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Engaging Students in Writing Recount Text through *Google Maps*

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Abstract

Writing is undoubtedly an essential productive skill for every student in the modern era. Thus, this study investigates how students utilize the popular application of Google Maps in writing recount text and finds out their responses toward the learning activity. This research used descriptive qualitative research since it was conducted during the learning process of English subject at one high school in Karawang, Indonesia. Data sources were obtained through data triangulation consisting of observation, interviews, and documentation. This research included three phases related to checking knowledge, introducing and utilizing Google Maps in writing experiences, and finally giving assignments to students regarding their trip experience in a particular location. Based on the results of the observation, the process of teaching and learning using online Google Maps application in ELT context can enhance students' writing as well as promote their engagement. Data from interviews shows positive responses from students in learning English through the implementation of the Google Maps application to develop their writing skills. As for the documentation, learning outcome of writing recount text stated in the lesson plan was successfully achieved through the carefully planned activities using Google Maps, and this could be seen from the students' works. Research also reveals students are more motivated in an interactive

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and more fun learning process due to realistic and appealing object visualization, and not to mention its mobile practicality feature.

Keywords: Engagement, students, recount text writing, Google Maps.

1. INTRODUCTION

Writing goes without saying is one of the important language skills which is very essential for education since it enables students to express their ideas and opinions (Oshima & Hogue, 2006; Zamel, 1982). In Indonesia, there is Standard English competence to guide teachers in teaching writing. As stated in Indonesia's 2013 curriculum (K-13), students at Senior High school must be able to write several types of texts to achieve learning objectives formulated by the government, and one of them is recount text.

Exploration of students' competence in learning writing has been carried out in various ways, but those methods somehow prove less effective (Allam & Elyas, 2016; Eslami, 2014). At school, a teacher is expected to create an academic atmosphere that is meaningful, fun, thought-provoking, dynamic, and dialogical. However, more often than not is that teachers feel reluctant to use learning media during the learning process. In fact, from our observation in one high school in Karawang, learners were struggling to produce even a simple text. One of the possible root causes is more likely because educators still use conventional in-class instruction for almost the whole session as a teaching approach (Inayah & Nanda, 2016). As a result, the lack of media usage in supporting and creating a creatively innovative learning process has resulted in teacher-centered learning. Besides, learners cannot develop their skills to produce good writings.

Generally speaking, Rivers (2018) argues that many students feel bored and uninterested in the complexity of English writing activity because their teachers in the classroom often repeat the same routine using old-fashioned stuff like black/whiteboards, books, and other normative things for learning. Given this learning condition, the need for teacher's action such as developing a better curriculum, selecting the right teaching materials, or the application of more interactive teaching methods is expected to be carried out. Educators today should be able to provide a thriving class strategy while applying new and fresh learning media.

With the rapid advance of information and technology, mapping technology has at last emerged for some time, which is much more sophisticated and updated than the traditional printed map, and it has increasingly facilitated human in everyday activities. One of the greatest inventions of online/offline mapping technology is the web mapping service developed by Google Company known as *Google Maps*. Munir (2017) states that this application has certainly helped us find addresses and important places. Besides its default purpose of directing locations, there are many possible various activities that teachers can do to implement *Google Maps* in their classroom, such as digital storytelling or practicing grammar on 3D street view. In this application, users can create content, discover new places, and write comments on their expression and experience as well as providing judgments and testimonials.

The fact is that rarely do teachers implement *Google Maps* application as a medium in teaching writing in the class, especially to write a composition of recount

text in English language teaching (henceforth, ELT). Recount text is a type of text that retells past events whose purpose is to inform or entertain readers (Knapp & Watkins, 2013). Therefore, through *Google Maps* application in writing recount text, students are expected to excitedly share their stories in written form, such as giving comments and reviews on *Google Maps* for the places they have visited. With the blended and integrated learning style which is appropriate for millennial (generations in the early 21st century) practicing writing with something that they use in the everyday situation might build their willingness to get used to writing activity without considering it as a burdensome activity (Fructuoso, 2013).

To date in current scholarly literature, some previous research has been conducted in ELT writing context; there are, in fact, several studies that use technology integration in writing recount text such as research conducted by Khusnita (2013) using *Facebook* application and Kurniati (2015) using *Tumblr*. The study by Khusnita (2013) study aims to investigate how *Facebook* improves students' abilities and increases their motivation in writing recount text, while Kurniati (2015) had a study on writing lesson using *Tumblr*. The research was based on students' difficulties in understanding recount text and how to produce one. Last but not least, Listiani (2016) researched students' writing using *Instagram*, compared to the teacher-centered method, in reshaping recount text. After carefully reviewing these previous studies, none has implemented *Google Maps* in teaching writing of recount text, so this research primarily aims to fill the research gap in this area.

