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لسان الضاد

دورية اللغة العربية تعليمها وأدبها

Applying Technology-Based Learning Through Online Media Blog To Teach Writing

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Abstract

At this time, the development of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in various fields is very rapid and seen as a necessity and also an opportunity. In the field of English language teaching, for example, the development of ICT can provide a new dimension of developing literacy media for learners. ICT is able to provide creative opportunities for young writers. Good writing skills are important for future learners. However, the current writing study is still felt conventionally where the teacher still often tells the learner to write directly without writing process. Often the topics are limited so they are less interesting, not challenging exploration, loss of innovation and creativity. In fact, teachers who often, during this time, be the only examiner of the letters writing so that the lack of feedback and interaction in the process of writing it. One way that can be used to improve the quality of learning and writing skills of learners by utilizing ICT is by blog (online journal). Blogs are an online journal where learners can write anything they find interesting, edit it, publish it, and even make it a media sharing for all those involved. It is believed that writing by blogging can provide a real potential audience for better learner editing, innovation, exploration and creation, providing more dynamic interaction, better literacy skills, and even teamwork.

Keywords: Blog, Technology, Teaching Writing.

Introduction

The development of science and technology has been so rapidly in this era. The development of science happening recently does not take place suddenly, but gradually. The development of science occurs because humans are always faced with the challenges of nature, situations and conditions that spur creativity. There is always a push to make people move toward the progress and encouragement is curiosity¹. All having happened to this day is a long history of human civilization. The rapid advances in technology and science has presented challenges and opportunities for all aspects of human life, including education. Education is currently faced with a variety of challenges being very complex, one of them is the improvement of human resources that can compete and take part in this globalization era.

To build a quality education system of Indonesia required the support of all components as a whole and sustainable. The current global development requires the development in terms of quality of human resources². Indonesia's education has undergone many transformations, ranging from methods, focus, curriculum, and others. Language learning, especially foreign language learning, is also experiencing similar things. There have been many strategies, techniques, methods, and thoughts that have been generated for a better quality of foreign language learning. However, until now, foreign language learning, especially English, has not shown optimal results yet.

There are many people, especially children learning English now unable to speak and write in English even though they are

1 Mutansyir, *Sejarah Perkembangan Ilmu*, (Yogyakarta: Liberty Yogyakarta, 2002). 30

2 Nurkholis, *Sekolah Unggulan yang tidak Unggul*, <http://www.pendidikannetwork.com> (accessed on Oct. 31, 2017)

familiar with the rules in the language. They tend to understand mechanically existing concepts, in which if they are confronted with situations that must speak or write, they are incapable of doing so. There are many things affecting the success of learning English in the classroom. Some of these are the following factors that are mutually related to one another. First comes from the faculty. Many teachers who are not familiar with English language learning emphasize competency of language skills and other linguistic components as well as creativity and local wisdom³.

Lack of opportunities for creativity and supportive training activities may be the cause of the poor quality of learning affecting the quality of English language learning. The second, it comes from student ability. The quality of students' English proficiency has declined over the years. In classroom learning, they are more likely to be easy going. The third factor is from supporting media, such as the environment, learning resources, teaching support staff, facilities and others. It cannot be denied that supporting media can give effect to the success of teaching and learning process.

Writing skills is one of four language skills. To produce a good writing, one must have adequate schemata to be expressed effectively through written media. A good writing cannot be done once, but it should go through various processes from outline, draft and continual revisions. But in reality, many students do not produce writing through the process of writing. Particularly in writing learning, the following matters have great potential to influence the success of writing learning.

3 BSNP, *Tegaskan Dinas Pendidikan tidak Campuri Penyusunan Kurikulum*, <http://www.harian.nasib.com> (accessed Sept 17th

- Teaching and learning process.

Often, the process of learning to teach writing skills in the classroom is still very simple. The lecturer explains the lecture materials, the students write, then corrected by the lecturer and given a comment. There is no process capable of improving student writing.

- Feedback.

Feedback is a very important thing in writing activities. However, lecturers often give more comments to impress a direction. Students do not know what happened with their writing because when they are done, they directly submit to the lecturer to be corrected.

- Assessment Standards.

The assessment standards used should be clear not to invite questions of the validity of the grades obtained by the students.

- Creativity and Innovation.

