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Students' Preferences on Online-Based Media for Writing Course and the Reasons

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Abstract This article aims to investigate students' point of view about the most preference on online writing course media and their reasons. The methodology used was qualitative research method. The instrument was the questionnaires that were given to 34 students of Writing Course. They were in the fourth semester majoring in English Teaching. The finding showed the various type of applications and digital technology for learning in synchronous class such as, zoom, Google meet, Facebook, and Whatsapp Chat video. The Social media and translation machines take place as the most preferable online media for writing course. In choosing learning media, teachers must consider the learners' previous knowledge related to technological skills as well as the practicality of the media. There are plenty of sophisticated online media of writing nowadays, but without having a good research on students' preferences, it will be worthless.

Keywords: Students' Preferences, Online-Based Learning Media

Abstrak Artikel ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui sudut pandang mahasiswa tentang preferensi tertinggi pada media matkul menulis secara online serta alasannya. Metodologi y`ang digunakan adalah metode penelitian kualitatif. Instrumen yang digunakan adalah angket yang diberikan kepada 34 mahasiswa. Mereka berada di semester empat. Temuan menunjukkan berbagai jenis aplikasi dan teknologi digital untuk pembelajaran di kelas sinkron seperti, Zoom, Google meet, Facebook, dan video Whatsapp Chat. Media social dan mesin terjemahan menjadi media online yang paling banyak dipilih oleh mahasiswa. Dalam memilih media pembelajaran, guru harus mempertimbangkan pengetahuan siswa sebelumnya terkait dengan keterampilan teknologi serta kepraktisan media. Ada banyak media menulis online yang canggih saat ini, namun tanpa kajian mendalam tentang preferensi mahasiswa tetap sangat diperlukan.

Kata Kunci: Preferensi Mahasiswa, Media Pembelajaran Daring

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INTRODUCTION

In the due of covid-19, there are so many pro and contra about pandemic situation. For minimizing the transmission of corona virus, the government force to apply social distancing for all citizens at most of the word especially in academic field. According to UNESCO (2020) many countries conduct the same system of closing the schools as the way to respond the emergency of public health, there is at least 1.5 billion schools impacted by Covid-19 in 188 countries. Therefore, the ministry of Education and Culture of Indonesia stated in Circular Letter of Ministry of Education number 4 tahun 2000, teaching and learning in all levels of education will be done by online learning and do the learning process from home (Kemdikbud 2020). The condition forces teachers to make the transition of the way from the teaching face to face learning into online learning.

Writing has always been seen as an important skill in English language. Writing is a form of communication that allows students to put their feelings and ideas on paper, to organize their knowledge and believes into convincing arguments (Istiqomah 2019). The process of writing is complex in which these processes should follow from its first step until the final step of writing (Fajrina 2017). Thus, it is important to take attention on what details in writing courses field.

In this pandemic era, English teacher have to find a good and an effective strategies to teach students. Writing skill is one of the subject materials in English. The basic competency that should be achieved in writing English subject is the students have an ability to develop and produce simply functional written text (Siregar and Dongoran 2020). Writing is both productive and expressive. In writing, writers should be able to combine graphology, structure, and vocabulary (Irmawati, Asri, and Aziz 2021). Writing has always been deemed a demanding task for both teachers and students; while the former does their best to impart language knowledge and to incorporate different teaching strategies and techniques so that students manage to produce adequate pieces of writing, the latter try hard to follow their instructors' guidelines (Ouahidi 2021). Therefore, strategy is one of most important elements in the learning process because the available resources are very limited (Prabantoro 2018). The used of strategies will

Students' Preferences on Online-Based Media for Writing Course make easier for teachers and students to receive the materials. Hence, it also make the process of learning becomes enjoyable and easy to understand.

