



Students' Tips for Enhancing Writing Skills using Social Media in Pandemic Era

Elsa Rosalina^{1*}, Nasrullah², Vebrianti Umar³, Rahma Pitria Ningsih⁴ 

^{1,2} Universitas Lambung Mangkurat, Banjarmasin, Indonesia

³ STKIP Islam Sabilal Muhtadin, Banjarmasin, Indonesia

⁴ Politeknik Negeri Banjarmasin, Banjarmasin, Indonesia

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ABSTRAK

Menulis merupakan salah satu keterampilan dalam pembelajaran bahasa. Menulis juga merupakan keterampilan yang paling sulit bagi pembelajar bahasa karena ketika siswa mulai menulis, mereka harus mengumpulkan ide dari otak mereka dan kemudian mengetik atau menuliskannya menjadi sebuah paragraf yang baik. Media sosial dan kehidupan sehari-hari tidak dapat dipisahkan saat ini. Media sosial telah berkembang menjadi platform online terpenting untuk menghubungkan orang. Penelitian ini mencoba menganalisis kontribusi media sosial dalam meningkatkan keterampilan menulis siswa. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode kualitatif karena untuk mendeskripsikan kiat-kiat siswa dalam meningkatkan keterampilan menulis menggunakan media sosial. Partisipan penelitian ini adalah 2 orang mahasiswa Prodi Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris Angkatan 2019. Mereka adalah mahasiswa D dan T. Mereka dipilih karena mendapat nilai tertinggi pada mata kuliah "Menulis Menengah". Pengumpulan data penelitian ini menggunakan wawancara dan dokumentasi. Hasil dari penelitian ini adalah bahwa siswa D dan siswa T menggunakan media sosial untuk meningkatkan keterampilan menulis mereka. Siswa D setuju bahwa Instagram dan WhatsApp dapat meningkatkan keterampilan menulisnya karena dia memposting dan menulis tentang kegiatan sehari-harinya melalui media sosial semacam itu. Siswa setuju bahwa Youtube dan novel online serta situs web membaca juga banyak berkontribusi untuk meningkatkan keterampilan menulisnya. Disimpulkan juga bahwa setiap siswa memiliki kiat-kiat untuk memanfaatkan media sosial dalam meningkatkan keterampilan menulis mereka.

ABSTRACT

Writing is one of the skills in language learning. Writing is also the most difficult skill for language learners because when the students start writing, they must collect the idea from their brain and then type or write it into a good paragraph. Social media and daily life cannot be separated today. Social media has evolved into the most important online platform for connecting people. This research tries to analyse the contribution of social media in improving students' writing skills. This research used the qualitative method because it was to describe students' tips to enhance writing skills using social media. The participants of this research were 2 students from English Language Education Study Program Batch 2019. They were students D and T. They were chosen because they got the highest score in the "Intermediate Writing" course. The data collection of this research used interviews and documentation. The results of this research were that student D and student T were using social media for improving their writing skill. Student D agreed that Instagram and WhatsApp can enhance her writing skill because she posted and wrote about her daily activities through those kinds of social media. The student agreed that Youtube and online novels and reading websites also contributed a lot to improving his writing skill. It was also concluded that every student had their tips to get the advantages of social media in improving their writing skill.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Covid-19 spreads fast all over the world. All of the sectors are getting impacted by this situation. Education is one of them. Spread of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) has impacted all aspects of global citizenship, including Indonesian society and academia (Ajay Kumar & Somani, 2020; Onyema et al., 2020; Susilawati & Supriyatno, 2020). During a Covid-19 pandemic, the concept of social and physical distancing requires everyone to stay at home to prevent the virus from spreading. Lecturers must continue to teach to keep students informed about proper education and teaching (Alchamdani et al., 2020; Bestari et al., 2020; Lapitan et al., 2021). The teaching and learning process conducted in offline learning has changed to online learning. Meanwhile, this situation changes everything in the teaching and learning process. According to previous study online learning is an option that can be used in this day and age when technology and communication are at an all-

time high (Pratama et al., 2021). Furthermore, the COVID-19 pandemic emphasizes the importance of using online models and applications to achieve learning objectives (Cicha et al., 2021; Adarsh Kumar et al., 2021; Yao et al., 2022). As a result, learning innovation is required to sustain global education development. This transition has been difficult for both teachers and students because it requires them to embrace the online teaching-learning process (Almaiah et al., 2020; Ganesh et al., 2022; Yuzulia, 2021). The teachers and the students must have strategies to achieve their goals. The teachers explain the material and the students get their goal of getting the highest score. The students also have good strategies to achieve their goals in Pandemic where all the activities are done in online learning.