This nuance can also function very in the process of learning to write. However, the lack of creative and innovative nuances in classroom learning often lies where all the writing process is done in the classroom so it looks monotonous, less 'challenging' the exploration of student knowledge.

- Motivation.

Motivation is an internal factor that is important to help a person get better results. Students having low motivation in following the course will affect its success in learning writing so that in the end, students are not able to produce a good writing.

In relation with the above statements, several new innovations in the field of education primarily to improve the quality of learning English emerged along with the development of Technology, Information and Communication (ICT). The rapid development of ICT provides challenges as well as opportunities for teachers and students to be used

effectively in learning in the classroom⁴. ICT can be one of the medium of learning English to create creativity and innovation.

Along with the development of ICT today, there are many free online media that can be used as a medium of learning. Tools like blog, webpage, social networking system (friendster, facebook, tagged, and others), and Content Management System (CMS) can be used to help improve students' English proficiency. In connection with writing skills, one of effective medium that can be used to improve students' skills in writing is a blog.

A blog (a simple form of weblog) is a frequently updated website (site) that is often called an online (diary) journal⁵. Nowadays, blogs grow very rapidly along with the development of ICT in Indonesia. Almost everyone has a blog, ranging from artists, politicians, teachers, lecturers to students because the process makes it very easy. Having a blog also means having an online journal. Students can write whatever they like. They can edit and publish as often as they want. They can also be a sharing medium for all audiences both in and out of class.

In relation with the improvement of writing skills, the use of blog media is very appropriate with the characteristics of learning to write. With blogs, students can write anything on the existing blog section, including providing additional emphasis or information with other media that is also available, such as audio, video, or links to other relevant pages (sites). Blogs as an outpouring of student ideas and writings will be very useful for them because blogs as online media are able to provide a real audience for student writing. It is

4 Sei-Hwa, *the Use of ICT in Learning English as an International Language*, ERIC Digest. http://www.ed.gov/databases/ERIC_Digests/ed427318.html (accessed on Sept 2017)

5 Rouf, I and Y. Sopyan. 2007. *Panduan Praktis Mengelola Blog* (Jakarta: Media Kita), 60

expected that this will also provide better motivation for improving students writing competence. Furthermore, in accordance with some of the factors mentioned earlier, the blog is believed to greatly assist in improving student achievement in writing learning.

Theoretical Review

Writing Competencies

Learning writing is essentially a study of how one expresses ideas and feelings through written media. Through writing activities, a person can also express his or her needs. They can also record his thoughts on important matters or activities that are personal in their lives. In fact, writing can also be entertainment, where one can communicate feelings and ideas to others through various media and forms, such as letters, autobiographies, stories, and essays.

Rethinking states that there are four general purposes of writing activities, namely to inform, influence, express, and entertain. In writing, almost everything written by the author is a reflection of his ability to process words, so even the abstract things can be displayed more clearly⁶. Thus, the ability of students to express their ideas and feelings will be effectively communicated to their readers. In writing, students must be able to master several things. First, students must be able to master the elements of writing, such as topic sentence / thesis statement, introduction, body, and conclusion. Each of these elements has characteristics that must be followed to make writing better. Second, the student must be able to master knowledge of the components that make up a coherent in writing. Third, students have the competence on writing based on the types of composition.

⁶ Reinking et al, *Strategies for Successful Writing USA* (New York: Prentice Hall, 2002), 03

Motivation in Language Learning

Gardner and Tremblay suggest that motivation relates to how a person behaves. There are 4 aspects in motivation, namely 1) goals, 2) effort, 3) desire to achieve goals, and 4) behavior that supports the achievement of a problem solving. In addition, motivation is also defined as a beginning to create and maintain one's behavior toward the attainment of goals⁷. This aspect of motivation is very important because it plays a role in determining the activity and behavior of students in learning⁸.

Oxford and Shearin further stated that motivation is a desire to achieve goals, combined with efforts to achieve that goal. Many researchers consider motivation as a key element that determines success in improving the ability to learn both language and foreign languages⁹.

Gardner and Lambert put forward a model called the Socio-Educational Model. This model is structured after conducting research for more than ten years and concluded that learners' behavior toward target language and culture has an important role in the motivation of language learning¹⁰. From this model there are two kinds of motivation, namely instrumental and integrative motivation.

