

THE USE OF FACEBOOK TO IMPROVE STUDENTS' SKILL AND INCREASE THEIR MOTIVATION IN WRITING RECOUNT TEXT

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Abstract

This article is about the use of Facebook as learning media to improve the writing skill and increase motivation of tenth grade students of SMA N 1 Kajen in the academic year of 2012/2013. It aimed to investigate the way Facebook improved students' skill and increased their motivation in writing recount texts. It adopted an action research design which was carried out through pre-test, cycle 1, and cycle 2. The subjects of the research were 32 students of X 2 of SMAN 1 Kajen. A Facebook group was created as a place for students to write recount texts as well as to give feedback to their peers' writings. Writing tests, observation sheet, and questionnaire were used as the instruments of collecting the data. The results of the writing tests at the end of the three cycles showed a significant improvement of the students' writing. The result of the observation showed that after learning writing recount text using Facebook, the students became more attentive, active, and attracted in joining the lesson; and happier and more serious in writing. The analysis of the questionnaire showed that the students responded the use of Facebook in their learning positively. Based on the overall results of the research, it can be concluded that the use of Facebook contributes to the improvement of students' skill and motivation in writing recount texts.

Keywords: action research, Facebook, motivation, recount text, writing skill

Introduction

Writing is one basic skill in learning English beside listening, speaking, and reading. Writing means producing or creating a piece of text. That is why it belongs to productive skills together with speaking (Harmer, 2001, p. 199, 246).

Meanwhile, producing something in a language other than our own mother tongue is quite difficult to do. This problem is clearly seen from the writings produced by the students I taught when I did my teaching practice (PPL). The short interview with an English teacher in my high school, SMAN 1 Kajen, also confirmed that students' production of writing is still below the standard expected by the teacher.

Along with the difficulty caused by the unfamiliarity with English as foreign language for them, writing itself is a quite complicated skill. To produce a piece of writing we need a quite long process starting from planning, drafting, editing, and final drafting (Harmer, 2004, p. 4). In order to write something, a writer needs to have an idea or memory of certain event or

phenomenon and be able to construct that idea or memory in a certain order so that the reader can catch the meaning concluded in the text (Ruddell, 2005, p. 32). On the other hand, "a common response of many students when they are asked to write is that they have 'nothing to say' " (Harmer, 2004, p. 61). Students often find it hard to start writing because they have no idea about what to write. There are also students who have million thoughts and feelings to be written, but they do not do because they do not know how to start to write it.

Even when they have an idea of what to write and how it will be constructed, it is mean less without sufficient language components like grammar, vocabulary, punctuation, and spelling. The writing should be organized well, too, in order to be able to be easily read and understood by the readers (Harmer, 2001, p. 255).

The other problem found by the teacher in teaching English writing is the students' dislike of writing practice. According to Harmer (2004, p. 61), the students are reluctant to write because they

rarely write, even in their own language. The lack of writing practice makes them perform poorly in writing. Many of them also feel bored and uninterested in writing due to the use of conventional media in the learning process.

Dealing with those problems, the teacher does realize that she should more motivate the students to write as motivation can push them to achieve more. Indeed, it is one of teachers' roles to motivate the students (Harmer, 2001, p. 261), One of the ways to motivate the students is by creating enjoyable and comfortable learning atmosphere so that students feel fun to write. The feeling of fun in writing can motivate students to write more and more so that their writing skill improves. As Harmer (2001, p. 51) stated, "The chances of success will be greatly enhanced if the students come to love the learning process." Moreover, practice writing regularly will build the student' writing habit. This writing habit is very important because when it had been built, students would get used to write without spending many efforts either thinking writing as a burdensome activity.

Actually, in everyday life, the writing habit has been built by the students themselves through social media, for example on Facebook. Facebook is a social networking site found by Mark Zuckerberg in 2004 which has become the leading social networking site in the world used by high school students, professionals inside corporate networks, and, eventually, everyone (Boyd & Ellison, 2007, p. 7). www.socialbakers.com reported that at the end of February 2013, there are 963.679.900 Facebook users worldwide. 47.165.080 of them are Indonesian. This number of users placed Indonesia as fourth in the highest number of Facebook users in the whole world following United States, Brazil, and India. It also shows that Indonesian, including the school ages, are quite active in Facebook. In that social network, they feel free and enjoy writing their thoughts, feeling, and opinions in informal way. They usually write about something happened to

them in a day as their Facebook statuses. It can be considered as simple recount.

Recount is one of genres taught in Indonesian schools. It is genre which retells events for the purpose of informing and entertaining (Gerot & Wignell, 1994, p. 194). In writing recount text, students can tell everything about their past experiences. Facebook status is one example of recount text that can be met in our everyday life. The experiences shared in Facebook statuses are usually typed in simple form and way. That is why Facebook users do not realize that actually they write recount text on Facebook almost every day, yet many times a day. Moreover, they do not realize that they enjoy recounting their experience on Facebook.