In response to the above background, it is indispensable for teachers to promote interactive and fun lesson to help students become more interested and engaged in writing activity, therefore this study focuses on how *Google Maps* application to become a tool for students in writing recount text. A qualitative analysis has been employed in this study to gain more insights and comprehension on how the application could attract students' interest and affect their writing.

English is a mandatory subject in the Indonesian high school curriculum, so there is an official English language curriculum. In this respect, appointed English teachers usually follow English curriculum documents, such as syllabi, lesson plan, and textbooks/workbooks. In practice, many teachers heavily rely upon and use available published textbooks or workbooks in carrying out an English lesson without further improvement in terms of lesson study resulting on the monotonous and tedious English learning at schools. Also, even though teachers can engage students through online approach (Barkley, 2009), little is known about how high schoolers interact with technology such as *Google Maps* to learn English or how they utilize the application in producing texts such as recount text. Thus, this research was conducted to find out how students perceive their learning activities and how they conceptualize the process of learning English which is writing recount text through *Google Maps*. Many of current published studies are experimental in design and emphasize specific aspects of learning. Since very little research has been undertaken to investigate the potential benefits of *Google Maps* to English learning, the aim of this research is to fill these gaps, and the following questions guide this study:

- In what ways does *Google Maps* engage students in the creation of recount text?
- What are students' responses to *Google Maps* as they engaged in the learning activity?

These research questions aim to capture the experiences of students with the use of *Google Maps* spanning one month. This documentation can contribute to a better

understanding of how *Google Maps* as instructional mediation assists students to learn English, especially in writing recount text.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Google Maps is a world map that we can use to see an area and also to show the way around the world. In other words, *Google Maps* is a map that can be viewed using a browser (Svennerberg, 2010). The technology used through online mapping service provided by Google, this service can be accessed through the site <http://maps.google.com>. In the implementation, *Google Maps* can also be adapted to the needs of the application that will be made in the classroom (Anupriya, 2013).

The use of *Google Maps* as learning media is part of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) implementation during the learning process. The application provides access to world resources and visual information to help and also to collaborate with sophisticated mapping tools. According to Sirenden and Dachi (2012), *Google Maps* is an application on the gadget in the form of a digital map used to show directions, locations, and places that users want to visit. Due to this very reason, for its great potential as an educational tool, *Google Maps* cannot be ignored by teachers as learning media. Everywhere smartphones could make access to *Google Maps* or other Internet-based applications easier than ever. Surely teachers can take advantage of this convenience to facilitate mobile-assisted language learning by organizing students to rate and write reviews for places they have visited.

Learning media (Hamalik, 1985) is an integral part of the learning system. Therefore, efforts and strategies must improve the learning process and achieve better education outcomes. Besides, the need for teaching aids or learning media which is appropriate, attractive, effective and efficient remains the same for ages. During the learning process, especially in writing activity, learners often face difficulties in preparing a text. Based on the given circumstances, researchers attempted to take advantage of *Google Maps* for students so that they are expected to be more interested in engaging in the learning process as a whole.

Google Maps offers graphical virtual services that can be dragged, and satellite images for the whole world as well as the application of travel guides that provide information about a place (Mufti, 2015). On *Google Maps*, any reviews of a place will be written in sentence form. Thus, people can provide or write reviews for places they visited, and sometimes it can inform others about where to go or where to visit. Their reviews will be seen by others and are open to the public, so anyone can see what is written. In this study, students are expected to compose a piece of recount text (Fachrurrazy, 2010) through *Google Maps*. According to Hyland (2004a), the recount is a kind of genre that has a social function to retell events to provide information or entertaining. As for the steps, *Google Maps* can be used to provide students' experience through the following procedures:

First, students open the *Google Maps* application on their gadget. When prompted, choose an account or enter the email address and password before proceeding and also they could prepare a -yesterday, -month, or -a year ago trip experience. Second, students find the place in *Google Maps* by clicking the browse section of the place on the map; at the bottom of the page, there is a tab name or place address and then at the top of the page is review feature. Sometimes there are already

existing reviews and students can see the star rating (1-poor to 5-excellent) and the number of reviews that have been written. Next, they choose the button or link to write a review. Rating is also necessary. After finish writing a review and giving a star rating, students produce a recount text that is based on their own experience. The more detail they provide, the better the review is. Since recount text is a non-fiction essay, so the whole story is a pure experience of the author of the text.

