

FOSTERING STUDENTS' EXPERIENCES IN ENGLISH WRITING WITH MICROBLOGGING IN TWITTER

Pham Thi Thu Hien

Ly Tu Trong College Ho Chi Minh City
hienthu.ph@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

Twitter and Microblogging are two separate entities but completes each other. Both of them can be used as language learning tools and their potential has been proved by several scholars. This study tries to examine students' experiences in integrating microblogging with twitter. It is also study about the beneficial roles of microblogging with Twitter in language learning, its relation to writing, and its appropriateness in language learning. This study employs a qualitative research methodology, and case study as its research design. Semi-structured interviews and questionnaires were employed in this study to find out about participants' views about microblogging and Twitter. From this study, it can be concluded that the participants of the study underwent various experiences during the implementation of microblogging with Twitter. They also felt that microblogging with Twitter at some point advantages them to systematically arrange their ideas, and allows them to choose appropriate diction of their ideas. They also stated that Twitter can be an appropriate means in language learning, especially in English writing.

Keywords: *English Teaching, writing, microblogging, twitter.*

INTRODUCTION

According to Jabbarova (2020) state that, "The problems in writing come from two sides, those are students and teachers", the problem discovered in teachers is a lack of teaching technique, method, and media, some teachers do not even attempt new technique, method, and media, so it causes lack of interest in the study. One of the strategies that can be used is by employing trends in students' life. Foreign language learning is a process, which is not restricted to classroom limitations. It demands a situation outside the school setting and it grows more effective when conducted beyond the classroom.

Social networking sites (sns), an example of it is Twitter, have also been applied in foreign language learning contexts in higher education. One of the most commonly employed social networking sites used in language

learning is Twitter. In a study carried by Castrillo de LarretaAzelain (2013) Spanish students who were studying German as a foreign language engaged in a Twitter activity spontaneously.

Over the foregoing decade, Twitter has developed significantly in its fame and now outranks narrow to Facebook in terms of social media usage. Smith (2015) assesses that 302 million active monthly users are on Twitter, which covers 100 million daily users. Twitter enables its users to engage with microblogging. With the exponential development of microblogging, it has also transferred into educational circumstances. Twitter as a microblogging platform is such a device that improves student collaboration and interaction.

For most students today, the usage of Twitter is everywhere; it has also occurred among most educators.

However, Twitter has not been without its part of difficulties in the educational environment. Some examine Twitter for being a disturbance in education; the challenge is to determine whether Twitter can be applied in significant ways in the classroom and if it can promote language learning and interaction. Designs for usage of Twitter in language contexts remain to develop and emerge. One difficulty to the efficient use of Twitter in the language classroom is gaining assignments that are reliable and pedagogically innovative for both shorter and wider classroom settings.

Education has changed from the traditional forms to the technology utilized in the classrooms. It is now an organized matter that the practice of technology promotes teaching and learning in language classrooms. As digital natives, today's students are not content with the conventional learning, and English as foreign language (EFL) learners who become disengaged and unmotivated in a traditional classroom setting is no exception. Learners involve essential communication outside the classroom by utilizing the target language. They also receive the benefit of developing their language skills with instant feedback from other students and teachers as well.

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

Microblogging

Blogs (also known as weblogs and online diaries) can be described as text-based, constantly updated online journals, in which knowledge is posted about a person, organization, or topics of interest Lomicka (2017) Meanwhile, microblogging is short-form blogging, designed to blend the flexibility of a mobile phone with the social potential of the Web Geser (2009). The distinctions between the two of them are based on the number of users and characters limitation. Web 2.0

applications are designed for communication, production, and participating, support for collective and cooperative production of content and knowledge through easy and dynamic communication and publication mechanisms Hsu, Ching, & Grabowski, (2014). Microblogging is one of the latest Web 2.0 applications and can best be explained by the highly popular Twitter application. Like blogging, microblogging supports personal publication and conversation between writers and readers. One unique essential feature of microblogging is the short-and-sweet coercion it poses limited number of characters per entry.

