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Students' Perspective on the Use of Edmodo as an Assessment Tool

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Abstract

The lecturers are in search of exploring innovative assessment techniques in order to promote students skill. Edmodo as a web-based online technology allows students and teacher to post materials, share videos and links, grades, notices, and assignment. The special code assigned for a particular group which makes it secure and safe in use. The study focuses on how the use of edmodo as an assessment tool. 68 students from two classes that attending News and Report Writing Course in English Language Education Islamic University of Riau in Pekanbaru participated in various assessment activities through Edmodo during 2016/2017 academic year. Reflection of the students regarding the use of Edmodo as an assessment tool were obtained by semi-structured interviews. There were four questions which posed to the students conducted by the researcher. The result indicated that most of the students motivated and Edmodo also reduced their test anxiety to a great extent and they would prefer to be assessed through Edmodo rather than traditional assessment techniques like pen-and-paper test.

Keywords: *Assessment, Edmodo, News and Report Writing Class*

Pespektif Mahasiswa terhadap Penggunaan Edmodo sebagai Aplikasi Penilaian

Abstrak

Para dosen sedang mencari cara untuk mengeksplorasi teknik penilaian inovatif guna meningkatkan keterampilan siswa. Edmodo sebagai teknologi online berbasis web memungkinkan siswa dan guru memposting materi, berbagi video dan tautan, nilai, pemberitahuan, dan tugas. Ini memungkinkan guru untuk bekerja dengan peserta didik mereka secara real time, dan dapat digunakan baik di kelas atau di rumah. Kode khusus yang diberikan untuk grup tertentu yang membuatnya aman dan aman digunakan. Studi ini berfokus pada bagaimana penggunaan edmodo sebagai alat penilaian. 68 siswa dari dua kelas yang menghadiri Kuliah Menulis Berita di Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris Universitas Islam Riau di Pekanbaru berpartisipasi dalam berbagai kegiatan penilaian melalui Edmodo pada tahun akademik 2016/2017. Refleksi siswa tentang penggunaan Edmodo sebagai alat penilaian diperoleh dengan wawancara semi-terstruktur. Ada empat pertanyaan yang diajukan kepada siswa yang dilakukan oleh peneliti. Hasilnya menunjukkan bahwa sebagian besar siswa termotivasi dan Edmodo juga mengurangi kecemasan tes mereka sampai batas tertentu dan mereka lebih suka dinilai melalui Edmodo daripada teknik penilaian tradisional seperti tes yang menggunakan pena dan kertas.

Kata Kunci *: Penilaian, Edmodo, Kelas Menulis Berita*

1. INTRODUCTION

The use of social media and social networking for teaching and learning has exploded in recent years. Many lecturers see social media as a means by which more student-centred and social constructivist pedagogies may be designed in an online environment, as it enables students to contribute and collaborate to e-learning environments in a number of ways marked difference from first generation e-learning tools that behaved in a more traditional teaching-centred manner and in which social interaction and social learning was much less possible. Social media also provides mechanisms for peer learning and peer assessment, and for the development of active learning communities of practice.

In order to keep students engaged in the lessons and make them more autonomous learners, teachers have started to employ various techniques, and accordingly recent research has focused on blended learning techniques which combine online and traditional classroom-based teaching and learning. Blended Learning is basically a combination of learning excellence that is done face to face and virtually (Husamah, 2014).

Motivating and engaging today's students in learning process is really difficult if the learning environment does not appeal to them. When the assessment is regarded as an essential component of the process, motivating students becomes more challenging and difficult. The existence of language test anxiety in the assessment process has been proved by many scholars. That is why a great bulk of research attention has been paid to foreign language anxiety and language test anxiety.

Test anxiety on different language skills has been reported by many researchers. For example, (Huang and Hung, 2013) explore the relationship between test anxiety and the performance of integrated tasks and speaking task in particular. They suggest that the advantage of integrated tasks over independent tasks may not be related to the reduction of test anxiety. Likewise, (Lee and Lee, 2015) examine the effects of audio-visual aids on anxiety, retention in reading, comprehension test scores in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classrooms. They conclude that employing audio-visual aids can help students reduce reading and listening test anxiety.

As it is clear from the above-mentioned studies conducted in different contexts about foreign language anxiety in general and test anxiety in particular, reducing students' anxiety levels in foreign language classrooms is crucial for success. Language teachers usually employ different formative assessment techniques and a variety of testing types during learning process. At the end of each unit, module, or chapter, students are given a quiz or a short test covering the main points of the lesson. Recently published course books have already module, unit or section quizzes.