In the field of writing course, there are many things to be prepared such as teaching and study methods, techniques and strategies, including media. According to Arifin (2017) writing strategies are considered as a problem-solving task with goals to be accomplished. This criterion is also important to be fulfilled by the learning media itself. In this era, there are many learning medias which are already very sophisticated such as, Edmodo, Moodle, Quizzes, etc. Learning is no longer merely to sit in school. Children can study anywhere at any time and use many available media, such as social media, facebook, line, and so on (Jumariati and Febriyanti, 2020). However, many previous studies focus on the strategies of using those media or the effect of utilizing those media. Still very few studies concern on the students' preferences. It actually also very important to investigate students' preference in order to see the students' point of view and its compatibility to the best criteria of those media to the course goals.

Online learning is access to learning experiences via some technology. The teaching and learning are all doing in online from doing test, discussion, exercise, and even task (Carliner 2004). Moorhouse (2020) stated that teacher can keep giving the lesson through the digital platform such google classroom, zoom, goggle meet, what Sapp and many more. In the line with this, the technology tools are needed such using devices like laptop, computer and smartphone. Thus, there are so many platform media to be accessed that make the communication by teacher and students helped.

There are many studies investigates on the students' opinion on online media for leaning. Amin and Sundari (2020) found that the students perceive positive agreement and feel much learning and improvement when they use digital learning platforms such as Cisco WebEx Meeting video conferencing, Google Classroom learning management system, and WhatsApp mobile messenger application. Nuraeni and Nurmalia (2020) stated in their study that WhatsApp provided easier and faster communication between teachers and students for academic purposes. It allowed students to share and exchange information through the features of WhatsApp, for example, images, audios, videos and many more. Another benefit of utilizing WhatsApp is how it also helped the students to recognize e-learning activities actively. Other study

Students' Preferences on Online-Based Media for Writing Course conducted by Zheng et. al. (2017) finds that Wikis, blogs, and cloud-based writing platforms, such as Google Docs are needed in writing course as

collaborative tools among the team in academic writing projects.

Moreover, some studies focus on the influence of online media for writing. First, Suswati & Saleh (2020) state that the students indicate the progress in sharing their ideas in the writing class using social media such as WhatsApp, Instagram and Facebook as learning materials. They concluded that the use of social media can solve the gaps, such as conventional method, monotonous materials, the lack of internet access, and not up-to-date texts. (Chandra and Yuyun 2018), it is shown that the students use Google Translate in three different aspects, such as vocabulary, spelling, and grammar. Vocabulary becomes the most used aspect in Google Translate, with word-level becomes the highest one, followed by phrase as the second most used. Sentence becomes the third most used while spelling becomes the fourth. Grammar is the fifth among the others. However, the majority students admitted that Google Translate is helpful if it is dealing with word.

Nowadays, the teacher also can explain the process of writing through some media platform easily. Second, as Andini (2020) mentions that the contribution of Facebook Group in writing is effective especially in pre-writing activity where it helps the students in the brainstorming process before the actual writing activity. The ideas or peer feedback help them get a better idea for writing, and they also find it easier to complete their essays after participating in the FG discussion. The students prefer using FG in writing activity to traditional face-to-face activity because they feel comfortable expressing their ideas. The writing activity through FG also makes them engaged to think critically. Besides, (Alobaid, 2020) evidently shows that the smart learning environment of ICT multimedia technology as a source for language learning with its multiple handy features can efficiently drive a range of desired effects for the optimization of writing fluency of language use and expression in the language learners' daily written communication.

Truell, Zhao and Alexander (2009) found that faculty's media preferences in distance education are different from those of students. In their study, both faculty and students preferred online lecture notes and assignments the most. However, in video conferencing formats, significant differences emerged. Faculty

preferred TV-based two-way live lectures, whereas students preferred Internet-based two-way live video and audio lectures. Nowadays, the use of online videos is becoming increasingly popular in distance education, and some faculty members also record their lectures and upload them on course websites. In a recent study, Sadik (2015) compared different types of online videos and found that students perceive screen casting recordings to be more useful than lecture capture recordings.

Furthermore, the use of media platform make the students get the achievement and create something interesting. It was proven in Lestari (2018) who says that the implementation of Padlet, a webspace, in teaching writing descriptive text Padlet can improve students' writing achievements and it can be considered as the media in learning teaching process applied in other skills, such as designing interesting layout, well introduction and interesting topic to be discussed and examined. Besides, the tools used in learning English writing is also important, according to Erben (2009) tools are created by people under specific cultural and historical conditions.

