Enhancing the Students' Writing Skill through Technological Writing Feature of Wridea

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Abstract

This experimental research investigated the effect of using Wridea on enhancing EFL writing performance in PGRI University. It shed a light on how Wridea could enhance the writing skill. Wridea helped many of the participants to be more metacognitively aware of their English writing process. The population of this study comprised of the students who were enrolled in the fifth level and their final number was 55 students. The total number of the participants was 24 students. The instrument of this study was a test. The data analysis of this study used quantitative method. The results of this study showed that Wridea could be utilized as a service for improving the writing skill outside of the classrooms.

Keywords**:** Wridea, students' writing skill, writing performance

Introduction

Writing is critical to student success in education. In grade school, teachers ask students to compose texts to demonstrate, support, and deepen their knowledge and understanding of themselves, their relationships, and their worlds. Writing also serves as a gateway for employment and promotion in the workplace and trends suggest that the demand for proficient on-the-job writing will only increase in the future (Noermanzah et al., 2018 & Karto et al., 2019). Of course, writing also serves many purposes in today's civic life. In this technological age, language teaching and learning strategies have moved beyond the boundaries ofthe walls of schools (Yunus & Salehi, 2012). The rapid development of technology and the information and communication revolution have influenced teaching and learning methods so that they are able to achieve the ability to think critically, creatively, collaboratively, and collaboratively (Noermanzah & Friantary, 2019). In other words, the traditional ways of language teaching and learning have been affected by various changes that have integrated technology in education as a new way of teaching methods. Several recent studies have proved that new technologies appear to be as an important factor in encouraging active learning and making students creative and able to solve problems (Grégoire, Bracewell

&Laferrière, 1996). Sivin-Kachala & Bialo (2000) indicatesthat technology develops students' self-concept and effectson their achievement positively. Watkins (2007) suggests that new technologies help in expanding the learning experiences of students in classrooms. Accordingly, educators try their best to offer opportunities for learners to build their own knowledge; as a result, those learners become responsible for their learning process and get a higher motivation level in which this can lead them to learn successfully.Recently, the applications and tools of Web 2.0 technologies such as Facebook, YouTube, Blogs, WordPressand so on, have become very popular.

These applications provide people with online virtual environments to communicate, collaborate and share their ideas and thoughts with each other (McCarthy, 2010). Obviously, most people nowadays know how to employ these tools in many several fields, especially in the educational field. Thus, it is easy to bring the digital communities into classrooms.

Computer Assisted Language Learning (CALL) is the field that investigates the role of technologies in language teaching and learning. The most obvious advantage of CALL is that it is based on the learner-centered approach. Moreover, it creates a low anxiety environment in which this environment motivates learners to learn independently (Farrah & Tusheyh, 2010). It has been suggested that using computers in an educational environment provide teachers and learners with authentic tools that help them to communicate and improve learners' language skills (Vi, 2005).However, there are many terms that are related to CALL. One of those terms is Computer Meditated Communication (CMC), which this studyis concernedwith. CMC helps people from different social and geographical backgrounds to easily communicatewith each other. CMC greatly develops the ways of communication among people (Bansal et al., 2011). It enhances the collaborative learning and makes students more autonomous (Sun, 2009). It enthuses learners to be more confident of their ability to learn (Swaffar, 1998). Moreover, unlike face-to-face interaction, CMC provides students with equal opportunities to participate (Kern, 1995). Basically, the main purpose of learning a foreign language is to be able to communicate with other people and help them to express their emotions and thoughts using that foreign language (Lee, 2002); therefore, the fundamental goal of teaching learnersEnglish language, which is considered the

most international language in this world, is to improve learners' English communication skills to be able to share their ideas and exchange information with the others in the real situations (Yang & Chen, 2007). Hence, educators notably are interested in shifting from using the traditional methods to using new technological methods which suit this generation in this digital world (Saengsook, 2006).