Instrumental motivation refers to the learner's desire to learn the language for the purpose of real and practical purposes, such as college entry requirements, job search, or a visit to a place. While

7 Ames, C., & Ames, R, *Research in Motivation in Education* (San Diego: Academic Press, 1989), 65.

8 Ngeow, *Motivation and Transfer in Language Learning*, ERIC Digest http://www.ed.gov/databases/ERIC_Digests/ed427318.html (accessed April 12th 2015)

9 Oxford, R. L. and Shearin, J, *Language Learning Motivation: Expanding the Theoretical Framework*, the Modern Language Journal, 78, 12-28.

10 Gardner, R. C., and Tremblay, *On Motivation Research Agendas and Theoretical Perspectives* (Modern Language Journal: 79, 1994) 359-368.

integrative motivation refers to the desire to learn the language with the aim of being able to interact with the target language community.

Technology, Information and Communication (ICT)

As a result of today's globalization, the spread of English and technological developments have altered the learning of English as a lingua franca¹¹. The result, both English and ICT has become a very important literacy skill for most non-native English speakers to get deeper knowledge into English¹². It cannot be denied, the spread and utilization of ICT in the world of education has grown very rapidly in many countries.

Due to its rapid development, ICT is seen as a thing capable of providing challenges as well as opportunities. In connection with the use of ICT in learning, Zhu and Kaplan proposed a technology-based teaching model. From the system approach, technology-based teaching includes four components, namely students, lecturers, teaching materials and technology tools¹³.

ICT, in English learning can be integrated into the four language skills and other language components. It is believed that ICT is able to provide an interactive, innovative, and creative learning model. By utilizing ICT, the ability of students can be improved because the activities are very diverse, expandable, and real. Pelgrum states that ICTs can help students to¹⁴:

- explaining the text innovatively
- enrich or expand the context of literacy learning

11 Warschauer, M., & Healey, "Computers and Language Learning: An Overview Language Teaching", 33 (1998): 57-71

12 Papert, S, *Mindstorms: Children, Computers, And Powerful Ideas* (New York: Basic Book, 1980), 25.

13 Zhu & Kaplan, *Mc Keachie's Teaching Tips*, <http://crlt.umich.edu/index.html>. (accessed September 24th 2011).

14 Pelgrum, W, *The Educational Potential of New Information Technologies: Where are We Now? Children and Computers in School* (Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum, 1996), 23-24

- view text from alternate / different viewpoints
- compile and process text and data more quickly and efficiently
- store, record, edit and adapt the work more quickly and efficiently
- change the structure and quality of texts to suit different audiences and aims

Because it gives benefits, today, many schools and other institutions have used ICT as a tool to promote learning, both to improve competence, to respond to the development of one's ability, and other things for more effective learning.

Media Blog (Online Journal) as a Learning Media Writing

According to Rouf and Sopyan, a blog is an online page that serves as a journal / diary for someone¹⁵. Jovan adds that the blog is "a personal diary, a daily pulpit, a collaborative space, a political soapbox, a breaking-news outlet, a collection of links, one's own private thoughts, and memos to the world¹⁶. Blogs with various types and variations of its features have attracted many people to use in learning in the classroom.

There are several researchers and writers who have reviewed the utilization of blog media (online journal) for learning English. Jati examines the use of class blogs and student blogs for writing classes. He found that although initially, blogs were not intended for learning English, blogs could be a very useful medium for learning writing¹⁷. Jati says that by utilizing free blogging services on the Internet, teachers are capable of creating and storing online supplemental materials for students, post class notes for student reviews, and

15 Rouf and Sopyan, *Panduan Praktis Mengelola Blog*, 71.

16 Jovan, *Panduan Praktis Membuat Web dengan PHP* (Jakarta: Media Kita, 2007), 56.

17 Jati, *education and ICT*, www.unesco.edu (accessed on August 2015)

general feedback to the class as a whole and individually.

