

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

The development of information and communication technology (ICT) has provided positive effects on education, especially in learning process. Through the use of technology, the work of teachers can be assisted, students' interest to learn is increased, and thus the quality of teaching could also be improved (Bates & Poole, 2003; Bottino & Robotti, 2007; Godwin-Jones, 2011). However, in practice, the application of technology in education does have its own problems. Two things to be dominant in this case are the lack of teaching practitioners who have professional competence in the field of ICT and the availability of softwares. Based on those conditions, so it is reasonable that teachers prefer the easiest alternative, which uses printed-media.

The use of printed-media has long dominated formal education, but the time has come to introduce available sophisticated technologies in language teaching. The sophisticated media mentioned in this case does not need to be new or complex, as long as that media use could fundamentally transformed the way students learn and can changed students from consumers to contributors of information, so the media then could be applied in learning (Ahluwalia, Gupta, & Aggarwal, 2011).

The utilization of technology in teaching English as foreign language has been well established during decades. Currently, the intention focuses on technology-based application which could create learning opportunities in various subject curricula (Chang, Wong, & Chang, 2011), and about how it could improve students' performance (Richardson, 2006; Hung, Hwang, & Huang, 2012). Blogging is one of the examples and it is becoming pedagogical alternative for teaching-learning (Campbell, 2003; Ward, 2004; Pinkman, 2005; Arslan & Şahin-Kızıl, 2010; Sun & Chang, 2012).

Blog has become indispensable part of academic life for decades (McClellan, 2004). In language learning, blog is better known as Edublog. The use

of Edublog is basically simple, since the practitioners requires no technical knowledge of HTML in operating it (Kadjer & Bull, 2003). However, despite its simplicity, Edublog is mainly supported by the constructivist approach, as their use underscores learner interactions (Kern, 2006), learner-centered, social interactions and active social learning (Ferdig, 2007). Moreover, Edublog also could successfully enhance students to work collaboratively in sharing knowledge and exchanging ideas (Lee, 2009).

Edublog is effective educational media (Niles, 2013). In field of teaching-learning, this media is frequently used for years (Blackstone, Spiri, & Naganuma, 2007; Boyd, 2006; Churchill, 2011; Dieu, 2004; Murray & Hourigan, 2008; Pinkman, 2005; Richardson, 2006). Particularly in writing, this media is known useful to assist students' writing skills through authentic productions (Pinkman, 2005). Moreover, the exchanging of informations and comment through blogging has been shown to be beneficial and motivational factors for language learners (Pinkman, 2005; Yang & Chang, 2011).

Based on the explanation above, it is indeed that Edublog or blog can effectively use to facilitate language teaching and learning. However, in contrast, there are still many teaching practitioners who have not realized it. As matter of fact, if the application of Edublog can be implemented well, the use of Edublog is assumed to be useful as transformational technology for teaching-learning (William & Jacobs, 2004).

The use of Edublog in language learning is perfectly assimilated with the implementation of Project-based learning. Edublog that integrated Project-based learning will provide a real-world, constructivist, and cooperative learning environment to the students (Bottino & Robotti, 2007; Hung, Hwang, & Huang, 2012). David (2008) mentioned that technology integrated project-based learning could provide students with more learning chances and interpersonal interactions, as it conforms to the requirements of technological instruction. Moreover, it is also considered that this strategy could assist learners in acquiring, managing, and integrating knowledge, as well as solving problems independently (Schmeck & Lockhart, 1983).

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Project-based learning is known as an instructional strategy in empowering learners to pursue content knowledge on their own and demonstrate their new understanding through a variety of presentation modes (Stripling, Lovett, & Macko, 2009). The reason of empowering here is project-based learning is relevant with the concept of fun learning and hands-on experiences. Fun in Project Based Learning means this strategy is able to make students enjoy to learn and freely express their ideas. Moreover, hands-on experiences means this strategy allows the students not only physically connect with the material that is being learned, but also creatively think how the results of project should be presented and communicated (CASTAÑEDA, 2014; Chang, Wong, & Chang, 2011; Coffin, 2013; David, 2008; Faiq, 2014; Krajcik, Czerniak, & Berger, 2002; Patton, 2012).

