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Utilizing Edmodo as a Digital Language Learning Platform to Teach Writing for Non English Major Students

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Abstract

The information and communication technology (ICT) nowadays has surrounded the students and the lecturers in their daily activities, so the use of digital learning in a classroom becomes essential. This study focuses on writing because for most students it is difficult skill in English. They need to be given some facilities that can raise their interest as well as their confidence to publish their writing. The aim of this study was to describe how the lecturer implements edmodo as a digital language learning platform for social science education major students, how their writing assignment using Edmodo and how their responds after using Edmodo. This study used descriptive qualitative. This study would explore some of the features using field note, students' assignments and interview employed as the the instruments. The data analysis techniques by using data triangulation. The results showed that the students actively participate in writing their tasks through Edmodo. They can share their ideas freely and the lecturer can monitor them easily by giving feedback directly toward their writing components; format, punctuation and mechanics, content, organization, grammar and sentence structure. The feedback can be given at anytime from anywhere without banded into a classroom meeting. It does not only help students in improving their motivation in writing but it also builds students' confidence because they do not feel depressed while writing in front of their lecturer in a limited time and frustrating classroom situation.

Introduction

The development of globalization era requires educational sector to be able to create human source that can adapt to every change and development happened. The information and communication technology such as E-learning offers new things as a media to support teaching learning process. It has surrounded students and teachers in their everyday activities that make the use of digital learning becomes essential. For teachers, the use of technology will improve their learning effectiveness and efficiency while for students will give opportunity and more learning experience[1]. The technology does not replace the existent language learning materials but it changes the ways in which learners learn and deal with their learning more effectively. The closeness between students and technology can be used to support the teaching learning process to add their knowledge and understanding about the material they are learning. In outside the classroom, the students can



use it to learn by accessing the learning material or doing their assignments given by their lecturer independently. Therefore, it is important for lecturers/teachers to use media in teaching learning process.

Rahmawati stated that there are some choices to implement e-learning as a media in teaching learning process, they are (1) developing e-learning by ourselves, (2) buying a system, (3) using open source e-learning [2]. Open source e-learning is software free to use, and the original program can be changed by anyone. There are lots of free and open source E-learning applications that can be used by both teachers and students, such as eduslide, yacapaca, moodle, quipper school, edmodo, etc.

Edmodo is an educational website that takes the ideas of a social network and makes it appropriate for a classroom. It can connect teacher and students to work together anytime and anywhere. Furthermore, edmodo is a platform of social learning that is designed for teachers, students, schools, and districts to help the educators harness the social media power for customize the classroom in every learner.

At IAIN Madura, students of Social Science Education program get difficulties in learning English especially in learning writing. Therefore, they need to be given a digital learning media that can raise their interest as well as their confidence to publish their writing. Edmodo may become one of the solutions. The use of Edmodo in this research is as a media for the students to submit and publish their writing assignments. Hopefully the use of edmodo can help the students to develop their writing activity.

Finally, this paper going to describe about how the implementation of edmodo done by the lecturer, the students' writing and the response of the students after the implementation of edmodo in learning writing.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Teaching Writing for Higher Students

The fact that writing for most higher students, is not a simple skill, should be seen as something serious nowadays [3], [4]. Recently, the students tend to share their ideas in term of pictures, videos and simple captions. The students seem very addicted to the use of social media or they are attached too much to their gadget. And this phenomena makes the students feel reluctant to develop their academic writing skills. As a lecturer we have to find ways to help the students find their way to develop their writing skill.

Writing for higher students can be seen from two points of view, first we can see it from the product and the second is from the process of developing the writing project [3]. Seeing from the purpose of writing product according to the various context in which it occurs, they are included into :

- a. *Assessment*, the students may required to produce essays, written examination, or laboratory reports.
- b. *Learning*, the students can learn more general abilities to reason and critique. For this purpose, lecture can ask the students to write journal dealing with their thoughts, questions, problems and ideas about reading, lectures and applied practices.
- c. *Entering particular disciplinary communities*, in this level students are expected to produce a text that increase the norms and conventions of their choosen disciplines [3].

The above purposes are seen from the writing product point of view, but there are some other way to see the writing activities. It can be seen also from the writing process. As what is stated by Harmer that writing is a kind of process 'wheel', where writers move both around the circumferences of the wheel and across the spokes [5, p. 326]. And even when they have written what they think is the final version of their work, they may still, at the last moment, go back and re-plan or revisit stages they had thought they had completed. Those process then considered as a too long process because it seems take times to collect the ideas, to draft, to review and edit, over and over before they get the final product.

Those two classical ways of teaching writing to students then must also change and develop as the time. As what happen nowadays where the students love to make Vlog rather than writing a text and also the lecturer who has not much time to meet the students inside the classroom. Unfortunately, for academic reasons we still need to create the students good writing habit as well as providing them with an intensive guidance to make a better writing.