Thus, the use of blogs as a container or online journal media in learning, especially writing skills is possible to consider. Many things can be placed in the blog. Interestingly, the blog also provides an opportunity for its users to put sound, video, images, and more. All of those things are easy to do. Through the blog media, one can collect and share interesting things, whether it's a political comment, a diary, or a link to another relevant site. The idea of blogging is not just to express ideas, feelings, and experiences, but also to get responses from blog users who share the same goals. Rouf and Sopyan stated that there are three types of blogs, namely:

- **Blog Tutor.**

This blog is run by lecturers in the class. The content of this blog is usually limited to the syllabus, course information, homework, and more. Or, the lecturer can write about his ideas, feelings, and experiences to then be shared from different perspectives, such as culture, information, and other things. This blog type limits the space for students to be more creative.

- **Class Blog.**

This blog has the characteristics of 'agihan' (share) where the lecturers and students can contribute their ideas and experiences. This type of blog is very well used as a collaborative discussion space for lecturers and students. Students are given more freedom to write and interact in this type of blog.

- **Student Blog.**

This type of blog actually requires more time and effort from the lecturers to organize and arrange everything necessary, but it may be the best for students to see from the opportunity given to writing, expressing their ideas, feelings, and experiences. Students

will have their own blogs and they will usually provide the best for their own.

There are several reasons why blogs are used as learning media to write. Wang and Fang stated that blogs are able to provide a real audience for student writing. Typically, only the lecturer corrects and comments on the student's writing and the focus on attention is usually on the form, not the content. With blogs, students are given the opportunity to get a real audience, either classmate, out of class, parents, or others in other parts of the world who have access to the internet¹⁸.

To constantly maintain the interest of students to write on blogs, lecturers should be able to make it a habit. Otherwise, those blogs will be abandoned by the users. The lecturer, as the main facilitator in this case, should be able to motivate the students on an ongoing basis.

Discussion

Given the rapid development of ICT today, there is no harm if the relevant features or ICT tools applied to English learning. One of free online tool that can be utilized to promote writing skill is a blog (online journal). As mentioned earlier, blogs can serve as one's journal where the blog owner can express his ideas and feelings through the media and published online. In accordance with its characteristics, blogs can also be utilized in learning, especially writing.

In classroom writing, students are given a venue for expression and interaction with their faculty, friends, and others who share the same interests and access. They will have their own blogs for later use

¹⁸ Wang and Fang, *Benefits of Cooperative Learning in Weblog Networks*, <http://www.weblog.network.com> (accessed on August 30th 2007)

as a medium for writing their essays. Through the writing process that is much emphasized on the writing process (outline, revision, draft, revision, final writing) in the classroom and online that simultaneously done, the media blog (online journal) as a learning media is expected to improve students' writing skills in learning writing.

After the blog is created, the next thing that needs to be submitted is how to utilize the media blog in learning to write. With emphasis on writing process, blog-aided blogging learning should pay attention to 5 things, namely:

- 1) blog creation
- 2) Process of making outline
- 3) Drafting process
- 4) Revision process
- 5) The process of publication to the media blog (online journal).

In more detail, these five actions can be described as follows.

1. Making Blog (Journal Online)

In this case, the lecturer will show the steps to create a blog to the student by using the provider of multiply with the steps described previously:

- a. Type <http://multiply.com>
- b. Click 'Join for Free'
- c. Fill ID
- d. Invite contacts (if required)
- e. Blog is complete, stay filled as needed.

2. Create Outline

After a subject of a certain type of composition in the paper

has been explained, the student will make an outline (a kind frame of thought containing the subject of thought with a brief and solid description). Please note that this process is a process that is not easy and will determine the success and direction of writing students. It is believed that 75% of the writing will be good and effective if the outline is good as well. Outline consists of three important elements, namely Topic Sentence / Thesis Statement, Developmental Paragraphs, and Conclusion.

The lecturer can then instruct the student to make corrections with the classmates using the instrument of writing assessment, for example in this case by using formative feedback which has three ways of checking which can be selected one of them: correction, or controlled correction, or guided correction. After that, together discussed outline students by displaying it in front of the class (via LCD media), and revised if any.

The outline they have generated should then be uploaded to their blog. Each of them can comment on his friend's outline. This process of correction is also very important to do from the beginning of the writing process to the end. Students are given an explanation of what and how to correct the work of their friends before being collected to the lecturer to be corrected again. It has been described previously that the correction process uses formative scoring feedback. In using this formative scoring feedback, there are two main things to do.

