. Especially in order to make the learning process as comfortable and effective as possible, most students choose the right digital device for learning.

Today, there are countless tools, methods and platforms that can be used for online learning. Among the various online media applications, the learning management system or

LMS that is quite developed and utilized during this pandemic is Schoology. Schoology is an e-learning application. Through this application, teachers / tutors can create classes that will be followed by students. The teacher can create several classes at once, each class choosing the access code. This access code will be used by students to enter the classroom created by the teacher. Through this application, teachers can design classes, share information with students, determine learning outcomes, determine assessment grades, create folders to manage learning material, create discussion forums, make assignments, make quizzes, conduct assessments and download the results of student development analysis (Huda, 2018).

The Schoology platform was designed by Jeremy Friedman, Ryan Hwan and the Trinidad team. This platform is offered free of charge to all educators. Applications that are part of the LMS (learning management system) can be accessed via iOS, Android, and Kindle based devices. LMS can develop student competencies. The Schoology application is part of the LMS that makes it easier for educators and students to interact anywhere and anytime, especially making it easier to deliver material, answer quizzes, and collect assignments. Schoology takes the form of a website that combines e-learning and social networking (Aminoto & Pathoni, 2014).

In connection with the description above, motivation is an important aspect in writing activities. Without strong motivation, students will find it difficult to do writing activities. Theoretically, motivation is any inner force that strengthens everyone to do something. Writing motivation is the inner strength that determines the success of writing activities. Students need motivation in writing, because with motivation they will be active in writing activities (Aryanika, 2016).

According to Cheng and Dornyei (Cheng & Dornyei, 2007) , motivation is one of the main key factors in determining the success or failure of foreign language learning. Learners need to be involved in English speaking activities that require a certain level of motivation. In general, motivation is divided into intrinsic and extrinsic factors that stimulate energy and longing for students to continue to be interested in learning and engaging in English activities. Especially while using media to improve writing skill for students, Schoology is one application that can help to improve motivation and help students to study more. This is stated by previous several studies which already conducted by Tommy Hastomo (Hastomo, 2019) in his research entitled “Schoology effects on students writing ability” and Agustin Apriliani et al (Apriliani, Asib, & Ngadiso, 2019) in their research entitled “Schoology as learning media platform for writing skill : implication to teachers and students” stated that Schoology as

alternative learning media platform that used by the teacher and the students and has great potential to help students in enhancing their writing skill ability.

Muhtia et al (Muhtia, Suparno, & Sumardi, 2018) also elaborated in their article entitled “Blended Learning Using Schoology as an Online Learning Platform” where they demonstrated that it is important to raise teachers’ awareness about the crucial role of technologies in their practices. They encourage teachers to use e-learning platforms such as Schoology. Referring to the theory of experts and these phenomena, this study is focused on analyzing the use of Schoology learning media for the motivation, perception and improvement of students' writing skill.

METHOD

This study uses a qualitative research approach with a case study research type. According to Mulyadi (Mulyadi, 2011) qualitative research is a research approach from representatives of naturalistic understanding that emphasizes the meaning from within, reasoning, in certain circumstances and contexts where its related to everyday life. The data obtained in this study is how the assignments and implementation of Schoology in teaching and learning activities can improve students' writing skills.

Research subject. This research was carried out on 44 PGSD class 2019 students who have received general basic courses related to English and English courses for scientific papers. The data source is the subject from which data is obtained (Arikunto, 2006). This study used students as a source of data where the data obtained from students in the form of test results, interviews, and questionnaires through google form. Data collection procedures in this study were carried out by providing test methods, interview methods and questionnaire methods

Test Methods. According to Ilmi et al (Ilmi, Indrowati, & Probosari, 2012) data collection methods using test techniques are used to retrieve ability data in a series of scientific actions that emphasize the cognitive realm. The steps taken by the researcher to collect data using the test method were as follows: giving the task of making research titles, research questions and research objectives collected by students through the Schoology channel which were then assessed and discussed again to get feedback.

Interview Methods. The interview method is one of the methods used in data collection procedures to obtain information through question and answer activities. According to Sugiyono (Sugiyono, 2015) the use of the interview method in data collection can be done if

the researcher wants to find the problem being studied and know the deeper things of the respondent. According to Yulianti et al (Yulianti, Tahyudin, & Nurfaizah, 2014) there are two forms of interview methods, namely structured and unstructured interviews. In this study, researchers used unstructured interviews by following the following steps, 1) the rules used were only in the form of an outline of the problems to be asked of students, 2) interviews were conducted in an open way between researchers and students regarding the perception and implementation of Schoology in improving writing skills 3) interviews were conducted to each student in a separate way, 4) the researcher conducted an interview analysis therefore things which related to the perception and implementation of Schoology were obtained in students' writing skills. These results imply the opinions of research subjects on writing motivation when they learn to use Schoology learning media.