For this reason, language learners confront much more assessment activity than other subject learners. It seems quite natural for them to be anxious as they are assessed almost during the whole process. Therefore, language teachers should know how to cope with anxiety problems inside the

class especially during testing their students since anxiety has the potential of decreasing students' motivation, integration, and involvement in learning.

The current study, therefore, suggests an alternative way of assessing students' different language skills encouraging the use of modern technology with which almost all students are familiar. This alternative assessment tool is embedded in a learning management system (LMS) called Edmodo which is a user-friendly and popular platform. The next section focuses on learning management systems in general and then Edmodo as an assessment tool is presented

As a virtual learning environment (Cauley, 2012), "Edmodo is an educational website that takes the ideas of a social network and refines them and makes it appropriate for a classroom s. Using Edmodo, students and teachers can reach out to one another and connect by sharing ideas, problems, and helpful tips.

Furthermore, Edmodo provides "a simple way for teachers and students in a virtual class to connect and collaborate" (Balasubramanian, Jaykurman, & Fukey, 2014) and helps to form a teacher-student bond (Lewis, 2014). Importantly, once students are put in small groups formed in Edmodo, they can collaborate with their classmates on particular classroom activities.

Edmodo as a free of charge social learning platform which provides learners with access to course content presented by teachers. It helps students interact with each other and teachers through instant messages, thus enabling learners to cooperate and collaborate in virtual classroom environment. Teachers can easily assign students and set a deadline for homework.

Furthermore, Edmodo is a secure platform since students can only login with the special code provided by teachers. Parents can also monitor students' progress and check their homework with another special code created only for them. The first step to use Edmodo is to create a free account by clicking on the link 'I'm a Teacher'. The following screenshot illustrates the welcoming page of the platform.
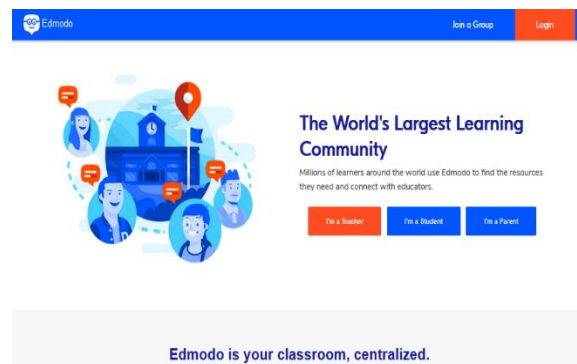

Figure 1: Welcoming Page of the Platform

Subsequent to creating the free account, teachers are now ready to form groups. The following screenshot indicates the interface of creating and naming the new group together with selecting a grade and subject area.
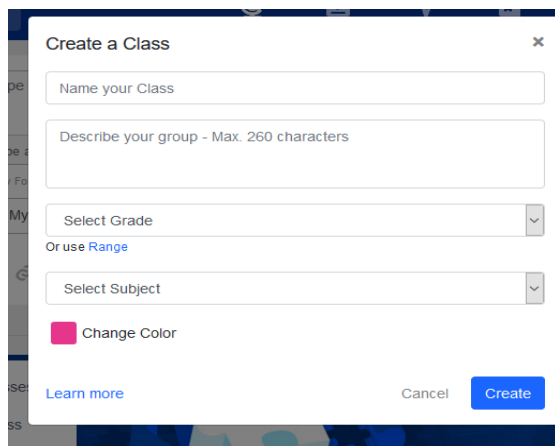
Figure 2: Interface of Creating and Naming the New Groups

On the left side of Edmodo screen, teachers can see all groups they have created. In addition, they can find 'Manage Group', 'Create Group', and 'Join Group' buttons on this page. Loading assignments and setting a due date are among the main functions of Edmodo. Teachers can send note adding both new files, links and from the library. They can select either a special group or all groups to send the files and notes. 'Note', 'Assignment', 'Quiz', and 'Poll' sections are illustrated in the following screenshot.
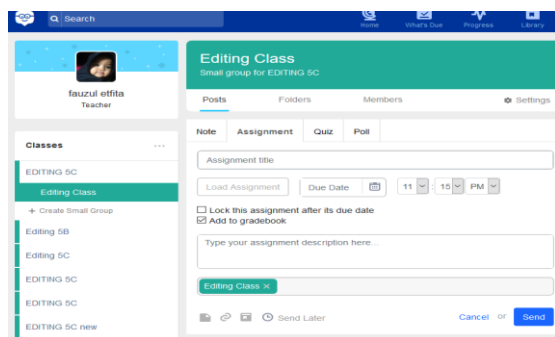

