SCHOOLOGY AS A LEARNING MEDIA PLATFORM FOR WRITING SKILL
Implications to Teachers and Students

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Abstract

Teacher needs to give various methods to teach writing in order to increase the students' writing achievement. To help the students write better, teacher should be able to be more creative and innovative in teaching writing. In 4.0 era, the students prefer using modern technologies (online media). Modern technologies can help the teacher and students access the lesson material, update the information that relevant with the lesson, communicate each other, or watch the teacher's videos like on *YouTube* about the materials easily. There are many digital technologies such as; Blog, Website, and others. Those media can be used as learning media to support students' writing skill, one of them is *Schoology*. *Schoology* is micro blog educational website that can be applied by teacher and students for collaborating about resources, assessment, and content on a secure and safe learning management platform. Students can post their writing task in *Schoology* group that created by the teacher. Then, the teacher can evaluate the students' writing and give some suggestion or comments. In other words, *Schoology* give stimulation for students to try their ability in writing achievement and increase the students' interest. This literature study reviews several papers studying the implication of *Schoology* as a learning media platform. The purpose of the study is to find out the implication using *Schoology* to the teachers and students. The findings expected that *Schoology* can be an alternative learning media platform that used by the teacher and the students to support teaching and learning process in writing.

Keywords: *Schoology*, learning media platform, writing skill

Introduction

In Indonesia, English was applied as the the first foreign language. Therefore, learning English is very important because it was used for International Language. English includes four language skills, namely: speaking, reading, listening and writing. English was believed to be difficult subject especially for the students. Most of the students are not interested in studying English, for example students of Junior High School. There are many reasons why the students are not interested in English. It is because they feel that English is difficult subject because of they find difficulties in memorizing vocabularies.

In other hand, the students also think that English is very difficult to understand. The students learn English from the basic. First, remember they are still in the beginners' stage. The other reason is English has different structure with Bahasa Indonesia, so sometimes it makes them confused. They get some troubles in their pronunciation and in the grammar. Therefore, for the students, learning English is not simple, because they are still lack in English.

One of English language skill that students have to master is writing. Writing is a difficult skill because it involves a complex cognitive activity, which the writer has to produce words or sentences and pay attention to its format, content, grammar, and vocabulary at the same time. Yunus and Chien (2016: 4) stated that writing is very important aspect in the teaching and learning of English as Second Language (ESL) as it is a comprehensive skill that helps strengthen vocabulary, grammar, thinking, planning, editing, revising, and other elements. Writing also helps to improve all the other skills of listening, speaking and reading, as they are all interrelated. Jack and Willy (2002: 303) said that writing is the most difficult skill for

second language learners to master. That is why students need to practice a lot to master writing skill. Without practicing, they can improve their writing. The teachers also need to give various methods to teach writing in order to makes the students more interested in learning writing.

The teacher needs to give various methods to teach writing in order to makes the students more interested in learning writing. To help the students write better, the writing teacher should be able to be more creative and innovative to help students in writing. In this case, the teacher can use appropriate media to support teaching learning process and make the students more interested in writing class. In term of media nowadays, the students prefer modern technologies because it has some benefits in teaching learning process. For example, the teacher and students can access the lesson material, update the information that relevant with the lesson, communicate with other people, and watch the teacher's videos like on *YouTube* about explaining the materials in everytime and everywhere easily. There are many digital technologies such as *Blog*, *Website,* and others. Those media can be used as teaching and learning media, one of them is *Schoology*.

Schoology is micro blog educational website that can be applied by teacher and students for collaborating about resources, assessment and content on a secure and safe learning management platform. *Schoology* was founded by Jeremy Friedman, Ryan Hwang, and Tim Trinidad at Washington University in 2008. By using *Schoology*, students and teacher can reach out to one another and content by sharing ideas, problem, and helpful tips. *Schoology* can be used for teaching writing. Teacher can post the materials' explanation and the students can leave some comment or respond on commentary column about the explanation that they do not understand. Using *Schoology* in learning was likely to be more interesting, showed by the result of the research that the website design provides professional looks and beneficial features. *Schoology* is also suitable for students to do writing task, because students will be free to explore their idea without time limitation like in school (but there is a deadline from the teacher to

collect the task). Students can post their writing in the *Schoology* wall group of class that created by the teacher. Then the teacher can evaluate the students' writing and give some suggestion and comments. In other words, *Schoology* can give stimulation for students to try their ability in writing achievement and increase the students' interest in learning writing.