Writing is one of the skills in language learning. Writing skills are an important part of a student's academic lives because they allow them to organize their feelings and ideas clearly and convey meaning through well-constructed text (Bestari et al., 2020; Durga, Satya Sri & Rao, 2018; Friantary et al., 2020). Writing is also the most difficult skill for language learners because when the students start writing, they must collect the idea from their brain and then type or write it into a good paragraph. Among all skills in learning the English language, writing skills are the most difficult for Malaysian students to achieve, with both teachers and students agreeing that teaching and learning writing is difficult (Pratiwi, 2016; Wil et al., 2019; Yoandita, 2019). This is also in line with previous study who stated that the most common writing problems encountered by ESL students are related to the use of tenses, articles, and prepositions (Fareed et al., 2016; Iswahyuni, 2021; Palupi & Septiana, 2018).

Social media and daily life cannot be separated today. Social media has evolved into the most important online platform for connecting people. People use social media for a variety of reasons; in the meantime, students use social media extensively in their daily routines and learning activities, including writing (Abdulai et al., 2021; Caya & Mosconi, 2022; Elkordy, 2016). Social networking activities have the potential to improve lecturers' professional status and add media/methods to their teaching. Using social media as a medium will provide several benefits to students' writing abilities. Students require such technology to keep their attention during the lesson (Boahene et al., 2019; Rinda, 2016). It also cannot be denied that the Pandemic makes most people spend their time using social media. This Pandemic also makes the teacher and students use WhatsApp and Telegram for the teaching and learning process. WhatsApp Messenger, also known as WA, has grown in popularity both internationally and nationally (Galvin & Greenhow, 2020; Kintama, 2021; Susanti & Tarmuji, 2016). WhatsApp is an instant messenger technology similar to SMS with internet data assistance and more appealing supporting features. WhatsApp Messenger has the potential to be used as a learning tool as well. According to the survey that has been done by previous study 90% of students, and lecturers use WhatsApp Messenger in their daily lives as well as in their learning activities (Susilawati & Supriyatno, 2020).

The previous study discovered that using WhatsApp affected the students' writing skills. The researcher systematically conducted an experimental study to represent the problem statement and study results after data collection, demonstrating the positive effects of using online platforms on students' writing once again (Susanti & Tarmuji, 2016). Other study conducted a study to determine the effects of social media use on the writing skills of ESL students (Borch, 2019). The study's findings show that using social media to improve students' writing skills is both challenging and effective. In addition, they also stated that social media has the opportunity for improving collaborative learning, supporting students' self-directed learning, and simplifying the teaching and learning processes.

Base on the phenomena and insight from previous studies this research tries to analyse students' tips for enhancing writing skills using social media. In this current study the research just focuses on the social media and its improvement to students' writing skill based on their experience using social media. Learners can gain access to more engaging and authentic writing opportunities through social media.

2. METHOD

This research used a qualitative method because it was to describe students' tips to enhance writing skills using social media. This method was used because the results of the interview will be described as the findings for this research. The participants of this research were 2 students from English Language Education Study Program. They were students D and T. They were chosen because they got the highest score in the "Intermediate Writing" subject.

The score of their writing subject was seen by the documentation of score recapitulation from the lecturer who taught this subject. After seeing the document then the researchers had decided two students who had highest score as the participants for this research. The data collection of this research used interviews and documentation. The researchers interviewed the students through WhatsApp and Zoom Meeting to get the data from the participants and also used documentation of their scores in the "Intermediate Writing" subject to support this research.

The data was then described as the findings of this research. The interview session was done for one hour for both of the participants. Each participant needed 30 minutes to describe their answers of the question from the

researchers. The data were analyzed using thematic analysis. The result of the data related with the theories and the previous studies that used in the literature review.

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Result

The findings of this research are gotten based on the research interview with the participants. The first participant was student D. She was a female student from batch 2019. First, she described the learning process in Pandemic situations. Here was the transcript of the interview: *"In my point of view, Ibu, the teaching and learning process in this Pandemic Era that is online learning can be as good as the process before pandemic which is offline learning. It depends on the strategy of the lecturers in the teaching process. When the lecturers use online learning media creatively and effectively, I believe the learning process can work well. The way I see it, online learning allows the students to explore the online source as much as possible. This can give a chance to students to expand their knowledge as much as they need. Some material in online learning can also be saved on the students' laptop or phone, so they can read it again. The weakness of online learning is the effect of using technology. There are a lot of students' complaints that their eyes hurt and they get headaches after they have several online classes in a day. Furthermore, the unstable connection can frustrate the learning process. So, I think offline learning is better than online learning which is a learning method in the Pandemic Era"*. She did agree that the teaching and learning process in a Pandemic situation is not as easy as before the Pandemic situation, in her opinion every condition has advantages and disadvantages. Both skills need practice, although we can do it online there is no emotion when we practice speaking just by Zoom, G-Meet, or any other media