Figure 3: 'Note', 'Assignment', 'Quiz', and 'Poll' Sections of the Platform

'Poll' section enables teachers to conduct surveys based on a question and various answers. It can be used to assess course satisfaction, needs analysis, and expectations of the students about the course. The focus of this paper is to introduce Edmodo as an assessment tool. Therefore, 'Quiz' section is attached much imporatance and will be explained with more details. When the 'Quiz' section is clicked, the following screen appears;
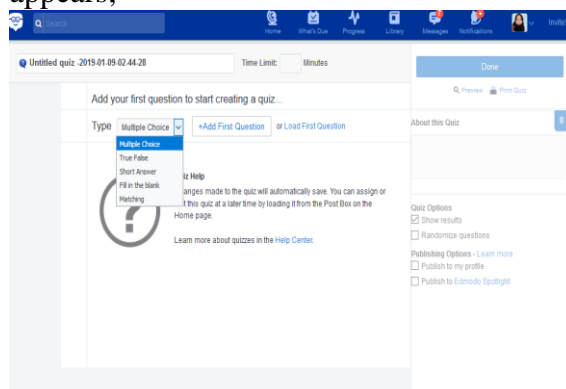

Figure 4: 'Create a Quiz' Section of the Platform

When the button 'Create a Quiz' is clicked, the following screen comes and teachers can first name the quiz. After setting time limitations for the quiz, teachers decide on the type of the questions. There exists five alternatives; *Multiple Choice, True/False, Short Answer, Fill in the blank*, and *Matching*.

As it is obvious from the screenshots above, Edmodo provides teachers with various assessment facilities in language classes. Teachers can employ both formative and summative assessment techniques through online exams. Some specific grammar structures, vocabulary, reading and listening comprehension skills can be assessed by means of easily-created quizzes. Duration of each quiz can be set and results can be sent to each student by just clicking a button.

2. METHOD

This study was a descriptive research, which aimed to explore the Edmodo usage into Editing class as a learning tool and to introduce the implementation of various assessment applications through Edmodo in their Editing classroom. To achieve the objective, the study was based on an Semi-structure Interview.

As many as 68 students from the English Language Education, Lecturer Training and Education Faculty, Islamic University of Riau were selected as respondents for this research. Participants were chosen based on an extracted name lists in accordance with the active involvement of the members in the assigned class, out of the total number of students lists involved in the study. The students were familiar with the mLearning setting in the Editing subject.

At the end of the academic year, a semi-structured interview was conducted by the researcher. Four questions were posed to the students; 1. Do you think Edmodo is an effective tool for assessment? 2. What are the pros of using Edmodo in your class? 3. What are the cons of using Edmodo in your class? 4. Which assessment type would you prefer if you had a chance? Pen and paper quizzes or online quizzes.

3. FINDING AND DISCUSSION

In this part, accounts of previous experiences and some reflections of students are presented. 68 students attending News and Report Writing classes in Islamic University of Riau participated to give perceptions on the use of Edmodo as an assessment tool during 2016-2017 academic year.

Results of the semi-structured interview

1. Do you think Edmodo is an effective tool for assessment?

57 students out of 68 gave positive answer to this question. Only 11 students thought that Edmodo was not an effective assessment tool. The related graph is below:
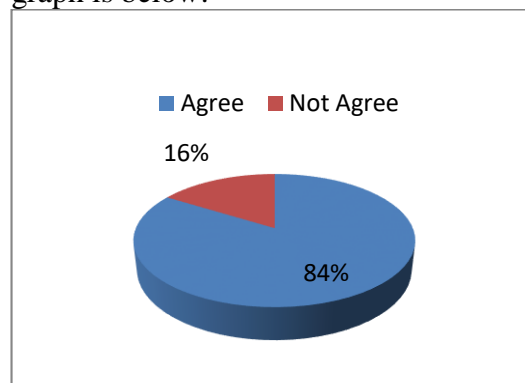

Figure 5: Percentage of students' opinion about the effectiveness of Edmodo

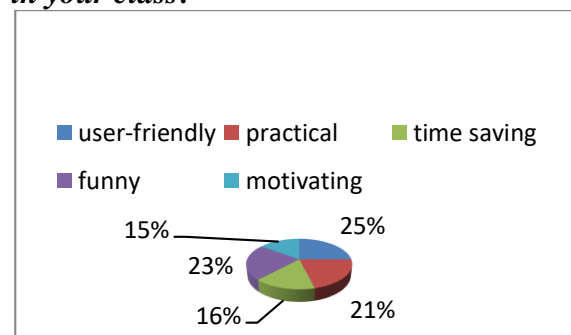*2. What are the pros of using Edmodo in your class?*

Figure 6: Percentage of students' opinion about the pros of using Edmodo

The graph above indicates the number and percentage of students who answered the second question regarding

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the pros of using Edmodo. 17 students stated that Edmodo is user-friendly, 14 of them reported that it is practical and 11 students focused on its time-saving aspect. 16 students found Edmodo funny and 10 thought that it is motivating for students.

