Using Instagram as a Medium for Discussion in Paragraph Writing Course at Universitas Negeri Padang

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Abstract

The pandemic outbreak in 2019 impacts students' discussion activities in the paragraph writing course of the 1st year English Student Department at Universitas Negeri Padang. To solve the problem, IT development provides social media, Instagram, as a medium for discussion through caption and comment features. This paper explains on how to use Instagram as the medium for paragraph writing discussion. The discussion is constructed through Instagram by dividing the activities into pre-teaching, whilst-teaching, and post-teaching activities. The first activity is done by uploading the materials and students' writing. After that, students and lecturer discuss the material and students' writing by giving suggestions or feedback on the comment feature. On the final activities, through the feedback giving, students can improve their writing before collect it to the lecturer.

INTRODUCTION

The huge usage of IT all over the world, which impacts significantly in the education field, creates new strategies and Media in learning and teaching for all subjects, especially English subjects for university students. The development of IT helps the English teaching and learning process become more effective and efficient. Then, the learning can also be done out of the class. According to Fu (2013), he states that IT tends to expand the access into education that makes learning and teaching can occur anytime and anywhere. Students can utilize the use of IT as media for learning, finding sources, sharing, developing and practicing their knowledge. Moreover, Ghavifekr and Rosdy (2015) also add that IT can help both teachers and students in various ways in teaching and learning their respective subject areas. It does not only help to achieve the students' needs but also the teachers' needs.

Corona virus or COVID-19 pandemic outbreak on 2019 gives impacts on the education system, not only in Indonesia but all countries over the world. According to Mekonnen and Muluye (2020), coronavirus pandemic impacts on face to face education system, especially for developing countries. It becomes new challenges in the education system which the learning and teaching process in classroom stopped in purpose to prevent the infection spreading as the solution from the government to start to change the school activities become online activities. Every student in any level of education are started to have online school through online platforms. English Department Students at Universitas Negeri Padang are also impacted by the pandemic. Every teaching and learning is done by independent learning process. All of the subjects are delivered by using some of online platforms. One of the subjects is the Paragraph Writing Course for English students of second semester.

Many online platforms are using in supporting the learning and teaching English skills such as Social Medias, teaching and learning applications and websites. The most using platform is social media that is equipped with some features and simplicity for education purposes. The widely use of social media as academic device to share academic works, research findings, book reviews, and communicate with their peers and teachers before the pandemic outbreak give the facility to develop the teaching and learning process. According to Erzad (2018), social media has significant role in teaching and learning process that helps students in receiving the lessons. The existence of social media in a learning process cannot be separated. Another researcher, Mukhtar (2019), stated that social media gives the chance to learn by enabling students and instructors to link and communicate in new interesting ways. One of the commonly used social media in teaching and learning English is *Facebook*.

In addition, Suthiwartnarueput and Wasanasomtithi (2012) in their research of the effect on using *Facebook* as a medium for discussion of English grammar and writing, they found students have positive attitude on using *Facebook* as media for learning grammar and writing. In writing, students sometimes tend to have grammar problem or error. In fact, writing and grammar cannot be separated. Through writing discussion on Facebook, it gives the chance for students to get correcting on their grammar and writing by teacher and other students.

Furthermore, there is one of social media that is similar to *Facebook*. It is *Instagram*. *Instagram* and *Facebook* have the same developer. The features provided in *Instagram* are also similar to the features on *Facebook*. *Facebook* is largely use as medium for teaching and learning English. Similarly, *Instagram* is also used by people as medium for teaching and learning English. Both of the applications have their own advantages for the users.

Based on the similarities of *Instagram* and *Facebook*, it makes possible for using *Instagram* as medium for discussion in paragraph writing. The caption and comment feature on *Instagram* can be used as media for writing discussion. Moreover, the excess of *Instagram* over Facebook will facilitate or ease students and lecturer for discussion in writing area. Looking at the benefits and simplicity, it is necessary to use *Instagram* for writing discussion in paragraph writing course for English Department students.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Writing is important skill in learning English language alongside with speaking, reading and listening. Brown (2000) says writing is spoken language in graphic representation, but it have different set of competencies and fundamentally different from speaking. Both of the skills are productive skills. Writing is a process to produce graphic symbols. It can be said as forming process of marks on flat surface. In addition, writing is a medium to express ideas though into written form.