In order to help the students to develop their writing habit lecturer need to remember some basics roles in teaching writing. Some of the roles propose by Harmer are as:

- a. *Motivator*, as a motivator lecture must create the right conditions for the generations of ideas, persuading them of the usefulness of the activity, and encouraging them to make as much effort as possible for maximum benefit.
- b. *Resource*, we should be ready to supply information and language where necessary.
- c. *Feedback provider*, we need to responds positively and encouragingly to the content of what the students have written[5, p. 330].

Dealing with the roles of the lecturer as the one who should give feedback to the students' works, there are something that the lecturer and the students must pay attention in the process of editing, re-drafting and re-writing. Based on to Harmer [5, p. 326] teacher and students must pay attention on:

- a. the language use (grammar, vocabulary, linkers)
- b. check punctuation (and layout)
- c. check your spelling
- d. check your writing for unnecessary repetition of words and /or information
- e. decide on the information for each paragraph and the order the paragraphs should go in.
- f. note down various ideas
- g. select the best ideas for inclusion
- h. write a clean copy of the corrected version
- i. write out a rough version.

Unfortunately, the lecturer sometimes cannot always meet the students in the classroom and do a direct correction to the students' work because of some reasons so lecturer should use the help of technology recently. Using technology for academic reason is not something new[6]. Many educator use the social media and other application to help them share any information and ideas in term of personal and professional life in this case is in teaching and learning. In teaching writing we notice that many lecturer use email, facebook, whatsapp, twitter, etc, to help them collecting their students writing projects or at least sending information or feedback of their students work. Through those application teachers and students can send and give feedback in an instant way.

In addition, other than those common known social media, Indonesian Educator commonly use an application called Edmodo. It is a social media platform often described as a Facebook for school. Edmodo (designed by educators) enables exceptionally secure cloud-based collaboration. A teacher, school, or district easily can manage a system that provides the best features of the cloud while practically eliminating the anxiety that we associate with students on the internet. (<http://susd.edmodo.com>)

Edmodo is a free application that can be used by educators, students, and also parents in a closed communication environment, where the teacher can monitor the interaction between the members. The students from the same institution or from different institution can submit assignment and educator can directly assess the assignment. Educators and students can operate Edmodo without any difficulties because the steps are very easy and can be followed by clicking the menu that clearly seen on the screen. Once, students create a class or group in Edmodo, then they can post their work and get their lecturer's or friends' feedback. Here are the activities when members of Edmodo submit a post that is summarized from the *Edmodo Teacher Guide*.

- a. Everything you create in or upload to Edmodo is 'private' by default – you must choose recipient lists for messages and assignments, and you must share documents and other resources by creating library folders to 'Share' with designated individuals or groups. You only 'see' students enrolled in your classes (groups) – you cannot access information about students that are not enrolled in one of your classes.
- b. Students see only the messages, assignments, or content you share with that group – messages sent to 1st period will not be seen by students in your 2nd period class.
- c. Students cannot privately message other students in the group. Students can only post to the whole group or individually to the teacher.
- d. You can send messages or assignments to all students in all classes by selecting all classes before sending the message. You can also send messages to individual students or other Edmodo members you have connected with.

- e. For consistency and easier management, encourage student account conventions (usernames, passwords, etc.).
- f. Establish a requirement that students always use proper grammar, punctuation, usage, spelling, and language. Complete sentences!
- g. Once a class is enrolled, lock the class group code to prevent unwanted or unauthorized registrations.

For writing activities edmodo can be usefull through these following process called the annotate and assignment platform, these steps are taken from *the Edmodo Teacher Guide*.

To annotate an assignment a student turned in, educator should do the followings steps:

1. Select the “annotate” option below assignment title (on the submissions page).
2. Once selected, the assignment will open up in a new browser tab. All your annotation options will appear across the top of the page.
3. Make any remarks or edits necessary. You can leave comments, draw on the assignment, highlight things or use the strikeout tool.
4. To delete an annotation, click on it and select “remove” from the drop down menu. (Mac users will need to hold down the “command” button while clicking on the annotation in order to see the “remove” option).
5. When you’re finished, simply close out of the browser tab. All annotations you made to the assignment will automatically be saved and you can enter the grade for that assignment (entering grades in Edmodo is optional).
6. The student will receive a notification that they have a new grade (if graded). When they click on the assignment title from the notification, they will be taken to the assignment page where they can select “view” to see the assignment with your annotated remarks. Students can also view your annotations by clicking on the assignment from the post.
7. The characteristics of Edmodo as a free application that can be accessed everywhere in online mode can make the busy lecturer checking the students’ assignment from every possible places. On the other hands, the students also can learn each others from their friends works and from the instant feedback that their lecturer give.

