A Survey on the use of Social Media as a Medium in Learning Writing Skills

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Abstract—This study aimed to investigate the use of social media as a medium in learning writing skills. The subjects of this survey study were 124 second-year students of the English Study Program, Faculty of Teachers Training and Education, Universitas Riau (2019 batch) selected using the total sampling technique. There were 85 out 124 students who completed the questionnaire. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics in the form of frequencies and percentages. This study showed that the kinds of social media that are commonly used in learning writing are Twitter, YouTube, Instagram, WhatsApp, and Facebook. Some specific writing skills learned through social media claimed by the respondents included learning new vocabulary, grammatical structure, correct spelling, paragraph development, correct capitalization, correct punctuation, unified ideas, and coherent ideas. Respondents also reported that they used social media for several purposes: adding references and information, taking as learning resources, developing creativity, collecting assignments, conducting online discussion, exchanging learning materials with classmates, and sending material in learning writing skills. It can be concluded social media has been part of significant alternative learning media used by students to improve their writing skills.

Keywords—Social Media; Medium; Writing Skills

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I. INTRODUCTION

As we are living in the digital age, learning is currently much easier with the internet. Internet is a communication networking that uses to connect electronic media with other media. Social media has played an important part in people’s lives today. It has been massively used for social purposes as well as for learning purposes. Handayani (2017) states that the appearance of social media has brought an impact on people’s social life. According to Salikin and Tahir (2017), “social media are computer-mediated tools that allow people to communicate, share ideas, exchange information, and share images/audios/videos to the virtual world community through the internet”. In other words, social media is an innovation in which the users can interact without meet each other directly.

Muller (2020) reports that there are about ten popular social media in Indonesia: YouTube, WhatsApp, Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, Line, Pinterest, TikTok, Tumblr, and Reddit.” Ten popular social media are not only used for entertainment but can also be used as a medium within education. As El-badawy & Hashem (2015) state that social media has a positive impact on the development of the students’ education. Besides, using social media in education can attract students’ learning interests based on their own without the need for instructions.

As Sakikir, et al (2016) state social media can be used to support and naturally motivating tool in learning English in various genres. Then, social media can be an additional learning source for students. The more sources the students have, the better their writing skills might be. As El-badawy & Hashem (2015) state that using social media allows students to improve their learning writing skills since students have the chance to get and share information, exchange ideas from the sources in online networking.

Social media can function as an interesting learning tool for students in learning writing. As Rao (2017) states that the characteristics of effective learning writing, students should be exposed to interesting and current topics, rich and appropriate vocabulary, and tools that can engage readers.

Nevertheless, Majid & Stapa (2017) argue that students are still facing difficulties in learning writing skills. As Anggitaningrum, et al (2021) “Writing is one of productive skill which presupposed difficult skill to be learned by the
students”. It’s because students have to learn the structure of the writing. Then, it supported by Soliman (2014) states that contact hours in traditional face-to-face classes are not enough to help students develop their writing skills so students need increasing writing skills by independent learning.

This research is targeting English students of English study program of Faculty of teachers training and education Universitas Riau (2019 batch). They have learned Writing I in the 2nd semester. Based on the syllabus of the second year in the 3rd and 4th semesters of the English study program, they will continue learning about writing subjects II and III. In writing subjects, students learn how to be good at writing starting which begins from basic or simple sentences to writing simple paragraphs. Next, students learn about how to good in paragraph writing or essay writing to increase students’ skills in writing and to develop ideas into a well-written form.

Regarding all the reasons above, every student usually uses social media as a medium for updating various information following the developing trend. On the other hand, social media also can be used as a medium in learning writing skills. Thus, the study aims to investigate three following research questions:
1. What kinds of social media are used by the students in learning writing?;
2. What kinds of writing skills have the students learned through social media?;
3. What kinds of learning activities have the students done in learning writing through social media?

II. METHOD

This is a survey research investigating 124 students of English department students of Universitas Riau on how they have used social media to improve their writing skills. Sampling was done by the total sampling technique. As Sugiyono (2012) states that total sampling is a sampling technique when all members of the population are used as the sample. Thus in this research, all population was used as the sample.

The students were from the 2019 batch that has learned Writing I subject in their second semester. Based on the curriculum of the English department, they are required to do some more advanced writing classes after passing this subject. In other words, Writing 1 is considered to be a basic writing class for first-year students.