Twitter

Microblogging was originated in 2006 with the launch of Twitter from the short message services used to create and send document messages. On Twitter, people post short message named 'tweet' and each tweet only contain up to 140 characters which comprise links, photos, and videos. People connect by following each other, when you follow users, their tweets leap up on the timeline. Users communicate with tweets through a variety of features by replying to messages utilizing the @ symbol as a form of addressivity, by favoriting a tweet (similar to the Like function on Facebook), or by retweeting it so that all of your followers can also see it (Hattem, 2014).

Challenges in inserting Microblogging into writing classroom

Some Challenges faced by educators in applying microblogging in the language classroom. For Example, Professor of French Carolyn Shread combines Twitter feeds into Moodle with students in advanced elementary and intermediate level French classes. To involve students in their viewing of 52 textbook videos, students are each assigned characters

from the video series. Students then posted about their character's private thoughts, lives, and activities throughout the semester, which added a "playful and creative element to their learning" (Shread, 2015).

According to Shread, students find the task appealing and challenging. Marshall (2016), who teaches large lecture classes, discovers ways to organize Twitter by practicing it as a way to promote starter questions at the beginning of class. This use of microblogging employs students to interact both with the instructor and with each other during in-class face-to-face sessions. Both examples present ways that Twitter can be used effectively for teaching different types of classes and for various tasks. Another challenge for those utilizing Twitter is obtaining an effective yet creative application of hashtags for both microblogging tasks and for research.

Lomicka As research including microblogging in its early stages, more studies is needed to highlight applications of Twitter. For example, research could investigate students' application of microblogging across multiple levels and semesters of language learning to aid fill the current gap in literature connected with Twitter in the classroom. Forty-Five students engaged in their research which seemed at the purposes, patterns, and features of student tweets.

Researchers regarded a type of patterns, purposes, and features and recommended that Twitter stimulates learners, develops language output, and supports them to socially interact with others. A common trend in studies on Twitter means difficulty finding frameworks for analysis, challenges in choosing suitable and affordable means to examine tweets, and a insufficiency of ways to explain hashtags generated by students.

Previous Study

Twitter as a microblogging platform was adopted in an EFL setting in the study by Borau, Ullrich, Feng and Shen (2009). Chinese students who were studying English as a foreign language engaged in the Twitter activity that was set to their English Listening and Speaking course for seven weeks. At the end the participants were provided a bilingual questionnaire about their habit of and view on Twitter. Results showed that the students had positive opinions concerning communication in target language on Twitter and Twitter was affirmed to be a proper tool to instruct communicative and cultural proficiency anytime anywhere.

According to the analysis of the studies on Twitter application in foreign language teaching and learning, Aydın (2014) asserts that Twitter can be employed as an educational tool to improve collaborative language learning, reading and writing skills. On the other hand, Twitter has also been described as having some drawbacks regarding cyberbullying, experiencing inappropriate content and violent content

In Twitter's initial stages of growth, the first benefaction to microblogging was a study carried by Antenos-Conforti (2009), who investigated microblogging applications in an Intermediate Italian classroom. In her innovative study, 22 students enrolled in university-level Intermediate Italian tweeted during one semester. Data were collected included tweets, a Likert questionnaire, and a questionnaire. Based on her results, Antenos-Conforti recommended that the establishment of Twitter can develop the classroom as it presents supportive participation and promoting a sense of community.

METHOD

This study employs qualitative research methodology and case study as its research design. According to Yin, R. K.

(2018). A case study is an experimental method that examines a present phenomenon in depth and within its real-world context, especially when the limits between phenomenon and context may not be clearly visible. In other words, a person would need to do a case study because they want to understand a real-world case and believe that such an understanding is likely to include important contextual conditions relevant to a case. This study Employs Semi-Structured Interview and Questionnaires distributed to 30 students that integrate microblogging with Twitter into their language learning.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Twitter for Educational Purposes

Based on the questionnaire result about whether Twitter serves a great benefit in language learning, the participants agrees that Twitter offers educational benefit for learning. 83.3% of the participants agree that twitter suitable and beneficial for educational purposes.