Students' fondness and activeness to write in social networking site like Facebook can be benefitted by teachers to teach writing. According to Friedman & Friedman (2012, p. 17), "the best way to bring courses to life and make learners more exciting, energetic, and enjoyable is by using social networking site in their learning". Teachers can make use of Facebook to support the learning writing activity. The writing habit which had been built by the students themselves on Facebook can be enhanced by teachers by using Facebook in teaching writing. The application of this social networking site is supposed to motivate them to write more and more not only in Bahasa Indonesia, but also in English as a way to practice their English writing.

Therefore, I am interested to solve the problems students face in writing using Facebook as media of teaching recount text. Specifically, I will make use of Facebook group to enhance students' skill and motivation in writing recount text as as Facebook group has the potential to give the youth a room to speak out and create a positive environment that is encouraging and conducive for aiding the writing process (Yunus & Salehi, 2012, p. 89). For that reason, an action research entitled "The Use of Facebook to Improve Students' Skill and

Increase Their Motivation in Writing Recount Texts” was conducted to the students of X 2 class of SMAN 1 Kajen to improve the students’ writing skill, especially in recount, and increase their motivation to write.

Methodology

This study is descriptive qualitative study aimed at improving students’ writing skill and increasing their motivation to write in English. It employed action research design. The subjects of this study are 32 students of X 2 Class of SMAN 1 Kajen in the academic year of 2012/2013. It was started by pre-test and followed by two cycles of treatments.

Pre-test was held on April 29th 2013, before the treatments, to see the students’ basic knowledge and ability of recount text. The treatments were given in cycle 1 and cycle 2. Cycle 1 was conducted in two meetings, May 4th and 6th 2013, with a formative test held at the end of it. Cycle 2 was in May 11th and 13th 2013, ended by a post-test.

There were three instruments used to collect the data: tests, observation sheet, and questionnaire. Three assessment tests were given to measure students’ progress in writing recount text: pre-test, formative-test, and post-test. The data collected from tests were scored using Brown and Bailey’s scoring technique which was cited by Brown (2004, pp. 244-245). Observation sheet is used to record the students’ behaviors during the research. Finally, the questionnaire was administered to obtain the data about the students’ perceptions towards the use of Facebook in learning writing recount texts

Findings and Discussion

1. The Implementation of Facebook in English Writing Activity

Here are the steps done to implement Facebook in the teaching and learning process:

Listing students as the members of the Facebook group

The students’ Facebook usernames were collected together with their writing in pre-test. They were then invited to the Facebook group “StoryBox”.

a. Preparing the material

The materials were prepared then posted to “StoryBox”. The students had to open the group first and try to comprehend them. It aimed to give the students basic comprehension about the materials before learning them with the teacher at school. Whenever they had difficulties in understanding the materials, they could ask the teacher to help them to solve it. There was no need to wait for the class to ask the teacher about the difficulties. Students could ask the teacher directly at the moment by commenting on the material either having a chat with the teacher to consult about their problems.

b. Reviewing the materials

Besides asking the students to read the materials in “StoryBox” by themselves, I also gave explanation about them in the class. This step did not only help the students to get a better understanding about the materials, but also helped them to solve their problems and difficulties in learning them. In this step, an example of recount text was discussed as well as the materials. Furthermore, the students were asked to observe and analyze the generic structure as well as the language features of the text.

c. Asking each student to write a recount text.

After having a discussion about the material and the example of recount text, the students were asked to write a recount text based on the given theme. I prepared the theme for each test: “Unforgettable Moment” for pre-test, “Unpleasant Experience” for formative test, and “My Holiday” for post-test. Then the students had to make their own recount text and post it to “StoryBox”.

d. Giving feedback

After posting the recount text, each student got review from me. The students were also asked to do peer review. It aimed to make the students able to recognize errors made by their friends so that they could give correction and advice to each other. Furthermore, the peer review activity was supposed to provide as much feedback as possible to the students so that they could realize their errors and write better later.

There were 32 students in class X 2. I divided them into eight groups of four. Each students had to review the recount texts written by friends from the same group by commenting on it. They might also comment on recount texts made by friends from different group.