This survey study was conducted under a quantitative research approach as it aimed to collect and analyze numerical data so the researchers can describe, explain, predict, or control phenomena of interest (Gay, Mills & Airasian 2012). Thus, numbers of data can be analyzed using statistical procedures, and the result of the data analysis was being explained descriptively. To achieve the objective of the study, the primary data was collected in a cross-sectional survey, which means the data were collected from individuals at a single point in time (Gay, Mills & Airasian, 2012).

The questionnaire was distributed in the form of Google-form which consists of 25 items that were self-developed by the writer following the literature on the use of social media in the literature review. The literature included the ideas of Stewart (2016) who argues social media can be used for specialized tasks like blogging (text or photo) and writing (e.g., Blogger, Tumblr, WordPress), sharing photos, videos, drawings, and/or text, (e.g., Vine, Snapchat, Instagram, Twitter), sharing sourced information and discussing it (e.g., Pinterest, Reddit, Twitter), gaming (e.g., Farmville, World of Warcraft), saving and categorizing information to view later (Pocket, Google+, Pinterest), etc”.

Thus, the blueprint of the questionnaire is as follows:

**TABLE I: THE BLUEPRINT OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No</th>
<th>Statements on the Use of Social Media as Medium in Learning Writing Skills</th>
<th>The Item Number</th>
<th>Total Questions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>kinds and frequency of social media usage in learning writing</td>
<td>1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>writing skills learned through social media</td>
<td>11,12,13, 14,15,16, 17, 18</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>learning activities in using social media</td>
<td>19,20,21, 22,23, 24, 25</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Total Questions</strong></td>
<td><strong>25</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The next analysis was done to find answers to the research questions as previously stated. The findings of each question are described in the following sections:

1. Kinds of social media used in learning writing

Data regarding the first research question - What kinds of social media are used by the students in learning writing? – is summarised in the following chart.

![Chart 1. Kinds and frequency of social media usage in learning writing](chart1)

The chart shows the rank of the ten social media used by the students to learning writing skills in terms of frequency. The highest frequency was obtained by Twitter with a mean value of 4.2. This means that Twitter is a platform that is most commonly used in learning writing. It indicates that social media Twitter is a microblogging that is useful for students in learning writing activity. This is probably because students can use Twitter to develop creativity in writing practice, write concisely, and get up-to-date references. Concision is a must in Twitter as the platform limits its users to write a maximum of only 200 characters.

The second highest mean value is 3.7 which belong to YouTube. This means that YouTube is most commonly used in learning writing. YouTube can assist students in learning writing. It can make learning more interesting and attractive through audiovisual that could make students get a better understanding about writing.

Next, data indicates that most students also commonly use Instagram (F2 statement) WhatsApp (F7 statements) with a mean value of 3.6, and Facebook (F1 statement) with a mean value of 2.9 as a platform for learning writing. This is probably because Instagram and Facebook can be accessed easily, and are useful for assisting them in learning writing activities.

The next list is social media that are not frequently used by the students with a mean value between 2.1 - 1.5. The lowest mean value was obtained by the F8 (1.4). The mean value means that most students never use social media Reddit as a platform in learning writing. In other words, students didn’t use those social media and it is not possible to assist them in learning writing activities. Particularly on social media Reddit, it can be proven the social media has very few users, which makes students unfamiliar with social media.

2. Writing skills learned through social media

The following data is the summary of the second research question - What kinds of writing skills have the students learned through social media?.

![Chart 2. Skills learned through social media](chart2)

Chart 2 shows the types of writing skills learned by the students via social media use. They are arranged from the highest frequency to the lowest one. The highest mean value is the W2 statement with a mean value of 4.4, which means that students most frequently learned new vocabulary through social media. It indicates that social media can help students in improving their vocabulary thus it can be easier to read books or novels, watching the movie, and listening music in English.

The second highest mean value is the W1 statement with a mean value of 4.1, which means that most students frequently learn grammatical structure through social media. It indicates that students learn about sentences, also about the use of word classes (part of speech), and so on. In other words, social media is possible to assist students in learning grammatical structure, which is without grammar communication particularly in writing is messy.