Furthermore, according to Nunan (2003), writing is work of inventing, expressing and organizing ideas into statements and paragraph that are clear for readers. In writing there are ideas that writer needs to share to the readers that these ideas are called as information. The sharing information in writing can be also called as communication. In order to make the information delivered to the readers, the writer needs to organize the ideas in a format to be meaningful writing. Therefore, English students should major writing that helps their communication and developing their thinking abilities and capacities. In making a good writing students should major everything related to writing that are called as language components, such as grammar and vocabulary.

In addition, Harmer (2008) says that there are four main elements in writing: planning, drafting, editing, and final draft. The first process is *planning* that have three main issues for writer to think about: the purpose, the audience and the content structure of the writing. The second process is *drafting*. This process is putting ideas into complete thoughts, such as sentences and paragraphs. The third process is *editing*. In this process, writer reflects and revises the draft that have been made to check ideas, the writing coherence, mistakes, errors and others relate to writing. In *editing,* writer can check their writing by self or check by other people. The last element is *final draft* that already been edited and fixed by the writer.

Academic writing is an important kind of writing in academic field that is specifically use for academic purposes. There are many kinds of academic writings developed in specific standards and formats of writing. Examples of academic writings are paper, thesis, dissertation, and journal article. Rao (2007) states academic writings are useful for academic fulfillment, academic development, and self-actualization in the academic field. Specifically, according to Wirantaka (2016), academic writing is important to understand students' disciplines, support their learning and establish their career. It is related to students' academic and develop the area of their disciplines.

Moreover, in academic writing there some requirements that students need to fulfill. Yankhonta (2003) says in academic writing students need to use their logical thinking and refer to theories to make it theoritical truth. The theories are provided from the previous studies and proven by providing the facts from gathering data and relating them with the theories. Here, paragraph is useful in delivering the theories and finding to be discussed in achieving scientific truth. Paragraph is the part in making writing.

English students have three phases of academic writing subject which is started from the paragraph writing course. Paragraph writing should be taken before students take essay writing and academic writing course. The subject are helping student to learn to write in academic form. Paragraph writing course help students in writing various paragraph relate to the writing genres. The course is designed to provide

students with the ability to write various paragraphs, comprising narrative, descriptive, cause-effect, and process and comparison-contrast paragraph. Then, the course also provides the theories of paragraph which include topic sentence identification, paragraph structure, unity and coherence and types of support.

In addition, talking about paragraph writing, the nature of paragraph writing must be known. A paragraph is a group of sentences that talk about one topic or one main idea. According to Oshima and Hogue (2006), they stated paragraph is a group sentences that is related and discuss only one main idea. A paragraph commonly consists of more than one sentence. The number of sentences on a paragraph is not really important, but the sentences need to be supported each other in explaining the main idea to make the proper paragraph. The paragraph also should have the proper length in developing the main idea.

There are so many kinds of social media that can be used as medium for discussion in paragraph writing course. One of the compatible social media is *Instagram* because it is becoming highly used and become familiar used by the students. *Instagram* or commonly called as IG was release on October 2010 by Burbn, Inc. and developed by *Facebook*. The founders of *Instagram* are Kevin Systrom and Mike Krieger. The name of *Instagram* is inspired by the words of instant and telegram which means sharing photo instantly and sending information to other people fast. This application is usually used by the young in which this application is available on Android, IOS, Froyo, Windows phone, and Windows 10. Statistically, after 10 months release, *Instagram* got 7 billion new users who have uploaded 150 million photos. It is an application for sharing photo and video with digital filter and sharing feature to another social media

Not only as media for posting and sharing photos and videos, Instgram is also used as medium for teaching and learning English. *Instagram* provides the new way in teaching and learning English where students can practices all of the four skills of English (Sesriyani and Sukmawati, 2019). English skills and sub skills can be teach and learn on *Instagram*. The features of sharing photos and videos, making captions, and others features make sure the process of English teaching and learning can be done on *Instagram*.

One of the skill that can be teach and learn on *Instagram* is writing skill. *Instagram* can be used as media for elaborate writing course. According to Gunantar and Transinata (2019), caption feature on *Instagram* can be used to improve students writing skills and motivation, because *Instagram* is phenomenal social network to communicate with friends and as well as the teachers. It can be used as medium for discussion in writing course. Through the use of *Instagram,* students will motivate in order to express or sharing their ideas. In expressing and sharing ideas related to writing, they can discuss the ideas with friends.

According to Anggraini (2017), using *Instagram* as medium for the process of teaching and learning in writing class as an alternative way to apply 21th century skills. The 21th century skills consist of an integrated of content knowledge, particulars skills, proficiency, and literacy of technologies which include skill in critical thinking, problem solving, communication, and team work. Using *Instagram* as the medium in teaching and writing will apply all the skills in the 21th century skills.