Writing is a channel that helps people to express their thoughts and feelings. Writing skill is a productive skill. It is considered as an important constituent of second/foreign language learning. Therefore, it is essential to focus on improving this significant skill. It has become so common to use a CMC environment to write because most people, presently, like to communicate through computers which penetrate into their daily life, particularly the life of young people (Fageeh, 2011). In a traditional classroom, the writing process is teacher-centered more than student-centered because students write about a particular topic receiving guidance from their teacher, and then the teacher revises their works. So, they receive feedback only from their teacher (Yang, Ko & Chung, 2005). On the other hand, a computer-based writing environment provides learners with a chance to communicate and interact with each other and with their teacher at the same time. Several studies have proved that using computers in the writing class enhance this skill and decrease the mistakes of learners (Grejda & Hannafin, 1992).

This study investigates the use of Wridea to examine its effect on the students' writing achievement when they write in English. Wridea is a free social-networking site in which people can argue or discuss about certain topics and easily use multimedia elements to enhance their words. They can upload images, videos, documents and PDFs, share links, comment on each other's posts, make public or private walls and exchange information. It is an empty virtual wall which provides users with this good amount of features that facilitate communicating among people and stimulate them to express themselves. They do not need to be at their computers to participate in this site, they can use their smart phones, iPads, tablets or any other device that has an Internet connection. The most amazing feature of Wridea is that users do not need to register. They just go to this site and click on Build a Wall icon and create a wall to immediately start posting. Wridea is considered as a good tool for real-time collaboration in a virtual environment.

Problems

This age is called the age of information and technology revolution. Technology has become an important aspect of our life, particularly in the educational field. Therefore, using traditional methods in English language teaching and learning makes students feel bored and lose their enthusiasm. It does not probably help in improving their English language proficiency. On the other hand, technology makes the educational environments joyful and interesting, and at the same time, students can be able to get benefits, develop themselves, increase their motivation and self-efficacy and improve their language learning skills. However, EFL learners in Indonesia are not efficient in the writing class because they do not get great benefits from the traditional method since they think that they should study just to pass their exam at the end of the semester. Consequently, the researcher suggests that it can be helpful to activate their interest in technology in enhancing their writing. In this study, Wridea has been chosen, in particular, because there is no any published study conducted on this website and because it may be the first study on Wridea in Indonesia. Therefore, this research highlights this unfamiliar site and examines how much it is effective in improving learners' writing performance through individual and collaborative activities.

Reserach Question

What is the effect of using Wridea on the achievement of the subjects in the writing skill of the experimental group that studied via Wridea method of teaching and the control group that studied in the traditional lecture-discussion instruction method?

What is writing?

Why is it important? Writing is not only a way of expressing ideas and feelings and exchanging information or a way of using words to express oneself, but also it is a social activity in which people interact with their partners (Taki & Fardafshari, 2012). Writing is considered as a challenge which many foreign/second language learners face. It is an important component not only in education, but also in life especially for those people who do not know how to express their feelings verbally, so they use words and letters to translate their feelings, ideas and thoughts. When anyone learns how to write very well, this helps him/her to produce an excellent plot and a logical argument. In addition, writing gives the reader a positive impression about the writer as a professional person and a good thinker because this writer enables the reader

to live with him/her that experience he/she has written out just through words (Ibrahim, 2013).

Several Ways to Teach Writing

Hillocks (1986) conducted a meta-analysis study in which he concluded that the traditional grammar instruction was not efficient in enhancing the writing skill. Therefore, this classical method, which most teachers inthese days use, has been proved that it does not work very well and not all students can get benefits from it. Grejda and Hannafin (1992) state that using computers to learn how to write help in reducing learners' mistakes, and then this leads to improve the quality of writing in which it is easy for students to learn from their partners' works. This is considered as a source of the learner's self-confidence and autonomy especially that they can interact with each other whenever they want (Yang, Ko & Chung, 2005). Graham and Perin (2007), in their meta-analysis of writing study which was conducted on 4th-12thgrades, concluded that the participants got a higher writing quality degree when they used words processors than when writing by pen and paper. Therefore, teachers have to recognize that it is necessary to add new interesting ways which attract students' attention to how to write properly. One of these ways is getting benefits from using social networks in the educational field particularly these sites that meet learners' needs and have a social interactive nature (Blattner & Fiori, 2009; Kristiawan, 2013; Hamdani et al, 2017; Rahmawat et al 2019)