3. METHODS

This one-month fieldwork was carried out in a high school in Karawang, West Java, Indonesia because of two reasons: (1) this school offered English subject supported with ICT program and (2) the author got entry access to the school. The nature of the study was qualitative method because *Google Maps* is a fresh learning tool for empowering both teachers and students to become creators of their stories.

To obtain maximum information and deep understanding of the subject matter (Ary et al., 2018) the research subjects in this research were six students from 10th grade when the research commenced and one teacher in a high school in Karawang. The researchers only chose six students as participants for a specific purpose. According to Sugiyono (2008, p. 85), purposive sampling is “a technique with a certain purpose.” The researchers have a particular purpose which is to have a more objective view from students with different academic backgrounds (2 slow, 2 moderate, and 2 fast learners). Purposive sampling techniques are primarily used in qualitative studies and can be defined as a selection unit, (e.g. individuals, groups of individuals, or institutions) (Teddlie & Yu, 2007). Furthermore, participants were selected because they were in the tenth grade where there is a study of recount text as stated in the competency standard of the high school curriculum.

To gather the information and data about the subject of study as well as answer the research questions, the data collection techniques of observation, interview, and documentation were implemented. Observations were carried out during the learning process in the classroom, while the interview was conducted after the end of the study. Documentation analysis was done in written and non-written. The written document were syllabi, lesson plan, and some authentic *Google Maps* reviews while the non-written document was in-class pictures.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 The Use of *Google Maps* in Writing Recount Text

The use of *Google Maps* in writing recount text was carried out in three activities. There are pre-activity, main activity, and post-activity in learning to write recount text using *Google Maps* application. The learning process took about 120 minutes. The researchers describe it as follows:

4.1.1 Pre-activity

When the class began, the teacher greeted students in English, then the teacher replied. The teacher asked the students to pray together before starting the lesson. Students prayed together in class. After that, the teacher checked students' attendance on that day and provided some motivational words to students. Students were asked to be active in the classroom, especially in learning English. The teacher said that her presence was only as a facilitator, and she told the students about the ability to achieve the minimum score of 75. After that, the teacher delivered the materials. She presented the lesson, which was recount text, and delivered an explanation of the upcoming activities following the syllabus and lesson plan.

4.1.2 Main activity

The use of *Google Maps* in writing recount texts was carried out in three activities. There was pre-viewing, viewing, and post-viewing. The researchers describe the following:

1. Pre-viewing

In the previewing activity, the teacher introduced the topic and media on *Google Maps* to students. The topic is about recount text, but first, the students are asked to be able to identify the generic structure based on Fadlun (2011).

2. Viewing

In viewing activity, the teacher asked students to read in advance a recount text material in the book. Students were asked to make 8 or 9 groups with 4-5 members each. Each group was asked to identify the generic structure (Orientation, Series of event, Reorientation) of the text. In groups, students analyzed the recount text. Students were then asked to discuss the results of their analysis in groups. After it was considered adequate by the teacher, in identifying the generic structure, students were asked to recall the place they had visited and was an unforgettable experience. The teacher used *Google Maps* to show the location; an example was the teacher asking one of the students about his personal experience visiting a place, then the student wrote it in front of the class on the writing board about his personal experience, namely to Borobudur temple. After that, the teacher asked students to open *Google Maps* on their smartphone. The teacher instructed the students to look for the place, and they might ask the teacher when having difficulty in opening an account or the application.

3. Post Viewing

In the post-viewing, the teacher requested the students to observe the results of their friend's writing experience. Students had to be able to understand the generic structure contained in recount text about the personal recount. There were no pressures and problems faced by students. After the teacher had asked one student to go forward and write down his experience in front of the class, his classmates began to provide positive responses. Students felt happy because they could remember more strongly about their experiences related to the description of the places he visited using *Google Maps*.

4.1.3 Post activities

In the post-activity, the teacher re-explained the generic structures related to personal recount text. Teachers told the students concerning the generic structure related to their recount text, that is so that the sentences they made related to the experience were sequentially written. In the final phase, the teacher closed the class by giving students a suggestion to review the material at home, parted, and then left the class.



Figure 1. A student was explaining his story through *Google Maps* (picture taken by authors).

