

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

The existence of internet in the last century created new and challenging environments for learning, teaching and also assessment. A number of studies explore the uses of new technologies such as web pages and discussion groups (Schellens & Valcke, 2006) as cited in Ridgway (2009), emails, synchronous chats, blogs and wikis in various educational settings and across disciplines. However, the technologies are new and it is important to explore new and effective ways of using them to enhance the processes of teaching and learning.

Nowadays, people come up with some new ways of communicating which make a significant impact on teaching and learning situation. As we move forward through this rapidly evolving information age, the integration of information and communication technologies into education has become “an imperative” (Warchauer, 2002; p.455). However, electronic literacy or called it as mastery of basic technology skills has become a prerequisite for every literate person in this era. As such, there is an overwhelming demand for the incorporation of modern technologies in education at all levels of stage. In

fact, these technologies have opened new avenues for assisting both teacher and learners (Dixon and Johnson, 2001).

One of the useful technologies which can be used as an interactive media in teaching and learning process is internet. The use of internet for researching and gathering information is enriching in many language teaching and learning situations, and most of the sites in English are more accessible than ever before. These kinds of resources are intended to help language teachers to be able to use them as various kinds of media in various language teaching contexts.

It seems that internet is no longer only a place to look for information, it is rapidly a place to expand, communicate, build network, publish, play and collaborate. Those advantages from internet make foreign language learners can have access to virtual classrooms and depth and breadth of teaching and learning situations, also materials which previous online learning or even physical classroom-based learning could not give. In pronunciation class, for example it is better showing students with news program on BBC, so the students know exactly how to pronounce the words correctly rather than teachers pronounce the words by themselves.

Clearly, the influence of technology in education manifested in the shift toward adopting new forms of course delivery which conceptualizes learners as knowledge creators, rather than as a passive recipient. It enables the relationship between teacher and students more democratic, humanistic,

and constructivist where the two sides act like a partner. Thus, there are also several things that teacher should consider before choosing what technology can help the teaching and learning process, to begin with teacher need to understand what they are doing from a theoretical standpoint, then what teaching approach that they are taking, and the last is what type of learning they are encouraging. Teachers also need to know how the technology itself can fit with students' understanding of language acquisition and how it can best support the pedagogical practices. Also, teachers need to know the technology which is going to be used.

With this concern in mind, blog can be one of valuable ways which can be used in EFL or ESL classroom. Blogs can add value to a lesson, it is also can be effectively integrated into the "broader professional context" which includes an understanding of learner needs, the educational setting, available resources, syllabus, and teaching learning goals (of Mc.Donough & Shaw, 1992, p.5).

There are unlimited reasons for using blogs in education, such as to provide a real audience for students writing, to provide extra reading practice for students, to increase the sense of community in a class, to encourage students to participate, to create an online portfolio of students written work as stated by Stanley (2005) on Zhang (2009). The primarily factor creates student interest in starting to use blogs. It is claimed that blogs work best when learners get into the habit of using them. If learners are not encouraged enough

to write in the blog, as well as Classroom blog, blogs can quickly be abandoned.

Classroom blogs are well suited to serve as online journals for students, particularly since they normally enable uploading and linking of files. Language learners could use a Classroom blog linked to a course. By publishing students' writing in the Classroom blog, the students have possibility of writing for readers beyond classmates, not usually possible in discussion forums. Readers in turn can comment on what they have read. Self-publishing encourages ownership and responsibility on the part of the students, who may be more thoughtful if they are writing for real audience.

The research set out to explore the extent to which writing through classroom blog facilitated students' knowledge construction and reflection. It was hoped that blogs would support them in writing. Here, the researcher explores Classroom blog as an environment for students to write journals and communicate with both tutor and peers.

1.2 Research Questions

Based on the background of the study above, the writer formulates the problem statement of the research entitled **“The Use of Classroom blog in Teaching Writing to Junior High School Students”** In order to answer this question, the writer arranges some subsidiary questions as follows:

1. How does the teacher apply classroom blog to teach writing?

Eugnia Ines Dwi Artvianti, 2013

The Use of Classroom Blog in Teaching Writing to Junior High School Students

(a Case Study of Second Year Junior High School in One of Public School in Bandung Year 2011/2012)

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2. What are the strength and challenges in using Classroom blog in teaching writing?

1.3 Aims of the Study

The purposes of the study are to find out

1. The ways teacher applied classroom blog to teach writing.
2. The strengths and challenges in using classroom blog in teaching writing.

1.4 The Scope of Study

This study limits its investigation into two concerns. The first is the strategies in using blog that teacher are using to develop students' fluency in writing, and the second is the strengths and challenges in using classroom blog in teaching writing.

1.5 Significances of Study

This study expected to provide theoretical, practical, and professional benefits.

1. Theoretical benefits

The research finding can be used to enrich the theories and methods in teaching writing using classroom blog.

2. Practical benefits

Practically, the research finding will be beneficially useful for the students, the improvement of teaching method in EFL classroom, and also for the readers who are interested in teaching media.

a) The students

- Students can develop their mastery on English writing using fascinating and sophisticated learning media, which is Classroom blog.
- Students will be able to express themselves freely in a written form.

b) Teaching method of English as Foreign Language (EFL) program

- To present the implication of using classroom blog in EFL writing activity.
- To give solutions to the EFL learning process, especially in writing.
- To provide information about the strategies which teacher used in using Classroom blog in writing activity.
- To provide sufficient evidence about the strength and the challenges that the teacher faced in using Classroom blog to teach writing

3. Professional benefits

In this perspective, the teacher, school and even a language course will get benefits from the research finding.

a) The teacher

- Teacher knows the level of students' mastery in writing.
- Teacher can provide students with creative media in teaching writing.
- Teacher can improve the strategy on teaching writing for young learners.

b) The school or a language course

The research findings can be used as a consideration to improve the teaching language, especially in EFL classroom. School or language course can provide students with more creative media, in this case is Classroom blog to help improving students' writing skill.

c) The writer

The research findings are valuable as self-reflection on teaching writing by using classroom blog.

1.6 Clarification of Key Terms.

Avoiding mistake and misperception of terms used in this research, there is an elaboration on these related terms, which are:

a) *Use*

Use refers to the application of a media or a program on how something is being applied. In the present study, it is connected

with the use of classroom blog in teaching writing in Junior High School.

b) *Classroom blog*

Enzer (2006) stated that a blog is basically a journal that is available on the web. The activity of updating a blog is “blogging” and someone who keeps a blog is a “blogger”. Over all, there is no difference with classroom blog, classroom blog is bigger than a personal blog where all of classroom member post their writing in the classroom blog, so it gives chance for tutor and students to communicate easily.

c) *Writing*

Writing refers to a task which requires Junior High School students to write something in English based on topic given by the teacher. Since the need of the students is to be able to write descriptive text based on curriculum given, the teacher specified the writing as writing descriptive text. Their writing is a part of learning, and classroom blog is used as a media to write.

3.7. Paper Organization

This paper is presented into five chapters.

CHAPTER I introduce background problems, research questions, aims of the study, significance of the study and also contents of study.

CHAPTER II presents related theories and literature. Basic principle which is relevant to the present study. Theories of teaching writing using classroom blog.

CHAPTER III describes the method and research used by researcher in conducting this research. This chapter includes research design, data collection, research subjects, research instruments, and data analysis.

CHAPTER IV elaborates findings and discussion. It presents the findings of the study and its discussion.

CHAPTER V presents conclusions and suggestions. In this chapter, the researcher draws the conclusions about the study and gives the suggestions for further study in the same field.



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