Research Methodology

In this research, the researchers used descriptive qualitatitave as the research design. It had a purpose to investigate a case in depth. Qualitative research provides descriptive accounts targeted to understanding a phenomenon, a process, or a particular point of view from the perspective of those involved[7]–[9]. It means that the process is done through analysis and description without manipulating the teaching learning process. This research was descriptive because the researchers needed to describe the process of the implementation of Edmodo in teaching English for Social Science Program students, the students’ writing performance and response of the students after edmodo was implemented.

The subject of the study was third semester students of Social Science Education Program At IAIN Madura. The total number of sudents is thirty five which consists of 20 female students and 15 male students.

The researchers would explore some of the features using field note, students’ writing assignment and interview employed as the instruments.

a. Observation Sheet

The main way to get the data for the shake of the study is by doing observation sheet in the edmodo class. Observation is used in collecting the data by using the observation and takes notes on the phenomena systematically. The observation sheet is in the form of table. The phenomena that is happening when on edmodo during the teaching learning process. The researchers observed on the students’ activity and their writing assignments which were posted on edmodo. The instrument used in observation was field note.

b. Students' Writing Assignment

Assignment is a task given to the students in the form of exercise. In this study, the lecturer gave a short writing assignment because the students are not English majoring. In analyzing the students' assignment, the lecturer used a scoring rubric of paragraph adapted from Oshima and Hogue consisting of five criterions.

The data was analyzed based on the fact and the interpretation using scoring rubric of paragraph. Those are format, punctuation and mechanics, content, organization, grammar and sentence structure.

Scoring Rubric: Paragraphs

Component of Writing	Rating Score
Format -- 5 points	1
There is a title.	1
The title is centered.	1
The first line is indented.	1
There are margins on both sides.	1
The paragraph is double-spaced.	1
Total	5
Punctuation and mechanics --5 points	1
There is a period after every sentence.	1
Capital letters are used correctly.	1
The spelling is correct.	2
Commas are used correctly.	
Total	5
Content -- 20 points	5
The paragraph fits the assignments.	5
The paragraph is interesting to read.	10
The paragraph shows that the writer used care and thought.	
Total	20
Organization --35 points	10
The paragraph begins with a topic sentence that has both a topic and a controlling idea.	20
The paragraph contains several specific and factual supporting sentences that explain or prove the topic sentence, including at least one example.	5
The paragraph ends with an appropriate concluding sentence.	
Total	35
Grammar and Sentence Structure --35 points	35
Estimate a grammar and sentence structure score.	
Grand Total	100

Adapted from Oshima and Hogue, 2007

c. Interview

Another instrument in this research was interview. The informants were students of social science education major. The researchers wanted to know their response how they learned writing by using edmodo.

Results

The Result of Impementation

The lecturer conducted the research for some meetings with three kind of activities. For the first meeting, the lecturer started the class by explaining the paragraph (how to write a paragraph) with the topic on human

relation. She explained the definition, the steps of writing a paragraph, the paragraph outline, the topic sentence, the supporting sentences and the concluding sentence. Then she gave example of a paragraph outline.

On the next meetings, it is the second activity, the lecturer asked them to prepare their own laptop or their android because the lecturer would continue discussing the topic by using edmodo platform. The lecturer asked the students to log in their account in edmodo and asked them to read all the learning materials of the topic she explained which had been uploaded through edmodo. She motivated the students to get involved in the learning process followed by giving a writing assignment of a paragraph, consisting of 100 to 150 words about their own village. The lecturer asked them to write the paragraph outline first as their pre writing stage. She gave enough time to the students in writing their own paragraph before posting it on edmodo.

After all students finished their paragraphs, the third activity, the lecturer asked them to give feedback to their friends' writing by giving comment on it referring to the five coring rubrics; content, organization, grammar, vocabulary and mechanics. Then the lecturer gave comments and correction toward the result of their work.

The Result of the Students' Writing Assignment

The assignment of the students is writing an English paragraph about describing their own village. While another students gave feedback on their friends' writing, the lecturer monitored their writing students progress and gave scored on their assignment.

The result was five students got excellent level because the content was complete and clear, the supporting sentences were relevant to assigned topic. The paragraph was organized well. They got very few grammatical mistakes. They were able to use appropriate words. Their format and their mechanics were very good.

Five students got very good level because the content is related with topic which was asked by the lecturer but they forgot to write the title. The paragraphs are intersting to read. They are organized well, they made few grammatical mistakes and used appropriate vocabulary.