Currently, using a CMC environment to enhance writing skill has been common and popular because this kind of the educational environments has become an essential part in our life since people use computers to communicate with each other daily (Fageeh, 2011). Several studies have clearly shown that students become able to produce longer texts when they get engaged in technological educational environments than texts which are produced by hand. In addition, students have opportunities to revise what they write frequently (Novelti et al, 2019; Kristiawan, 2014). Hence, the quality of their writing becomes better (Zawitinski, 2012). Thus, some new language teachers who are interested in creating fascinating educational environments tend to use social networking sites in education (Kristiawan et al, 2016). They try to discover effective methods which motivate students to learn and develop their writing skills enthusiastically (Ibrahim, 2013)

Social Networking Sites

Boyd and Ellison (2007) define social networks as web-based tools that enable people to build a public or quasi-public profile within a particular system. Additionally, these tools make users capable of editing a list consisting of people who those users want to share their information with. Therefore, people join these social networks to interact, communicate and share people their thoughts, opinions and interests and try to find other individuals or groups who have the same attitudes and ideas.

According to Warnock (2009), it is important to teach writing online because the environment can entirely be textual. This environment can be guided for students to know how they become able to express themselves using their own words in which this technological communicational service offers opportunities for students to collaborate and interact with their teachers or with the other audience. Moreover, this online environment gives writing teachers a unique chance in which this kind of writing-centered online courses enable teachers and students to interact beyond the school walls and help them to create a friendly educational community through using technological tools, but actually this is not for all students because some of them prefer those discussions which occur inside the classroom (i.e. face-to-face interaction). However, using these tools can be helpful for shy students as those students become motivated to socially and professionally connect with others in which this reflects the real value of education.

Today's students have become digital natives, thus educators have drawn their attention to use social networking sites as an alternative service for teaching and learning. Romero-Frías and Montaño (2010) observe that social networks can be a sufficient tool which leads students to construct their knowledge, develop their critical skills and exchange information. According to Goldford, Pregibon, Shrem and Zyko (2011), using SNSs for educational purposes can enrich students' learning skills, establish a friendly classroom community and motivate learners to be great achievers. Moreover, Taranto, Dalbon and Gaetano (2011) state that classroom experiences should be shifted from the traditional methods to new technological methods because the world has got been connected by technology. Therefore, teachers and curriculum developers need to use Web 2.0 technologies and

understand how to improve their digital literacy to facilitate making plans to develop curricula and classroom practices.

To sum up, Yunus, Salehi and Chenzi (2012) summarize the advantages of SNSs in five points. First, as today's students are digital natives, it is easy for them to deal with SNSs because they are familiar with these sites. Second, SNSs help some learners in creating global community. This is considered a useful environment for shy students because it permits them to participate and share their interests, attitudes, feelings and opinions. Third, these online platforms make students responsible for their works because a large audience is going to read what they write. This leads students to be self-directed learners. Forth, it is an easy way for teachers and students to give and receive feedback. Finally, parents become able to view the work of their children. On the other hand, teachers should take into consideration that some students prefer the traditional book-centered methods. Moreover, others cannot control themselves and do not concentrate on their learning process, but rather they spend more time on playing games and chatting with people. Another thing is that teachers cannot be sure that students' posts are not their own writing. They can copy and paste these written pieces without thinking.

Research Methodology

The researcher used an experimental design. This research included the writing skill pre-test, the implementation of the experiment on the treatment group and then the post-test to investigate the effect of Wridea on improving EFL learners' writing skills.

The research was conducted for five weeks in the English Language Department at PGRI University and the data had been collected during the first semester of the academic year 2018 –2019. The population of this study comprised of the students who were enrolled in the fifth level and their final number was 55 students and the average of their age was between 20 –21 years old. All of the students in this section were orally informed about the experiment. All of the participants in this study were not forced to participate, but rather they chose to participate voluntarily. The total number of the participants was 24 students. The sample was divided into two groups: the experimental group that used Wridea to

improve their writing skills and the control group that was taught traditionally. Twelve students were chosen randomly for each group.