Many researches conducted by experts about the using of *Schoology* in education. The first study was conducted by Low from Thammasat University in 2015. This study revealed that *Schoology* could motivate students and had a positive effect on students' learning outcomes. 80% students agreed that *Schoology* was interesting, flexible, and increase students' mark. Then, in 2016, Wibowo from Satya Wacana Christian University conducted a research about the implementation of *Schoology* in education. The result of this research found that *Schoology* could be an effective way for teaching writing, for supporting 4.0 era. It has proven that there is a significant different students' achievement after and before tough by using *Schoology*. From the results of some studies, it meant that *Schoology* had possitive impacts when implemented in teaching and learning process. Using *Schoology* in education is the important thing that must be conducted by the teacher when the teacher teaches writing. *Schoology* can be an alternative learning media platform that used by the teacher and the students interact each other. In order to know the implication of *Schoology* as a learning media in writing skill to the teachers and the students, this article will explain the implication of *Schoology* in writing skill. This article has purpose to initiate such recommendations; (1) to summarize the literature on *Schoology* for teaching writing skill and (2) to show what is the implication of *Schoology* for teaching writing skill to teachers and students. The discussion will show the use of *Schoology* in teaching and learning process of writing skill and the implication of *Schoology* as learning media platform for writing skill to teachers and students.

Methodology
This paper used a literature study as the method of collecting data, which involved several steps. The first step was collecting data related to the topic of the study from primary and secondary resources. The primary data were taken from several research papers studying the use of *Schoology* in language teaching and learning writing, while the

secondary data were from articles and books, which were used to support the topic of this study. The second step was classifying the data. The data collected from the research papers and articles were related to the use of *Schoology* in language teaching and learning writing, which focus on its implementation. After classifying the data, the next step was analyzing the data, and the last step was drawing conclusions based on the data analysis.

Findings and Discussion

Schoology is micro blog educational website that can be applied by teacher, parent, and students for collaborate about resources, assessment and content on secure and safe learning management platform. Using *Schoology*, students and teachers can reach out to one another and connect by sharing ideas, problems, and helpful tips on writing. Johan (2012: 44) stated that *Schoology* empowers teacher, inspires students, and simplifies administrative tasks across the board. Students not only learn in the class but also learn out of the class, especially when they got writing class.

Schoology founders Jeremy Friedman, Ryan Hwang, Tim Trinidad and Bill Kindler gathered up and began the development of *Schoology* at the end of 2009. Their mission and goal is to reinvent the way technology is implemented in the classroom. With a goal of improving student outcomes, they realized the need to disrupt the inactive education technology market by making *Schoology* obtainable and accessible for every teacher in every classroom.

Schoology not only provides schools and districts with a configurable, scalable and easy-to implement solution, but also provides a basic version of its award-winning platform free for teacher. As a result, enterprise adoption is easier for schools and districts. This is an Award Winning Learning Management System (LMS). Another mission is to authorize educators to give the tools and connections to connect students more efficiently and improve educational effectiveness on both a large and small scale. *Schoology* is not just an LMS. A living

breathing educational community can adjust to changing student needs, learn from collective experiences and continually improve as education and technology progress. Finally yet importantly, *Schoology* is transforming learning through the collaboration of passionate individuals.

Schoology has some advantages when applied by the teacher in teaching and learning writing. By using *Schoology*, teachers can create connections with other students from different schools, states, or cultures. *Schoology* provides a multitude of community resources and connections teachers can make with other teachers. In *Schoology*, students can upload homework assignments, take quizzes, polls and receive grades, feedback, and suggestions from teachers. Here, the parents can be involved by viewing their child's work and grades, and keep in touch with teachers. *Schoology* provides a method for sharing documents and digital media online. In other hand, *Schoology* has some disadvantages. If a student does not have access to a computer and the internet, or a mobile device they would not be able to use the tool. When students and teacher want to use *Schoology*, they need internet connection. In *Schoology*, there is no face-to-face interaction, which can lead to feelings of isolation.

Schoology can be one of teachers' facilities in using technology for learning process. According to Biswas (2013: 19), innovative approaches and tools on *Schoology* website facilitated both teachers and students to build a collaborative community to fulfill the educational goals in the 21st century. *Schoology* is a social networking platform, in which as a Learning Management System (LMS), it can be used for communication between teachers and students by accessing the materials or content of a specific course. In this modern era, teachers use *Schoology* as their learning media in order to ease learning process. The *Schoology* website is reviewed considering the following three design criteria from technology supported instruction by Cummins et al (2007):

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a. Provide cognitive challenge and opportunities for deep processing of meaning
b. Promote self-regulated activity for collaborative inquiry
c. Focus on multi literacies in the twenty-first century need.

As a social networking platform, *Schoology* can facilitate teachers in doing classroom management. By using *Schoology*, teachers are able to post assignments, tests, quizzes, discussions, and other activities online within their courses, allowing students to work individually or collaboratively whenever and wherever they are, even from home.