Moreover, from the interview result, most of the participants stated that twitter actually can be beneficial to language learning. Furthermore some participants stated that it helps certain skills in English language as follows:

“The essential of writing is vocabulary. Me personally, by using twitter I can learn a lot of vocabulary that I didn't know before. Slang words and idioms as well.”
(P2)

From the excerpt above, the participants stated that the use of twitter specifically enriched their English vocabulary. By improving their vocabulary, it will automatically maximize their effort in learning English skills.

Twitter and its relation to English Writing

The participants found that Twitter actually helps them in English writing. 83,3 % of the participants agree that specifically Twitter helps them in English writing. The result strengthens by interview results where the question was given in an interview to find out the relation between Twitter and English writing

“Yes, a lot. From every aspect, Like Twitter only has 140 characters, right? So when I need to tweet a long tweet, I had to brainstorm on how to deliver what's on my mind to 140 characters with much simpler words but still interesting and easy to understand. The same goes for writing in real life especially for essays and paper. It somehow helps me write the outline and deliver it to a paper where I need to keep it simple but still understandable and interesting.” P4

“I think so. My writing is more diverse than before because there are so many issues on twitter that we could learn about and I started writing more (on twitter) about issues that important to me and not just the same repetitive things (like lifestyle and gossip).” P6

Based on the excerpt above, the participants felt that the limit of character in twitter made them think about what they're going to say. By means that they have to carefully select appropriate diction and content to describe things they wanted to say. Another participants also stated that twitter made their writing topics more varied than before, they can carefully select the issues that are trending and important to them. In conclusion, twitter made their writing more diverse and let them to critically think about what they are going to say in their writing.

Twitter as an appropriate means in language learning

From interview result, some participants stated their opinion toward the appropriateness of twitter in language learning as follows:

“I think yes, a hundred percent. Twitter could be considered as the one because it's not as boring as if we learn in school or other formal institutions, we can just say anything without getting worried and by times we do realize what's wrong and what's right on how we write. It is not monotonous and you can use it for days or even anytime.” P1

“Yes of course, if our goals to improve new language, our writing skills, or exploring something good it must be appropriate. Personally, by using twitter to improve my English writing skill, I can recognize at least the wrong grammar for my next writing even though my grammar still bad until now. I have more concern about the hot issues that will be good for the next writing or even educate me.” P2

From the excerpt above, student said that they are sure that Twitter actually an appropriate means to do English writing. It causes the student to feel less boring and worried toward the learning itself. It is really important considering that English Writing is difficult to comprehend, and it takes a lot of effort to be able to learn writing effectively. Twitter also allows them to correct grammatical mistakes they encountered while writing English.

CONCLUSION

Twitter has improved significantly in its fame and now outranks narrow to Facebook in terms of social media usage. Smith (2015) assesses that 302 million active monthly users are on Twitter, which covers 100 million daily users. Twitter allows its users to engage with microblogging. Twitter as a

microblogging platform is such a device that improves student collaboration and interaction. For most students today, the usage of Twitter is everywhere; it has also occurred among most educators. However, Twitter has not been without its part of difficulties in the educational environment. Some examine Twitter for being a disturbance in education; the challenge is to determine whether Twitter can be applied in significant ways in the classroom and if it can promote language learning and interaction. Designs for the usage of Twitter in language contexts remain to develop and emerge. From this study, it can be concluded that microblogging with Twitter gave the participant some benefit as they are able to manage their own style of writing and to think systematically and effectively about what they're going to write. They also stated that it twitter interface actually suits educational purposes. The participants also agree that twitter is an appropriate platform in learning English.

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