3. What are the cons of using Edmodo in your class?

In the semi-structured interview, students were asked about the cons of using Edmodo as an assessment tool. 52 students stated that there were no drawbacks of using Edmodo while being assessed. 9 students reported that as it requires internet connection, it is not so practical. Few students complained about slowness of the platform. Only two students stated that Edmodo is confusing. The related graph is presented below:
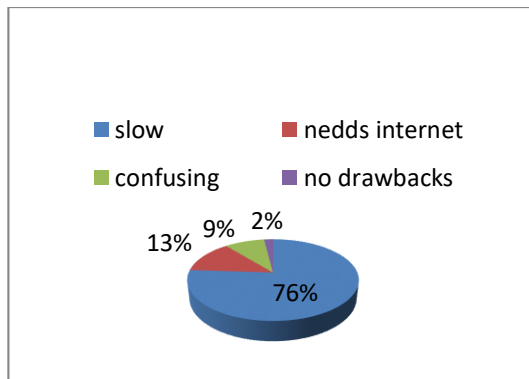

Figure 6: Percentage of students' opinion about the cons of using Edmodo

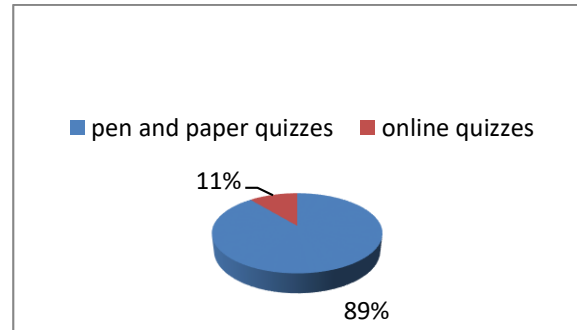### 4. Which assessment type would you prefer if you had a chance? Pen and paper quizzes or online quizzes.

Figure 8: Percentage of students' prefeences about the assessment types

As it is clear from the graph above, most of students reported that they would prefer online quizzes to pen and paper quizzes. Only 7 students stated that they would prefer pen and paper quizzes if they had a chance. As a response to this question, students also stated that they feel less test anxiety in online quizzes compared with pen and paper ones. Excerpts of some students' speech are as follows:

S1: "I prefer online quizzes, because I can do it at home and more secure during online quizzes. No one can see my work"

S2: "I get excited in doing online quizzes, because I can directly type the answer"

S3: "I used to feel nervous and forget everything when doing paper-based quizzes, but then online quizzes help me reduce my test anxiet^y

4. CONCLUSION

The current study introduces Edmodo as an alternative assessment tool to traditional pen and paper assessment techniques. Being a free of charge learning platform, Edmodo can provide

all subject teachers in general and language teachers in particular with various assessment facilities. The study shows the steps of how to create a free account and form groups in Edmodo. The overall aim of the study is to indicate that Edmodo can be used as an effective assessment techniques as well as a learning platform through which teachers can share course materials, notes, links and documents. In addition, the current study having introduced the basic steps of creating a free account and student groups, it demonstrates how to prepare quizzes with different question types which language teachers can easily produce. To this end, accounts of previous experiences and some reflections of students are presented. 68 students attending News and Report Writing classes in a Islamic University of Riau participated in various assessment activities through Edmodo during 2016-2017 academic year. Reflections of the students regarding the use of Edmodo as an assessment tool were obtained through semi-structured interviews conducted by the researcher. In relation to the findings, 84 % of the students participated in the study stated that the platform can be employed as an assessment tool in language classes. As the advantages of the platform, the students regarded Edmodo as user-friendly, practical, time-saving, funny, and motivating. However, 24 % of the students showed negative reactions towards Edmodo stating that it is slow, confusing, and requires constant internet connection. In addition, 89 % of the students stated that they would prefer online quizzes rather than pen and paper ones. Transcriptions of the students presented above also indicate that most of the students think that online exams

reduce their test anxiety compared with the traditional ones. The findings of the study are also in line with what Govender and Grayson (2007) and Dalton (2009) report in the literature. Considering all the results obtained from semi-structured interview, it can be concluded that Edmodo can function as an effective assessment tool in language classrooms. With its immediate feedback and user-friendly aspects, it can serve as an alternative assessment tool to traditional pen and paper exams in the classroom.

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