Data Analysis Techniques. The data analysis technique in this study uses content analysis. The steps of analysis according to Miles & Huberman in Pasa (Pasa, 2019) are as follows: data reduction, data presentation and then drawing conclusion and verification. In data reduction the researcher creating categories and analysis the data test, interview, and questionnaire. In data presentation the researcher displays the result in the form of narrative text and for conclusion and verification are drawn after the data has been previously displayed then the researchers compared the result.

Conclusion and verification. Conclusions are drawn after data interpretation (interpretation) is made of the data that has been previously displayed. Researchers compared the results of student work, interviews, and questionnaire results. And for data validation, the researcher used triangulation techniques with approach that researchers use when conducting research, collecting, and analyzing data (Kasiyan, 2015). In the triangulation of data sources, the researcher compared the test results and interview data. In method triangulation, researchers use more than one data collection method to obtain the same data. The researcher conducted a rewriting test which was later clarified by interview.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

When using the Schoology application, students generally felt enthusiastic, because this application was something new for them. However, at the second meeting students began to complain about a number of things related to the use of this application. The most complained about is the problem of the language of instruction used in Schoology which uses English, it cannot be set to Indonesian. However, at the 6th meeting they started to show significant progress in their choice of English vocabulary. This is reflected in the assignments submitted to the lecturers.

The reasons obtained from interviewed respondents stated that the use of Schoology application made them to open dictionary repeatedly to get the meaning. Therefore, for the “English for Research” course, they claimed to spend at least 2 to 3 hours translating every word they encounter into Indonesian. With the help of a book dictionary, not by the digital or online ones. They avoid using Google translate because it requires them to repeatedly edit the translation results obtained from Google Translate.

At the 8th meeting where the midterm examinations were carried out, students were able to adapt to the conditions of the Schoology platform. Indirectly, this platform has a positive effect on the commitment and willingness of students to complete writing assignments using the English language that is assigned to them.

To find out the relationship between the use of Schoology applications and the ability of students to write, the authors analyzed 3 writing assignments done by students. The author tries to recap the number of students who make more than 2 mistakes for each component of the assessment in his writing. The tasks given include making a research title (Title) which consists of 5-25 words, for Task 2 making Research Questions consisting of 10-30 words and the 3rd task which is making research objectives which consist of from 10 - 30 words.

Things that were grading components for the writing tasks, were :

- 1 Word order
- 2 Wrong word choice
- 3 Missing Subject
- 4 Structure
- 5 Organization
- 6 Content
- 7 Punctuations
- 8 Spelling

9 Capitalization

In assignment 1, 90 percent of students made mistakes in all aspects of the assignment assessment. However, these errors were reduced in the results of the second assignment, with significant differences in the mechanics aspects, namely punctuation, spelling and capitalization. Meanwhile, in the 3rd assignment, the number of students who made mistakes in all components of the assessment was below 50 percent of the total number of students. There was improvement by 40% in number of writing skills and lessen writing error found on their writing task. Some of the students' error in writing which is found on their task :

1. Word order and structure : What is teacher and student response toward using scientific approach?
2. Punctuation : to describe the scenario and implementation of teaching writing recount text using scientific approach with guided question technique
3. Missing word : for the effectiveness teaching, the teachers also need approaches in teaching writing.
4. Organization : through using the Pictionary game as a technique for teaching vocabulary, this study can help students in learning English effectively and improve students' vocabulary skill mastery.
5. Structure : for the effectiveness teaching, the teachers also need approaches in teaching writing.
6. Capitalization : what are teacher's and student's responses towards teaching vocabulary using Pictionary game ?
7. Spelling : deacriptive text

From the data, the number of errors decrease along with the number of exercises performed by students. The exercise is in the form of giving 3 different tasks as described above. The findings of the interview stated that:

1. They are getting used to English. Starting with the features in the Schoology application which are entirely in English
2. The habit of opening the dictionary is awakened
3. There is a Resource feature in the Schoology application that makes it easy for students to find learning resources that are relevant to the topic being discussed
4. Even in this feature, students can upload their work so that it can be accessed by Schoology users in

other parts of the world. Resources itself is a place where all material is stored. In this feature, users can manage all files, assignments, assessments, and learning outcomes. Resources consists of 2, namely My resources and Public Resources. In My resources, users can import files which are new resources obtained from other sources or the user's own writing. Meanwhile, through the public resource feature, users can share resources with groups and download resources according to their needs. Based on the results of interviews, this resource for them is a place to store written results as well as a place as a source of documentation and learning resources

Based on the results of interviews, test results and a Google Form questionnaire, it can be concluded that students' perceptions and opinions regarding the use of Schoology learning media are:

1. As many as 91.95% of respondents have used Schoology and 0.74% have never used Schoology.
2. The impression of students using Schoology was 13.42% that Schoology was easy to use, as many as 20.13% of students had an ordinary impression, but 65.77% of students had the impression that Schoology was difficult to use.
3. For students and respondents who have the impression of being easy and are used to saying because Schoology has a simple appearance. Meanwhile, students and respondents who stated that it was difficult to state because the language of instruction in Schoology was English and they preferred Google classroom to Schoology.