4.2 Students' Engagement in Writing Recount Text through *Google Maps*

Teaching students in writing recount texts mediated by *Google Maps* is still not extensively used. Thus, as mentioned earlier the impact of *Google Maps* as a medium in teaching the productive language skill is little known. However, this study provides actual information and authentic evidence on how the students were actively engaged in the integration of *Google* technology with English learning activity. In brief, students are involved in the creation of recount text based on personal experience. Students' experience in visiting certain places or locations in the heart that move or stimulate them to act or take part in the activity. Even though learning outcomes are equally important to the process itself, being able to draw students' participation is somehow appealing considering their reluctance in writing (Kellner, 2009).

There are three phases of the learning process in writing recount texts mediated with *Google Maps*, namely pre-activity, main activity, and post-activity. These steps can support the teaching and learning process embodied in class. The entire process is carried out based on the lesson plan carefully made by the teacher before the teaching-learning activity. Learning outcomes from the lesson plan were set as guidance for the teacher as one of the primary teaching objectives. Additionally, students' works (*Google Maps* reviews) are regarded as a written document and reference in this research.

During the activity, the students were guided to equip their mobile phone to write a review of a place in *Google Maps* in the form of recount text. Following this preparation, the teacher assisted the students to write a story in the English language

about a place or location they have visited. This activity was implemented as in Figure 2 below.

The media used by teachers in teaching writing is using the online or visual-based medium. In pre-activity, the teacher greets and checks students' attendance. In the main activity, the teacher introduces the topic and *Google Maps* to students. Then, they start productive activities of writing relevant stories about their trip experiences on places/locations found on *Google Maps*. This writing activity must also comply with the rules of recount text, namely generic structure. Students made reviews and post their writings to the public. In posting activities, the teacher discusses the results of the writing together. After that, the teacher closes the meeting. *Google Maps* as media in the learning process helps students in imagining during the writing process so that memory and vocabulary were better obtained. Students did not only enjoy the activity, but they also learned something.



Figure 2. The teacher was explaining the learning procedures using *Google Maps* when students carefully followed the instructions (picture taken by authors).

According to Monaghan (2007), the learning process in which they can read and write comments, suggestions, criticisms, related to the pervasive media has resulted in communication relations that are not limited, and this gives a good experience for students. Students feel a new atmosphere and experience when learning English by using *Google Maps*. This makes students more enthusiastic about learning English. The learning process of students can be seen clearly by the teacher when the teacher delivered the material to students about writing using *Google Maps* application. During the learning process, students are enthusiastic in carrying out their tasks because they use media (*Google Maps*) they are familiar with. When students feel comfortable in learning, the teacher can easily teach the materials. Thus, besides the students are interested and engaged in studying recount texts and honing their writing skills through *Google Maps*, they can see it from other perspective and gain the benefit by making use of this navigation application for learning English.

4.3 The Students' Responses in Learning English with *Google Maps*

Interviews were conducted to identify differences in individual work and collaborative students when using *Google Maps*. Interviews that were carried out at the end of study aim to obtain more information about students' experience with the online learning media, so participants were able to elaborate more on their experiences and clarify their perspectives on the influence of strategies on learning using *Google Maps*. They were asked several questions related to research questions so that their responses to this learning could be generated. Some students remarked the following:

"I think writing recount text with *Google Maps* makes me understand the material easily". (P1, formal interview, 21 August 2018, Author's translation)

"The application is very supportive, and I really like using *Google Maps* for learning recount text". (P2, formal interview, 21 August 2018, Author's translation)

"I have learned much better than before". (P3, formal interview, 21 August 2018, Author's translation)

"Learning to write recount text using *Google Maps* is an exciting experience for me and my friends". (P4, formal interview, 21 August 2018, Author's translation)

"I am quite excited because we can also see other people's comments, and I want to visit the place again". (P5, formal interview, 21 August 2018, Author's translation)

"In my opinion, learning recount text using *Google Maps* help me understand the material easily different from the other (media)". (P6, formal interview, 21 August 2018, Author's translation)

These students distinctively viewed *Google Maps* as an easy media for learning, a tool for memory recalling, and an online platform for interactive learning. P1 and P6 considered using *Google Maps* in learning English was easy since one can just simply type and search the place/location and then create a review in form of a story based on one's experience. The steps of writing a review on *Google Maps* had helped and supported P2 in sharing his/her experience to others from the visual information. The freedom to express feelings towards a certain place and the particular moment had made a better experience in learning for P3. Similarly, P4 and P5 felt excited when learning English using *Google Maps* because not only could they share their experience and thoughts, but they were also able to eagerly read and comment on other people's opinions regarding places they have visited.