Biswas (2013: 14) also stated that *Schoology* was a free tool that could help teachers to manage the classroom information. By using *Schoology*, students can still interact each other by online. *Schoology* can make teacher easier in managing the class, by uploading the materials of a certain course or giving feedback for students even when teachers are far away. The purpose of developing and integrating *Schoology* in schools is to connect school community in the technology-supported classroom for improving students' learning. Technology-supported instruction created dynamic educational tool that could be used to generate new ideas from teachers and students (Biswas, 2013: 23).

There were some strategies in classroom management that *Schoology* could support, such as students' involvement in academic work, teachers' instruction, students understood what was expected from them in order to be successful in learning and time could be used efficiently for the task (Biswas, 2013: 23). *Schoology* can also be a tool or communication bridge between the teachers and students by promoting asynchronous e-learning in which it can be accessed at any time not only when the two communicators are online. Before teacher gives instruction in *Schoology*, teacher can give guideline and announcement for his students to do the assignment in *Schoology*. After students do their assignment, teacher can give feedback, some comments, and evaluate the students' works.

Some researcher had conducted the previous studies about *Schoology* educational network. From those previous studies, the researcher can take lessons and their discrepancies based on the found gaps, the recent study is done. Piyada Low from Thammasat University conducted the first study in Thailand (2017), entitled "*Schoology* Learning Management System Implementation in foundation English Class: Learners' Perspective and Learning Achievement". This study revealed that *Schoology* could motivate students and had a positive effect on students' learning outcomes. 80% students agreed that *Schoology* was interesting, flexible, and increase students' value.

Second study conducted by Vania Wibowo from Satya Wacana Christian University (2016), entitled "The effectiveness of using *Schoology* in an argumentative writing class". It was found that the *Schoology* could be an effective way for teaching writing. It had proven that there was a significant different students' achievement after and before tough by using *Schoology*.

Alvin S. Sicat from Centri Escolar University conducted third study in Philippines (2015), entitled "Enhancing College Students' Proficiency in Business Writing Via *Schoology*". This study revealed that *Schoology* was an effective means of teaching Business writing among college students when used as a supplement to traditional method. *Schoology* has possitive impact to the students' skill.

The fourth research did by Azaria Huri Mira Kaho (2016) entitled "How Effective is The Use of *Schoology* in Pronunciation Class". Her research was descriptive research and the result of her study showed that comparing the results of the pretest and posttest, this study wanted to find out the significance of the use of *Schoology* in pronunciation class. The data were collected through amassing both pretest and posttest result of the respondents, which the

respondents were 40 students that diverse in four different pronunciation class in faculty of language and arts in Universitas Kristen Satya Wacana. Unlike the recent research, the data was examined using Statistical Product and Service Solutions (SPSS) application using Wilcoxon Signed Rank Test. The statistical data show that the use of *Schoology* in pronunciation class did not have a significant result. *Schoology* has possitive impact in teaching and learning process. The results from classroom implementation revealed the effectiveness of the product in enhancing students' conceptual understanding and problem solving skills. Students' responses towards the product's utility, attractiveness, and easiness as blended learning media were also positive. The implementation helps improve students' learning achievement. The learning opportunities has the greatest role in the motivation of learning, followed by collaborative learning. A high learning motivation using Social Learning Network, *Schoology* became a highly influential variable on learning achievements of the students.

The implications of using *Schoology* in writing class give many strengths to the students. Firstly, the students will get chances to revise their writing so that it can enhance the students' motivation since they get feedbacks and comments from the teacher. It challenged the students to correct their errors so that they can minimize it. Therefore, the students will be expected to not repeat their same errors in writing. Secondly, the students will get some benefits from reflection and self-assessment. The reflection activities will show the students about their learning progress. It makes the students become critical writers because they can reflect on their strengths and weaknesses so that they will know about what they can do and what they cannot do in learning writing skill. Next, the students will have better understanding about materials they have learned by reviewing their worksheets after getting feedback or comment from their teacher. *Schoology* will make the students more interested in joining the teaching and learning

process especially in writing. Interest gives big influence to the students to improve their writing skill. If the students have interest, they will have high interest in writing many texts that the teacher gives to them. They like to write anything that the teacher gives to them, which is used interesting topic in *Schoology*. They will be active in joining the teaching learning process especially in writing.

Conclusions

As the learning media, *Schoology* make learning more accessible, personalized and provide students with richer educational experiences. Meanwhile, the potentials of Schoology alone include the easiness of use, the security for student safety, and the efficient tools and resources for teachers. *Schoology* can helps the teachers to find out the students' learning progress in writing skill. With *Schoology*, the teachers will recognize the students' strengths and weaknesses in learning writing skill. After the teachers know about that, the teachers can evaluate their teaching and learning plans or method, whether it gives positive or negative enhancement to the students' learning outcome. In the end of teaching and learning process using *Schoology*, it can enhance the interaction between students and teacher because they have to discuss the learning progress in writing together.

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