Twenty one students got good level. Most of them wrote the content fit with the assignment given. The topic sentence related with the title but they are lack of coherence in writing their details; mostly relevant to topic but lacks detail. Their grammar and sentence structure were good. They were able to use punctuation and mechanic well and able to use appropriate vocabulary but they did not end their paragraphs with appropriate concluding sentences.

Five students belong to poor level because they did not write the titles and the content did not relate with the assignmet asked. Their paragraph were also too short. They were lack of grammar knowledge. Their writing were dominated by errors of spelling, punctuation and capitalization.

The Result of the Interview

The responses of the students related to the implementation of digital language learning platform, edmodo, were almost the same. They said that Edmodo gave them some benefits; easy to use, they can upload assignments and receive score and feedback and suggestions from their lecturer, their lecturer can control their progress of writing skill, they can learn anytime and anyplace. All advantages made them gave more interest in writing and build their confidence because they do not feel depressed while writing in front of their lecturer in a limited time and frustrating classroom situation.

DISCUSSION

a. The Implementation of Edmodo

The implementation of Edmodo as a Digital Language Platform can be figured out fromthe result of the observation sheet and fieldnotes. The lecturer explained to the students about media which they would use in teaching writing. She used e-learning media which means they use of electronic system or computer to support the learning process [10]. The lecturer utilized a digital language learning platform, called edmodo to teach writing because it is an excellent communication tool based on social networking. It is different with another platform because edmodo provides a more secure learning platform for learners.

Based on the observation, the lecturer needs some meetings to teach writing by using edmodo. She explained it first the material then she informed the students to continue discussing through edmodo platform. The lecturer motivated the students to get involved in the learning process followed by introducing text or learning material to discuss. This is considered as an initial exposure to build students' knowledge as suggested by Emilia [11]

The lecturer used notebook to teach writing but most of students used their handphone to interact with the lecturer in teaching learning process. The lecturer had uploaded learning material and writing assignment on edmodo that make students logged in their account by entering their nick name and their password. After that the students observed it in their own hand phone and laptop. All of the students post their assignments in edmodo then they give comment on their friends' writing.

The implementation of edmodo has not maximum yet because not all of the writing stages are done in edmodo. The students do not post all their writing stages in edmode, the just upload their final assignment but they discuss their work by giving comment on their friends' writing and finally the lecturer gave confirmation and summarized what they have learnt.

b. The Students' Writing Assignment

Almost all of the students were considered as successful writers because they make a good progress in their writing performance. They achieved well all the writing which adapted from Alice and Hogue [12]. Those are format, punctuation and mechanics, content, organization, grammar and sentence structure. Each component was categorized into four levels; excellent, very good, good, and poor.

Based on the researcher analysis, from thirty five students of social science education program, as the research subject in this study there are five students got excellent level, five students got very good level , twenty one got good level and only four students got poor level.

Edmodo as a digital language learning platform creates succesful writing activity, for example, the studentscan actively participate in writing their tasks through Edmodo. They can share their ideas freely and the lecturer can monitor them easily by giving feedback directly toward their writing components. It is supported by Giacomantonio [13], he states that edmodo wants to make it safe and easy for students and teachers to connect with each other.

CONCLUSION

Based on the analysis of previous chapter, the researchers concluded that Edmodo is one of digital language platforms as a media that is appropriate in teaching writing for social English program students at IAIN Madura. In the implementation of edmodo, there were three kinds of activities; the first, the lecturer explained the media which would be used in teaching learning writing and she explained the topic of how to write a paragraph related with social science education. The second activity, the lecturer asked the students to log in their edmodo account and asked them to read all learning materials and an assignment which had been uploaded in edmodo class. The third, the students post their writing assignments in their edmodo account. Then the lecturer and the students discussed the assignment by giving comment on each student's work. The astudents actively participate in writing their assignment through edmodo. They shared their ideas freely and the lecturermonitored them easily by giving feedback directly toward their writing components; format, punctuation and mechanics, content, organization, grammar and sentence structure. The feedback can be given at anytime from anywhere without banded into a classroom meeting.

In analyzing the students' work, the researcher concluded that the implementation of edmodo can improve their writing skills because they can achieved all the scoring writing rubrics adapted from Alice and Hogue. They are format, punctuation and mechanics, content, organization, grammar and sentence structure. Most of them were categorized into good level. They built their confidence because their writing have been published in edmodo. It is an digital language learning platform in which the students and the lecturer can share their idea and give feed back each other.

For the result of interview, the students give positive responds on learning writing through Edmodo. They can share their ideas freely and their lecturer gave feedback directly toward their writing components; format, punctuation and mechanics, contents, organization, grammar and sentence structure.

The feedback can be given at anytime from anywhere without banded into a classroom meeting. It does not only help students in improving their motivation in writing but it also build students' confidence because they do not feel depressedwhile writing in front of their lecturer in a limited time and frustrating classroom situation.

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