Generally, the students provide a positive response. Most of them are enthusiastic and motivated in learning English with the mapping technology. Students also seemed excited and unusually enjoyed learning English. Not to mention, the teacher also found no significant difficulty in introducing the new media to students. The existence of *Google Maps* is beneficial for media implementation in writing. It has been proven that using *Google Maps* could help them develop their creativity in writing. That's because they could remember several pictures related to the location for the writing text.

According to Harmer (2004), images can help students in developing students' creativity in writing. They can do more activities to learn because they don't just listen to the teacher's description. The use of *Google Maps* is in line with Hyland (2004b)

who highlights that new technology in ICT can influence the process of writing, quality, and many other writing components.

On the other hand, the media can also attract students to learn to write, especially by using *Google Maps*. English lessons become more effective because students do not need paper to submit their work. They only need to touch their smartphone and then the teacher will have their work checked and marked. In short, using *Google Maps* can make lessons more effective and efficient in terms of time, energy, and equipment. As a result, students were more engaged in the learning process, and consequently, their writing skills can be enhanced.

5. CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the research that has been conducted, this study was carried out in Grade X (ten) in a high school in Karawang, West Java, the researchers concluded overall results, interpretation, and discussion in the previous chapters, the researchers put forward the following conclusion: writing recount text using *Google Maps* for young learners is an exciting and easy process. This activity engages students in creating and bringing together visual information with written works. The creation of *Google Maps* review in the form of recount text requires the students to familiarize themselves with gadgets, *Google Maps*, and narrative literacy. This activity provides a new arena for students to share and talk over places they have visited with others. Also, the students are granted to create their recount text.

Throughout the whole process of using *Google Maps* in writing recount texts, the students were actively engaged as participators and reviewers as they carefully thought and remembered about the image and wrote a personal story. This user-friendly activity enables the thoughts and opinions of young learners to be heard. In terms of pedagogy, this study illustrates that technology can be structured and implemented in Indonesian high schools especially in English learning. In spite of these research merits, it still leaves some gaps to fill for further research like how *Google Maps* can be utilized to produce different genre of text such as descriptive, or how the teacher uses the application for different subject and topic.

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APPENDIX 1

Samples of students' writing of recount text on *Google Maps*.



My family and I arrived at borobudur temple at 02:00 am there,I see a lot of tourists. Borobudur temple visited busiest holiday. I can learn and practice speaking english with one of the tourists. This is the first time I speak english with foreign tourists.one year ago, I spent my vacation in Jogjakarta. I went to Borobudur temple. My family and I went there late at night. We went to Borobudur temple by bus. I have prepared everything before going to Jogja. When we traveled, we could see some beautiful views of mountains, forests and waterfalls. My family and I arrived at Borobudur temple at 2:00 a.m. there, I saw many tourists.The temple in this temple visits the busiest holiday. I can study and practice speaking English with one of the tourists This was the first.

The screenshot shows a mobile messaging app interface. At the top, the status bar displays 'Indosat Ooredoo', signal strength, time '15.13', battery '46%', and another 'Indosat Ooredoo' entry with time '15.21' and battery '43%'. The app header is blue with a back arrow, the text 'Curug Cigentis Karaw...', a search icon, and a menu icon. Below the header, a green circular profile picture with the letter 'T' is visible. The message content is as follows:

4 jam yang lalu

★★★★★ Last vacation, I spent time with my family on a vacation to Curug Cigentis Karawang. Approximately 3 hours drive. we went there using a car. . We leave at 8:00 a.m. In the car there are, mamah, father, grandmother, grandfather, niece, niece, aunt, and uncle. On the way we see beautiful scenery like mountains, rice fields, and others. Our trip was jammed for 1 hour. And we get there at 10:25. There the air is quite cold, the view of the waterfall is good. There my family and I play water under the waterfall. under the waterfall. At that time I wanted to be photographed with my family, and when I wanted to take my cellphone, because I was too happy to play until I forgot the last time I held my cellphone. I have been looking everywhere, but I haven't found it yet, at that time I wanted to cry, until finally I told my parents to ask for help looking for my cell. At that time I remembered the last place I was sitting at a tree that had a big stone, and I asked people. And finally there was a woman who found my cellphone, she said she found my cellphone near the last tree I was sitting on. I thank the woman. Allhamdulillah, I'm really happy that my cellphone was found even though the cellphone was dirty

... (The rest of the message is partially obscured by a vertical line on the right side of the screenshot)