Indeed, students also learn about spelling words (W4), organizing paragraphs (W3), correcting capitalization (W5), correcting punctuation (W6), and unifying ideas (W7) through social media. The learning activities are categorized into medium rank with a mean value between 3.9-3.1. Meanwhile, the lowest mean value is the W8 statement by getting a mean value of 2.8. W8 statement is also categorized into medium rank. It means that students also learn about coherent ideas through social media. It indicates that the writing mechanics composition is important to learn. In brief, if the use of writing mechanics is wrong it causes students to misunderstand and be confused about the meaning of the text.
3. Learning Writing Activities via Social Media.

The following data is the summary of the third research question - What kinds of learning activities have the students done in learning writing through social media?

As previously mentioned that this study aimed to investigate how students have used social media in learning writing skills. It was found that there are five types of social media categorized under high and medium rank. They are Twitter, YouTube, Instagram, WhatsApp, and Facebook. Although there are some differences in rank, this result is similar to the previous research on the frequency of social media in learning writing by Yunus, et al (2019) which found that students commonly use social media namely; YouTube, WhatsApp, Instagram, TikTok, and Facebook.

Writing skills are learned through social media shows medium rank. Students most frequently learn writing skills through social media; those are already sorted from highest to lowest mean value. Namely learn new vocabulary, grammatical errors, spell words correctly, organize paragraphs well, correct capitalization, correct punctuation, and unified ideas. Likewise, the lowest mean value indicates students even learned coherent ideas through social media. However, the mean value is the lowest on this topic, the mean value is also categorized into medium rank. This result is the similarities to Wil, et al (2019) about writing skills that are learned through social media with the highest frequency namely learn new vocabularies. It indicated that social media roles can help students in learning English. In other words, social media can enrich students' vocabulary. It showed that the use of social media has a significant effect on effectiveness in learning writing skills.

Social media is used in learning writing shows medium rank. The data indicates that students most frequently used social media in learning writing skills, those are already sorted from highest to lowest mean value. Namely to add references and information, and as the main learning resource, developing creativity, collecting writing assignments, online discussion, and receiving material. Likewise, the one lowest mean value indicates students even learned coherent ideas through social media. However, the mean value is the lowest on this topic, but the mean value is already categorized into medium rank. This result is different from the previous research on the frequency of social media is used in learning writing skills by Wil, et al (2019), which found that students commonly use social media for developing creativity in writing. It indicated that social media helps students write better in English and the frequency of participation in English writing activities.

IV. CONCLUSION

Social media is not only used as entertainment but it can also be used within education. This study found that social media have been utilized by students in learning English especially in improving their writing skills. Among various social media, the most commonly used are Twitter, YouTube, Instagram, WhatsApp, and Facebook. This study has also found that students have learned some writing skills through social media. These skills include learning new vocabulary, learning grammatical structure, spelling words correctly, learning how to organize paragraphs, correcting capitalization, correcting punctuation, unifying ideas, and learning how to make ideas being coherent. These skills are learned by the students through some social media-based activities such as using social media for learning resources, adding social media for references and information, as a means in collecting

Chart 3 presents seven learning activities done by the students to improve their writing skills in social media. They range from adding references and information, taking as learning resources, developing creativity, to exchanging learning materials with their classmates via social media.

Based on the data, the first highest mean value is the S7 statement with the mean value of 4.3, meaning that students most frequently used social media for adding references and information in learning writing skills. The second highest mean value is the S1 statement with a mean value of 3.7. By obtaining the mean value most students concur with the S1 statement, which means that students most frequently used social media as the main learning resource in learning writing skills. It indicates that social media is possible for assisting students and even to improve the quality of a learning writing activity. Besides, social media allows students to choose references, information, or learning source based on students' want to sharpen their analytical writing skills.

Indeed, most students also use social media for developing creativity (S6), collecting assignments (S2), for online assignments (S3), and receiving material (S5) in learning writing skills are already categorized into medium rank with a mean value between 3.5-3.2. Meanwhile, there is one statement that gets the lowest mean value is S4 statement with a mean value of 3.1. The statement is classified in the medium category, which means respondents moderate with the statement. It means that most students also used social media for sending material in learning writing skills. It indicates that the importance of social media is related to how these tools help and facilitate students in learning writing activities.

Discussion
assignments, for online discussion, and for exchanging learning materials among their classmates. The findings imply that social media is a potential learning platform to explore by both teachers and students to facilitate the teaching and learning process, particularly in a writing class.

REFERENCES