Project-based learning promote learning achievement among students, since the implementation of it leaves rooms for learners to decide on what to do and how to do the project (James, 2001 as cited in Blazquez, 2007). Consequently, learners' autonomy and collaborative working might be developed (Pablos Pons & Jiménez Cortés, 2007). This autonomy and collaborative working will help students to maintain their interest and motivate them to take responsibility for their own learning (Worthy, 2000; Blumenfeld, et al., 1991).

Based on those ideas, this study aims at proposing the implementation of project-based learning using Edublog in EFL writing. This study believes that by exploiting the use of Edublog in writing, the opportunities for students to experiment with digital publishing would be enhanced (Gregg, 2006). Moreover, the use of Edublog is assumed to give learners' opportunities to work autonomously, and produce authentic products and presentation of their writing (Thomas, 2000; Boss & Krauss, 2007; Patton, 2012).

1.2. Research Questions

Based on the background of the study discuss above, the main questions to be addressed in this study are:

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1. Is the use of Edublog in the implementation of Project Based Learning effective to improve students' writing skill in Vocational School?
2. What are students' perceptions after using Edublog for their writing project?

1.3 Purpose of the Study

Referring to the background of study and research questions formulated above, this research aims:

1. To investigate the effectiveness of the use of Edublog in the implementation of Project Based Learning in EFL Writing classroom in a Vocational School.
2. To investigate students' perception after using Edublog for their project work.

1.4 The Scope of the Research

This study was limited to investigate the use of Edublog in the implementation of Project Based Learning in EFL Writing, on a particular subject of writing, in which vocational students are involved.

1.5 Significance of the study

This study was expected to contribute to the technology-use in EFL classroom theoretically, practically, and professionally. In terms of theoretically, the result of this study can enhance teachers' understanding in using technology, especially Edublog, as an alternative in promoting project based learning in EFL Writing. Practically, this study provides the some guideline measures to use technology, particularly about blogging. Professionally, the findings of this study may inspire the teachers to make classroom teaching innovative and interesting.

1.6 Definition of terms

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a. Edublog

Edublog is blog that is used in education (Dudeney & Hockly, 2007). This social networking covers a wide range of topics related to education, from musing on educational policy and developments to the learner composition (Godwin-Jones, 2003; Duffy & Bruns, 2006; Zhang, 2009; Yang S. H., 2009; Fellner & Apple, 2006).

b. Project Based Learning

Project based learning is also defined as the instructional strategy of empowering learners to pursue content knowledge on their own and demonstrate their new understandings through a variety of presentation modes (Stripling, Lovett, & Macko, 2009)

c. Writing

Writing is defined as one of the most important skills in learning English as a foreign language, which reflects the power of students in mastering writing techniques, such as the learning of writing skills, rules and conventions (Okasha & Hamdi, 2014).

1.7 The Organization of Thesis

This thesis consists of five chapters as follows:

Chapter I

The first chapter is an introduction to what the research project is all about and covers the background of the study, research questions, objective of the study, the significance of the study, the limitation of the study, and the organization of the study.

Chapter II

The second chapter contains a review of related literature to understand the whole idea of what the projected study is trying to communicate. The chapter includes the theories and some related research on the problem studied

Chapter III

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This chapter provides the elaboration on the designed research methodology. It mainly contains the description of research design and details of data collection and data analysis procedure to conduct the research.

Chapter IV

This chapter outlines the general description of the research data units, as well as outlining the analysis and discussion of research results.

Chapter V

The last chapter of this research report summarizes what has been found out and discussed throughout the research processes. Following this, some suggestions are addressed to some parties that relate to the findings of this research.

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