Talking about writing skills, she agreed that social media can contribute to enhancing her writing skill. Especially in a Pandemic situation, where the government has a policy like "self-quarantine" where the policy ruled that if we did not have an urgent need we just stayed at home. This situation forced people to get closer to their smartphones. This opportunity tried to be used by student D to utilize the use of her smartphone to improve her writing skill. She usually used social media like Instagram, Telegram, and WhatsApp. Here was the transcript for the interview session *"Which social media account is often used for helping you in this situation? Then she answered: WhatsApp, Telegram, and Instagram"*. The next transcript in the interview session *"Why do you choose its account (WhatsApp, Telegram, and Instagram)"? The reason for question number 2? Then she said that because all of us, which are students, and most of the lecturers are using it. So it makes it easier to discuss our learning process.*

She said that writing on Instagram is like writing a diary to her. When she posts some photos on Instagram, she can describe her feelings, her thoughts, and what things are around her. Furthermore, she also agreed that Instagram is one of the unique social media because she can manage who can see her posts. Thus, when she posted something and just needed her close friend to read it, she changed the setting from Instagram. She believed that the routines that she did will improve her writing skill. In addition, after uploading and then writing the caption on Instagram, sometimes her friends also commented on her comment field. This was also one of the benefits of writing on Instagram, we can get some feedback from our friends, and we also can proofread what we wanted to write on Instagram. Student D also elaborated that she got many advantages when having an Instagram account for improving her writing skill. Here was the transcript: *"We can write a paragraph about what we feel today, what we've been through, or what we think about something in our surroundings in our social media, just like we write in our diary. Of course, we have to make sure our text won't hurt anybody's feelings. If we only want our close friends to read it, we can arrange the setting as we desire to. When one of our friends gives feedback about our text, we can discuss with him/her to improve our text. Furthermore, it is a good idea to proofread our text. By proofreading, we can ameliorate it when we find any errors. We can also make our text looks better by choosing the synonym of the words we are going to write"*

The second student was student T. He was a male student from batch 2019. He also described the learning process in a Pandemic situation. He agreed that online learning in Pandemic situations has a lot of weaknesses. Based on his experience, there are a lot of teachers or lecturers who are not aware of and understand how to use the technology. He also mentioned that *"I would say it has a lot of weaknesses on it, well it's good to prevent the Covid-19 virus but if we are talking specifically about the process of teaching and learning it definitely has a lot of weaknesses. There's a lot of teachers either lecture who aren't aware enough and understand enough to use the technology, it really affects the learning process. Some of them just give the assignment and don't even communicate with their students, some of them don't even enter the class (which very concerns me). I would say the honesty of the learning process is being doubted. Because in online class, we don't really can see, either they did it on their own, or by cheating"*. It affected the learning process. Also, some of the teachers or lecturers just give the assignment and don't even communicate with their students. Its condition also makes student T consider that online learning has a lot of weaknesses. In addition, he also believed that in online learning the teacher or lecturer cannot make sure either they did the task or did the quiz by themselves or just cheated with their friends.

In line with student D, although online learning has a lot of weaknesses, he also believed that this pandemic made the teacher, lecturer, and students finally have more ability to operate the technology. Pandemic was like a condition to force the teacher, lecturer, and students to give more attention to the technology as a part of learning itself.

Talking about social media, consistent with student D, he also agreed that this Pandemic made him closer to his smartphone. He tried to utilize his smartphone to improve his writing skill. In Contrast with student D who takes advantage of Instagram, WhatsApp, and Telegram to improve her skill, student Z said that he used Youtube to improve his writing skill. Here was the transcript *“Is Google social media, if it is. I'll say Google and YouTube for sure”*. Student T chose Youtube because Youtube has a very clear explanation. He can choose a role model (content creator) for his inspiration to improve his writing skill besides that he also shared some tips to improve writing skills using social media in Pandemic situations. Here was also the transcript *“I can get many variations of the answer of my problem. And I can choose my own style, for example, YouTube (it's very clear explanation tho and also I can choose the content creators)”*.