From the findings and research and answering the research objectives, it can be concluded that the use of Schoology as a learning medium is

1. Schoology improves students' English proficiency both in general and specifically, namely writing skills
2. Students' perceptions and opinions of the use of Schoology in general are difficult, especially for those who are just learning English because the language of instruction used in the Schoology app is English.

Discussion

In this section, the researchers will present the interpretation and discussion after getting the result of the research. As mentioned before, the use of Schoology is to facilitate an online communication and discussion, submit the assignment, and share the learning sources. From

the findings above there were several important factors to be noted related to the research question which was to determine the effect of Schoology online learning media on students' writing skills and to identify students' perceptions about the use of Schoology. Those several important factors were the students' impression on Schoology, how is the students' perception towards Schoology and last, how Schoology improves students' writing skills.

Schoology provides students quick access to relevant information. Through Schoology, teachers can build courses, upload their lectures and lessons, create assignments and discussions, grade submissions, and test and quiz their students online. Through Schoology, teachers can list or schedule events or activities. This helps keep everyone in touch and on the same page. Schoology offers automated gradebook and attendance. Schoology also provides easy communication, posts, updates, messages, and comments. Through Schoology, everyone can be simply informed. The previous studies on Schoology proved that Schoology, as an LMS, is an effective, easy, and flexible tool that can effectively contribute to the development of learning from distance, especially in blended learning and e-learning (Astuti, 2019).

Though it has many good offers and tools, most of the students while using it first time were a bit confused. But for those who already familiar with Facebook, stated in the findings that it was user friendly. This finding on research is the same finding as stated by Karyawati and Ndadari (Karyawati & Ndadari, 2017) where they stated that indeed some students found the difficulties when they used it the first time where they weren't familiar with it.

There were several problems in student's writing skills as stated by Mutia (Mutia, 2018). First, lack of vocabularies. When the teacher asked students to make a sentence without a dictionary, many students were still confused. They able to make a sentence in Indonesian but when they translate into English without opening a dictionary they did not know how. Second, they did not know how to make a good sentence. When students make a sentence, the structure of sentences were incorrect. When students make a simple sentence in past tense, many students sill use verb 1, sometimes the sentence didn't have a subject. Third is content. When teacher asked students to make a paragraph, they look confused about what they should write. They cannot construct the main idea and supporting detail into paragraph. This is similar to the researchers finding where the students submitted their writing task into Schoology and then found some errors such as word order and structure, punctuation, missing word, organization, capitalization and even spelling mistakes were found.

When using the Schoology application, students generally felt enthusiastic, because this application was something new for them. However, at the second meeting students began to

complain about number of things related to the use of this application. Such as the application, the system, the needed of large data and so on. Other than that, they also complained about the problem of the language of instruction used in Schoology which uses English. After getting used to it and spend many hours familiarizing themselves with Schoology, most students and respondents answered that Schoology was easy and Schoology has a simple appearance which has Facebook alike look. This positive perception towards using Schoology and getting familiar with using Schoology is similar to the findings of Amalia (Amalia, 2018) where her finding stated that the students have a positive perception toward the use of Schoology and even the assessment system in Schoology. The similar statements posed by Abbas (Abbas, 2020) were in his findings he found that most students were motivated by learning using schoology e-learning because of its easiness, friendly look, and challenging way of doing the task.

In improving English writing skill, the research finding stated that there was improvement by 40% in number of writing skills and lessen writing error found on the student's writing task. It can be concluded that Schoology does improve writing skill. This stated supported by several other previous research such as Hastomo (Hastomo, 2019) and Apriliani et al (Apriliani, Asib, & Ngadiso, 2019) where they stated that Schoology as alternative learning media platform that used by the teacher and the students and has great potential to help students in enhancing their writing skill ability. Sicat (Sicat, 2015) also stated that Schoology as an LMS is an effective tool for enhancing college student's proficiency in writing in English, especially in business writing.

The finding proved that Schoology can be an effective, easy, and flexible LMS platform for e-learning and blended learning. The platform has many advanced educational features for teachers and students in times of COVID-19 and certainly to improving students' writing skill.

CONCLUSION

Students' English skills improve because they are forced to use English because there is no Indonesian language setting in the Schoology channel. And due to the English setting therefore students are forced to use dictionary to understand the language and instruction used. For writing tasks, components of errors that are often found included: word order, wrong word choice, structure, organization, and spelling. With the increasing number of assignments given and the more frequent use of Schoology therefore students get used to using it and improve their proficiency in English. From their task which was submitted, there was improving of 40% of score and lessen writing error found on their writing task. Majority of the students stated

that Schoology had simple appearance. It is to be concluded that Schoology did improve writing skill because the language of instruction in Schoology was English with user friendly outlook hence force the students to study harder using and writing in English.

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