Havice, Davis, Foxx and Havice (2010) argued that although the used of rich media in online courses is more likely to boost students satisfaction, it can be also increase the risk of technical problems, which in turn discourages students to use advanced technology. Moreover, Cole (2016) revealed that online students tend to prefer face to face interaction, and is rather related to their communication satisfaction with instructors. These studies support Caspi and Gorsky's (2005) claim that students may not always prefer rich media to learn media in trhe online learning context.

However, among all those result of the previous studies, there is none of the study tries to find out the students' preference on the best online media for writing course along with their actual reasons. This present study fills the gab of the previous studies that tend to focus on finding the best tools and the best strategy to be use in online learning. Students' opinion about all aspects of the online learning needs to be counted as one of the most important factors of learning. Good score is not only the indicator of success in teaching and learning. Students need to enjoy the process of learning. It can make them as lifelong learner.

Even though, there are various kinds of online tool that have been

proofed effectively help the students in learning, not necessarily put all those list of online media as the most preferred media in their writing course. It can be cause by many reasons such as, practicality of the tools, familiarity, and accessibility. This is why this present study was aimed to find out the students' preference on online media for writing course. It was expected that the result of the study can see the actual fact of students' opinion on the media for writing. The result was also help the teacher to not only focusing on using certain kind of media without seeing the students' main perspective as the users.

METHOD

This study uses qualitative research methodology. All of the data are gathered are analyzed by having triangulation. One of the instruments is questionnaire. It focused on students' perspective of writing course learning media. The participant of this study was the students majoring English education of UIN Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta. There are 34 students who participated in this study. They participated in the study by filling the questionnaire that figure out the types of online media that they use in writing. It is also utilized to classify their choices into the most preferred media for this course. Next, the researchers analyze the data by seeing the percentage of each question. The conclusion is taken based on the highest percentage of students' choice in the questionnaire. It is followed by taking interview with some of the participants. It was used to relate their answer in the questionnaire with their actual though. Finally, they were connected to the relevant theories. The outcomes of the data were reported from the beginning to the end.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

There are several findings from this present study. First, the most preferable online learning media for learning writing is translation machine such as, Google translate. Students use it to help them translate some of difficult words. Second, the most preferable media based on accessibility, familiarity, flexibility, and efficiency is social media such as, Whatsapp and Telegram. The following part will elaborate the finding in details.

Based on the result from the questionnaire, the population of the students UIN Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta is majoring English education. They used technology to learn English language more than a year. These following tables will show the general views of the students' experience in using ICT-Based and online learning media among 34 respondents.

Table 1. The students' learning media in writing course

Types of Learning Media	Users Percentage	
Social media such as, Whatsapp, Telegram, Wechat	82.4%	
Web series, such as BBC web, Youtube, Journal web,	79.4 %	
Synchronous media such as Zoom, Google meet,	88.2%	
Facebook chat video		
Translation machine, such as Google translate	94.1 %	
Grammar checker	73,5%	
Digital dictionaries	58.8%	
Reference Apps, such as Mendeley	17.6%	

Moreover, the questionnaire also shows the preferences based on the effect that the students feel on their writing improvement. The result finds out the students' reasons of choosing certain kind of online media. The students may choose more than one answer. This following table shows in detail.

Table 2. The students' preferences and reasons of online writing media

Types of Learning Media	Reasons			
	Accessibility	Flexibility	Familiarity	Affectivity
Social media such as,	79,4%	73,5%	94,1%	50.6%
Whatsapp, Telegram,				
Wechat				
Web series, such as BBC	47,1%	70.2%	58,8%	44.6%
web, Youtube, Journal				
web,				
Synchronous media such	41,2%	30.3%	63.5%	56.3%
as Zoom, Google meet,				
Facebook chat video				
Translation machine, such	64.7%	70.6%	78.5%	60.2%
as Google translate				
Grammar checker	73,5%	60.6%	70.2%	60%
Digital dictionaries	58,8%	56.7%	68.8%	63.5%
Reference Apps, such as	17,6%	15.3%	10.2%	17.3%
Mendeley				

Accessibility means the students ability in terms of cost and the easiness. The students prefer social media as the most accessible media in learning writing because it is not expensive and can be accessed anytime without any significance obstacles. Social media is also chosen as the most flexible media because they can be easily can direct respond from their classmates as well as from the lecturer. Besides, this media is also the most familiar one among other media since they have been using it for years and supported by not complicated feature of the application.