The comment was based on the given criteria of organization, content, grammar, punctuation and spelling, and style. Besides reviewing, the students were also asked to read their friends' recount texts as many as possible and "like" whichever text they liked.

e. Asking each students to revise their recount text

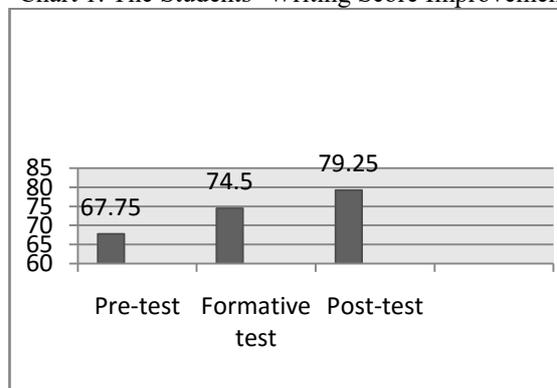
After getting review from me and their friends, each student read and studied the review. At school, I displayed the students' common errors and gave explanation about how it should have been. Finally, the students were asked to revise their texts to be the better ones.

2. The Improvement of Students' Writing Skill

In this study, Facebook is used as a tool to practice writing. After the pre-test was given and examined, a series of treatment based on students' need was given with the expectation that the students writing skill would improve and meet the English minimum score (KKM, Kriteria Ketuntasan Minimal). At the end of cycle 2, all students had been able to write well and reach the KKM. Furthermore, the analysis of pre-test, formative test, and post-test showed that students' writing skill improved

in all aspects of writing stated by Brown and Bailey: organization, content; grammar; punctuation, spelling, and mechanic; and style and quality of expression (Brown, 2004: 244-245).

Chart 1. The Students' Writing Score Improvement



In the aspect of organization, most students had provided the text with title, orientation, events, and reorientation in pre-test. However, they were still confused to organize the text well. It made the communication interfered. Some students picked up title which did not represent the text well. Some of them did not give clear separation between orientation, events, and reorientation. The orientation was not complete. In the events part, the order of ideas was chaotic. In the reorientation part, all students had put the conclusion of the events and their feeling about them. In formative test, the students had considered to organize their text well. They had put the orientation, events, and reorientation in sequence.

The ideas in their writing flew smoother because they had used sequential words such as first, then, next, after that, finally, etc. Only small number of the students still did mistakes; they did not use sequential words to keep their ideas coherent. In post-test, the students had considered to organize their text better than before. They had put the orientation, events, and reorientation in good sequence. All students had used sequential words to keep the ideas coherent.

One of the problems faced by most students in this aspect of content was the lack of ideas. In pre-test, some of them failed to regain their memories to be written. The others still had the memories but they could not express them well. Another problem was the students' inability in developing ideas into sentences. Most students only wrote the point of each idea without adding supporting sentences. This made the ideas were not fully developed, and the draft of the recount text was short.

In formative test, the most problem was still about the students' inability in developing ideas into sentences. Some students had started to add supporting ideas but most of them still only wrote the point of each idea without any supporting details. Finally, in post-test, most of them had tried to add supporting ideas to develop ideas into good writing.

Meanwhile, the students' mastery of grammar was low. They failed to differentiate the use of verb, noun, and adjective. It could be seen from their writing in pre-test. In their writing, I found many adjectives and nouns that were used like verbs. Many students repeatedly changed the adjectives and nouns into past form by adding *-ed*. Some verbs were also used as if they were adjective. Students also failed to differentiate passive form from active one.

There were many errors in sentence structure. They also failed to use past tense in retelling their experience. Some of them used the wrong *to be* or even did not put any *to be* where it should have been put. In other words, the students' grammar mastery was poor and it needed to be improved. In formative test, the students' mastery of grammar was still low. The problems found in their writing were the same with that in pre-test. However, the number of mistakes found much decreased. Their writing was getting easier to understand. In short, there was improvement in grammar aspect, but it still needed to be improved more.

Finally, the result of post-test showed that students' mastery of grammar improved, especially in the use of past tense

to retell past events. The number of mistakes found in students' writing decreased significantly. The problems of punctuation, spelling, and mechanic found in the students' writing in pre-test was the inability in using proper punctuation can be seen in the students' writing. There are many run on sentences. Students ignored to put period between ideas; they put commas instead. Some students ignored the importance of using capital letters. The errors in spelling were also found. In formative test, the student ignorance of using proper punctuation decreased. They started to be more careful in using punctuation. Some of them still ignored the use of capital letter in starting new sentences. The errors in spelling were still found in their writing. It was caused by their laziness in checking out the spelling of words in dictionary. In post-test, most of the student had used punctuation mark, capital letters, and spelling properly. Some errors in spelling were still found.

Furthermore, in the aspect of style and quality of expression, the students had problem in choosing the appropriate vocabulary in the pre-test. When they did not know the words in English, they just looked up their dictionary and chose the first word that they saw without checking the part of speech of the word. As a result, they repeatedly misused some vocabulary. Moreover, there were students who wrote vocabulary which do not exist in English. In formative test, their awareness of style in writing improved. They learnt new vocabularies by reading their friends' writing on "StoryBox". Moreover, students' difficulty in choosing proper vocabularies were helped by the list of vocabularies given by me.