The first point is about how students and lecturers correct the writings made, whether by correction (giving explicit input on a particular idea or word, directly to the correct one), controlled correction (giving input by simply providing points of ideas or words preferably), or guided correction (giving implicit input by

simply giving certain codes. The second main point is formative scoring feedback, which is to assess students' writing in accordance with the standard scoring system. The scoring system to be used is the adaptation of J.B. Heaton on "Writing English Tests." Assessment will be given by student classmates as a form of peer correction activity and from lecturer at the end of the process of writing a type of composition. This assessment emphasizes five important things in a paper, namely content, organization, vocabulary, language use, and mechanics¹⁹.

3. Drafting

This process is done if the student's outline is considered adequate, in the clear sense of what will be developed in their essay. Students have begun writing by developing points of thought on outline elements by adding phrases or sentences, as well as relevant transition markers. The drafts they have created should then be uploaded to their blog. Each of them can comment on his friend's draft.

4. Revise

In this process, the students' writing is given back to their classmates to jointly correct the draft of the writing that has been made by means of correction, or controlled correction, or guided correction and scores by using the previously given formative scoring feedback. In this process, students may still revise their writing.

5. Publish Posts

After the students' writing was revised, it was time to publish their final paper. This is where their final writing is uploaded to their respective blogs. Lecturers will check their writing and comment. Their

¹⁹ Heaton, *Writing English Language Test*, (USA: Longman Group Limited, 1991), 121.

final paper was also printed and corrected by his friend before being corrected by the lecturer. So the students' writing goes through the various stages of the writing process in hopes that what they produce can be better and more effective. With blogs, their posts will be viewed by other people, their friends and lecturers, and because they are shown to the public, students will try to showcase their best efforts. As an additional activity, student motivation can also be sought out in connection with the utilization of blogs on learning writing. This can be done by distributing an online questionnaire through an online survey provider such as <http://www.surveymonkey.com>.

This can be student-friendly media because when they go online to post on their blogs, they can also post their comments online in the online survey media mentioned earlier. This questionnaire is complementary but can be very useful to know the opinions of students about the use of blogs in learning to write. In this case, it can be seen in the aspect of student motivation. Aspects of motivation to be known is formulated with reference to four aspects of motivation, namely

- 1) Purpose,
- 2) Business,
- 3) Desire to achieve goals
- 4) Behavior that supports the achievement of a problem solving²⁰.

The whole process can not be denied is a fairly heavy process to do. The process of writing itself is a long series of people to devote or express their ideas and thoughts in a writing pouring container. In this case, in addition to emphasizing that the activities of writing must go through a writing process. Of course, careful preparation,

20 Honey, *The Learning Motivation Questionnaire in Education* (San Diego: Academy Press, 2007) 89.

the ability of teachers to learn writing and technical management of blogs is needed so that what is desired, the quality of learning to write better and improving student achievement in learning to write, can be achieved.

Conclusions and Suggestions

In today's era of globalization, ICT is growing rapidly in various fields, one of them in the field of education. English learning is one in the field of education that demands something like this. Writing skills is one of the important skills that should be mastered well by someone who learns English. However, writing activities are not as easy as imagined if it is not done by a process. One of the media that can be utilized in writing learning is media blog or online journal. Simply, a blog is a frequently updated web page that is often referred to as an online journal. Blogs or online journals are believed to help students write whatever they love, where they can edit and publish as often as they want, which can also be a sharing medium for all audiences, both in the classroom and outside the classroom, even abroad which cannot be imagined given the journal is online.

In accordance with the improvement of writing skills, the use of blog media is very appropriate with the characteristics of learning to write. Students can write anything on the existing blog section and other information in other available slots. In its practice, one of the most important things to remember is the process of writing, from making outlines, revisions, drafting, revising, until a final piece of writing can be produced.

The use of blogs as a medium of online journals in learning writing is 1) making blogs, 2) the process of making outlines, 3) the process of making a draft, 4) revision process, and 5) the process of publication to the media blog (online journal). The use of blogs in

learning writing is that blogs are able to provide a real audience for student writing. Lecturers, together with their friends, both class and class, even in other places, their parents, and those with access to the Internet can do so.

Giving the advantages, it is suggested that teachers teaching writing either paragraph level until essays or reports can take advantage of media blogs or online journals in writing activities. Finally, applying technology-based learning through blog to teach would greatly help the achievement of a better quality of writing learning. Likewise, student achievement and motivation are believed to be improved.

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