Flexibility defines as the easily modified to get respond. Besides social media, the translation machines are considered as the most flexible online media in learning writing according to students' opinion. It is because they can directly answer their problems especially in unfamiliar vocabulary and grammar. Majority of the students which reach 91.1% of the students also agree that this media is one of the most familiar media for them. However, lower percentage (79.4%) shows that the accessibility of this media is not as high as two other reasons. The students cannot use this media with maximum results by using all types of their gadget. Using cellphone for translation machine can be easily access the data that they want to convert to the translation machines.

The next reason is the familiarity. There are several definitions given by the students related to familiarity of the media, such as knowing the manual of the media, commonly used not only for learning but also for entertainment purposes. Social media definitely takes the highest position among other media as the most familiar one, followed by translation machines, digital dictionaries, and synchronous media. Web series is classified as one of the most flexible media but not less familiar compared to other media.

Effectivity of the learning media is measured based on the students' opinion. This study do not use any achievement result to see how effective the media to help the students to develop their ability in writing. Surprisingly, this reason does not get high responds compared to other reasons. In general, only 50% of the students agreed that online media effectively help them to improve their writing.

There is a major difference found in this study compared to other studies. According to Sakkir et. al. (2016), the most effective media is zoom cloud meeting. However, in this study students preference seems do not really related

to the effectiveness of the media in helping them to improve their writing ability. The students tend to focus on the accessibility, flexibility and familiarity in choosing the media that they use the most. The students do not find the significant role of online media in increasing their knowledge and skills in writing, but it actually helps them in writing with much more easily. Easiness in writing turns out not a guarantee of good quality of the writing itself.

This present study definitely strengthens some of the previous studies. First, a study conducted by Kobayashi (2017) who found that online media is correlated with higher level of technology skills. Based on result of the study as shown in table 1, it is clearly seen that more sophisticated media tends to be less preferred by students. Therefore, the teachers must make sure that all of the media that are used during the process of teaching and learning must be supported by adequate technology skills on that particular media.

Moreover, the result of the study supports the findings of Sujarwo et al. (2020) who figures out that the students positively responds online learning media during the pandemic of Covid 19 for its flexibility. The students' preference goes to the circumstances that provide them to use the media as well as get faster more direct respond for discussion with the classmates and lecturer. Since almost all of the students use their phone more often and find their cellphones are more flexible compared to their netbook or laptop, therefore one of the indicator is they can flexibly use it by using their phone and easily use anytime and anywhere.

In terms of basic theory of choosing media, there are several reasons to choose a learning media. Marpanaji et. al. (2018) say that there are four reasons to choose learning media: to improve the quality of learning, to present and strengthen the main point of the knowledge and skills, strengthen information and add more opportunities to comprehend the material without repeating it, and to accommodate students' characteristics. This present study shows that students still cannot precisely determine which learning media that specifically gives significant effect on their learning quality. Rich type of media used in the same type definitely not giving more effective learning result. Teachers and lecturers must be able to build a bridge between students' interest, preferences and choices with the most representable media which can highly improve the students' writing quality.

CONCLUSION

There are several important points that can be concluded from this study. First, social media and translation machines take place as the most preferable online media for writing course. Second, in determining media, teachers must consider the learners' previous knowledge related to technological skills as well as the practicality of the media. The Social media and translation machines take place as the most preferable online media for writing course. In choosing learning media, teachers must consider the learners' previous knowledge related to technological skills as well as the practicality of the media. There are plenty of sophisticated online media of writing nowadays, but without having a good research on students' preferences, it will be worthless. In the future, it recommended conducting other studies of students' knowledge and technology skills on ICT-based and online-based learning media.

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