He said reading is a key activity to improve his writing skill. Reading also can help him to remember the good pattern of writing. Reading an online novel is also indirectly a way to improve writing skills. He also mentioned *“First reading anything, either article, novel or even random comments. It will help us to remember the good pattern of writing (for me) then try to write down what happened to you in a day, when you happy sad or even feel grateful (make it like a story) keep writing then after maybe a while, start to re-read your writing then you'll find the mistakes, cuz most of the time, the mistake found after you finished (not directly, cuz for me I wasn't aware enough) but maybe a week after”*. Reading exemplifies examples of truly excellent writing, providing students with instruction in voice, organization, syntax, and language.

Discussion

Online learning had a negative effect for the students because sometimes the lecturer just gives the assignment to the students. Furthermore, for writing, it is also more challenging to do in an online situation because she said that she can't make interaction with our lecture or teacher as she does the offline class (Basar, 2021; Fareed et al., 2016). Pandemic at the beginning, was make student confused about how could catch the material in the limited access where face to face was prohibited to do. There was no readiness to do this but the technical support can do everything now. Online material which was uploaded by the lecturer before the online class was helping the respondent to repeat the material in the class where she had difficulty at the time. This is also in line with e-learning establishing student engagement and motivation in attending the class to learn, both of which are necessary for learning. It can be assumed that shifting from traditional to e-learning will help to develop the language learning process (Riananda, 2016; Sariyani et al., 2021; Subedi et al., 2020). Notably, this study can help students improve their writing skills by incorporating visual images into their texts.

Then for the use of social media that show that using social media helped learners improve their writing skills. As a result, it is recommended that both teachers and students use various social media and wiki platforms during the teaching and learning process (Boahene et al., 2019; Haidari et al., 2020). The reason why respondent used those social media is that most of the lecturers at her university use these social media to help and conduct the discussion when starting the learning process. As a result, teachers who know how to use social media for their students' writing will produce better results than those who have never used social media.

The participants can build their confidence in English writing by practicing through writing on Instagram captions. The students tried to write sentences confidently. The researcher focused on the second result of previous research that state students will build their confidence when posting photos and then add a caption to their Instagram account (Ambarsari, 2020). Most of them agree that Instagram is one of the media where they can express their feelings by writing a caption when they post something on Instagram. This previous study has the same finding as this current research where student D told the researcher that she tried to utilize Instagram because she can express herself through a caption but also sometimes has a comment or feedback from her friend. Furthermore, the respondent also believed that this process was like a simulation when writing in her class. Moreover, Telegram and WhatsApp are also her favorite social media to improve her writing, because most of her lecturers do the discussion through both these social media. Student believe that more and more student used WhatApp and Telegram to do written language then parallel her for improving her writing skill too. Writing practice is the best way to improve writing skills and that using social media is one fun activity that we can do or can take benefit from the Pandemic itself (Huertas-Abril, 2021; Munna & Shaikh, 2020).

Technologies such as software (PowerPoint, iMovie, The Gimp), websites (Wikipedia, YouTube, Podomatic), and corpora (Corpus of Contemporary American English) have positively contributed to learners' mastery of English (Brook, 2011). Furthermore, here the theory just focuses on the mastery of English in general. The next previous study stated that there is a statistically significant difference in some but not all aspects of the learners' writing fluency; specifically, the accuracy and organization of ideas as qualitative dimensions of fluency improved after five months of actual exposure to YouTube as long as factors like engagement, enhancement, and

intelligibility are provided by its multi-mediated input (Alobaid, 2020). This is in line with the strategies applied by student T who had used Youtube as a social media to improve his writing skill. According to previous study YouTube videos have the potential for health promotion and education (Ifenthaler & Racey, 2017; Rahmatika et al., 2021). Youtube is one of the social media that can facilitate someone who wants to learn about something. The use of Youtube also can be a way to maximize and add his knowledge about writing based on the explanation on Youtube, so it can make better writing skills of student (Ibrahim, 2006; Ifenthaler & Racey, 2017).

The implications of this research provide an overview related to students' tips for enhancing writing skills using social media in the pandemic era. Based on the results of interviews conducted in this study, it is hoped that it will be a reference for students and teachers in using social media to support improving writing skills in a pandemic situation. The limitation of this research lies in the very limited research subjects which only involve two students. In addition, this research only focuses on writing competence. Therefore researchers also have a suggestion for other researchers to do other research on students' tips on using social media in other skills like listening, speaking, and reading. They can also take from other situations like the New Normal situation.

4. CONCLUSION

Based on the findings, it can be concluded that every student has their own story and tips to enhance their writing skill. Student D agrees that *Telegram*, *WhatsApp*, and *Instagram* are the best social media to improve her writing skill. T has a different opinion. He said that *Youtube* and *Online Novel Web* were the best social media to improve his writing skill because he can see many explanations on Youtube related to writing skills. Here is also the proof from those students that they both have different social media platforms for improving their writing skills.

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