Findings and Discussion

This study was set out to answerthe question of the research which is "What is the effect of using Wridea on the achievement of the subjects in the writing skills of the experimental group thatstudiedvia Wridea method of teaching and the control group thatstudied in the traditionallecture-discussion instructionmethod?" Therefore,this study investigated whether Wridea couldbe used as an effective tool to improve English writing performance or not. By comparing the mean scores ofthe control group and the experimental group in the pre-test and the post-test, the results revealed that there were statisticallysignificant differences between the achievement of the both groups due to the Wridea method. Before conducting the experiment, the scores of all participants in the pre-test were almost similar. The mean score of the control group was 6.88 and the mean score of the experimental group was 6.50, and after conducting the experiment, it was clear that the achievement of the experimental group, whichwastaught according to the Wrideamethod, was better than the achievement of the control group, whichwastaught according to the traditional lecture-discussion instruction method in which the mean score of the control group was 7.23 whereas the mean score of the experimental group was 11.92. This wasaclear evidence that Wridea affected in the students' writing proficiency positively. Therefore, the hypothesis of this study was accepted.

This result supports the value of using social networking sites, particulary Wridea, in which this kind of websites has proved its effectiveness on enhancing writing performance. Wridea gives learners equal chances to build their knowledge, and to be more self-confident and responsible for their learning process. It was clear that the participants of the experimental group noticed their mistakes and tried to correct each other too. Therefore, this led them to build their own knowledge without any help given by the researcher. Furthermore, their sense of responsibility for their learning process was obviously increased in which they were serious and ready when the researcher asked them to discuss some topics. This result is in harmony with

several views raised by different researchers such as Warnock (2009), Romero-Frías and Montaño (2010) and Yunus, Salehi and Chenzi (2012).

Obviously, the students of the experimental group got benefits from using Wridea to develop their writing skills in which they were able to easily learn some new vocabulary, to correct ungrammatical sentences and to enhance their writing style. This is attributed to the platform used in this study which is accessed with a huge amount of writing activities. In support of this interpretation, the preceding result is in line with the findings of Hillocks' meta-analysis study (1986)in which he claims that the traditional grammar instruction is not efficient in enhancing the writing skill. Thus, educators should shift from using the traditional methods to integrating SNSs into the teaching and learning processes (Saengsook, 2006), particulary the Wridea method that attracts learners, makes them enjoy learning and leads them to be happy and excited about doing tasks through Wridea. By comparing the mean scores of the both groups, the effect of Wridea on the participants' writing achievement was clear.

The mean score of the control group revealed that there was little progress, but it did not have any statistical significance between the scores of the pre-test and the post-test. This means that the control group that was instructed by the traditional lecture-discussion instruction method, got little progress in their writing proficiency compared to the experimental group. Furthermore, using Wridea contributed to creating a friendly educational environment in which none of the participants felt angry, offended or insulted when their mistakes were corrected by their classmates. The participants had a facility that gave them several opportunities for self-learning that made them independent on the teacher.

In support of this interpretation, Goldford, Pregibon, Shrem and Zyko (2011) indicate that using SNSs for educational purposes can be considered as an effective way that enriches students' learning skills, creates a friendly classroom community and motivates learners to achieve their goals. In addition, this is in harmony with what is reported by Yunus, Salehi and Chenzi (2012). They indicate that SNSs help students to contact with their teachers. They can communicate with each other so freely. Finally, it can be concluded that EFL learners' writing performance can be improved a lot through using Wridea compared with the traditional method used by EFL teachers. Those learners will be definitely able to use English language more

properly and effectively, especially in this age where the main goal of learning English language in Indonesia is to prepare them to be successful when communicating in all walks of life.

Conclusion

This study investigated the effect of using Wridea on enhancing EFL writing performance in PGRI University. It shed a light on how Wridea could enhance the writing skill. In the light of this study, it was a clear sign that Wridea was very effective in which there were obvious differences in the results of the participants in the pre-test and the post-test. It was clear that using Wridea improved the writing skill sof the participants of the experimental group in which the experimental group achieved better results in the post-test than the control group. Wridea helped many of the participants to be more metacognitively aware of their English writing process. Thus, the results of this study showed that Wridea could be utilized as a service for improving the writing skill outside of the classrooms.

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