However, the number of vocabularies given in the list were limited. So that the students were expected to bring along their dictionary in case they need other words that they could not find in the vocabulary list. Yet, many of them did not bring their dictionary. Finally, the students' errors and mistakes dealing with vocabulary

decreased significantly in post-test. They were happy to learn new vocabularies from their friends' writing. Their problems with vocabulary usage were also overcome by their activeness in looking up the list of vocabularies and dictionary.

3. The Increase in Students' Motivation to Write

The increase in students' motivation to write was showed by the result of the observation sheet and questionnaire. The observation sheet recorded some aspects on students behavior during the writing activities.

The first aspect which was observed was students' attention to the teacher's explanation. The second is students' active participation during the class. It covered students' activeness in asking question, answering questions, giving opinions, etc during the lesson. The third aspect is the students' positive response towards the media. The fourth is the students' motivation in writing recount text. The last aspect was students' seriousness in writing recount text. The analysis of observation sheet pointed out that the students' positive behavior in those aspects improved significantly from pre-test, formative test, until post-test.

The result of the questionnaire also indicated the improvement of students skill and the increase in their motivation in writing recount text. Referring to the analysis of the questionnaire, most of students responded the use of Facebook in their learning positively. The questionnaire consisted of 27 close ended items which were grouped into six general aspects.

The first aspect is the students' perceptions towards recount text and English writing. From the result of the questionnaire, it was found that most of the students agreed with the statements under this aspect. Most of them liked writing in English subject. There were 50% of students stated that writing recount text was easier than other text type and the rest did not think so. However, most of students often faced difficulties in writing recount texts.

Traditional method used by the teacher in teaching recount text was not good enough. Generally, they needed more attractive media to be used in learning recount text.

Based on students' perceptions towards the use of Facebook in their learning, it was found that most of students gave positive response to the use of Facebook in their learning. They believed that Facebook could be benefitted as media in learning recount text. They also liked the use of Facebook as media in learning recount text. Furthermore, they felt that the use of Facebook as media was very effective. The application of Facebook as media of learning writing recount text was quite easy. Finally, they agreed that Facebook was needed to be used in the following class activity.

The third aspect is the students' perceptions towards the use of Facebook in improving their language skills. The result of questionnaire showed that most of the students also agreed with the statements under this aspect. Most of the students agreed that Facebook helped them overcoming the difficulties in writing recount text. The use of Facebook in learning writing also improved their skill in writing recount text. Moreover, the way Facebook presented the learning materials helped them in acknowledging it. Furthermore, teacher and friends' comments helped them in revising their writings. Finally, their writing skill improved by commenting on friends' writing on Facebook.

Based on students' perceptions towards the efficacy of Facebook supported learning in comparison with traditional learning, it was found that most of students agreed that using Facebook in learning writing is better than traditional learning. They agreed that the use of Facebook as media of writing recount text was more effective than using paper. Using Facebook as writing media was more fun compared with using paper. In addition, learning using Facebook enabled them to learn anywhere and anytime. Furthermore, students felt freer

to comment on others' writing on Facebook rather than in face to face classroom activity.

Based on students' perceptions towards the efficacy of Facebook exercises, it was found that most of them agreed that assignation through Facebook decreased the possibility of forgetting doing homework. They also agreed that assignation through Facebook was more various. Furthermore, they felt that assignation through Facebook made them have two way communication with others in English.

The last aspect is students' perceptions towards the use of Facebook in increasing their motivation and feedback in writing. Based on the result of questionnaire, it was found that most of students agreed with the statements under this aspect. Most of the students stated that they felt motivated to write recount text on Facebook. The use of Facebook itself had increased their motivation to write. In addition, they felt more motivated by others' comments on their writings on Facebook. They also felt motivated by others' liking on their writings on Facebook. Finally, they felt motivated to write better since their writings would be read by many people, not only by the teacher.

Conclusions

The use of Facebook as teaching and learning media bring many benefits for students. Particularly it can improve students' skill and increase their motivation in writing recount text. At first, students enjoy the use of Facebook in their writing class. It increases their motivation to write because of its fun, non-bordered space, challenge, supporting features (comment, like, share, etc), and large number of audience. Furthermore, the use of Facebook in learning writing recount text also help them achieve more in writing. It is because the use of Facebook in learning was likeable, it presentes the material attractively, it enabled them write more imaginatively and creatively, it made them more scrupulous in writing because it would

be read by many readers, and it provided "comment" feature which enabled them review each other's writing for betterment.

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