Listiani (2016) is also argued that *Instagram* is a unique media with many features in supporting students' purpose related to the students' daily needs and education such as photo sharing, social and education. It is not only photos and videos sharing, but it provide caption feature for user to write or express their opinion. The caption feature nearly looks like *Facebook* status. It is can be used as writing medium with comment feature as medium for discussion and giving feedback. Through the process of giving posts and comments, the undergraduate students' interest in writing is aroused and it positively affects their ability (Wahyudin, 2018). In addition, Soviyah and Etikaningsih (2018) conducted an experimental research to investigate the effectiveness of the use of *Instagram* application on the students' performance in writing descriptive texts..

According to Mansor and Rahim (2017), they found that *Instagram* is effective platform in encourage students to interact with their peer in the group. The use of social media gives chance for students in interacting with others specifically for discussion in writing courses. The lack of time or the pandemic issues make the interaction such as discussion section in class cannot be done. The use of *Instagram* make students have chance to do discussions and interact with other students. Moreover, it found that *Instagram* improves students' motivation to learn and participate in class activities (Purnama, 2018).

DISCUSSION

1. The Implementation of Instagram as Medium for Discussion in Paragraph Writing Course

The implementation of using *Instagram* as medium for discussion in *Paragraph Writing Course* according to Safitri (2021), there were seven steps of the procedures done in her research : 1. Deciding the teaching materials, 2.*Instagram* uses to explain about writing, 3. Organizing the students group, 4. Providing students the situation that they were learning using *Instagram*, 5. Lecturing 6. Students try to modify that situation, and 7. Asking students to perform their tasks on *Instagram*.

In addition, Avivi and Megawati (2020) stated the procedures of using *Instagram* as media for discussion in writing course are creating the account, writing and posting on *Instagram* account, teacher feedback, revising the writing, posting on *Instagram,* and Classroom members feedback on the writing. These procedures focus on uploading, feedback and revising on the writing. These all can be used to complete the procedure from Safitri's research found.

Trinadiah et.al (2014) mention the procedures in using social media as a medium for discussion in writing are planning, acting, observing, and reflecting. In *planning* step, the lecturer plans a teaching-learning activity which include the preparation before the teaching learning process such as making lesson plan, preparing teaching materials and making the social media account. Then, *acting* step is the implementation of planning where the lecturer asks the students to be the member of the social media and asks them to post their text. The lecturer also asks the students to give comments. After being commented by their friends, the students have to re-post their writing. In *Observing* step, the teacher observes teaching learning process in the classroom group improvement from the first posting to the last one. In *reflecting* step, lecturer discusses the result of the discussion and finds the solution.

According to the implementation from all the researches above, writer organizes the implementation of using Instagram as a medium for discussion in paragraph writing course. The implementation will be divided into pre-teaching, whilst-teaching and post-teaching activities.

a. Pre- teaching.

Starting the activities, the *Paragraph Writing* class needs to have a private account as the medium for discussion. Lecturer need to choose class representative to make and handle the class *Instagram* account. The account will name as the class name and will set as private account where only show for the following and followers that are the class members and the lecturer. In order to make the lecturing and discussion done properly, the account set as private account where only the class members and lectures are allowed to access.

Moreover, the activities in *Paragraph Writing Course*, lecturer also need to explain about *Instagram* and the activities will conducted in online through using *Instagram*. In using *Instagram* as the medium for discussion in *Paragraph Writing Course*, students should well know or familiar with *Instagram* and the features. This prevents the misleading and misinterpretation about the activities will be done on *Instagram*. After explaining about *Instagram*, lecturer should explain about the activities to avoid misleading in the course.

Then, the class members will be divided into groups for each topic of the materials of the syllabus to make a simple and short presentation about the material and example of the topic material that will upload in the class *Instagram* post. The purpose of dividing students into group is to save time and develop student's teamwork skills or collaborative skill. Then, in group students will learn actively and effectively.

b. Whilst-teaching

The group of the presentation is asked to upload their presentation in form of an *Instagram* post and they can put the example of the writing topic in caption feature. The material will be discussed by the class members. They can ask and give addition about the topic. In a group, students can exchange and discuss the material that they will learn and present. After the material is presented and discussed, it is the time for all of the students to start their writing that is related to the topic presented and learned. All of the students' writing will copy on the caption and will be shared in an *Instagram* post, where each student is asked by lecturer to read and give comments and suggestions about the writings on the *Instagram* comment. The comments could be the grammar, mechanics, content and the word use of the writing. The comment and suggestion can also be called as feedback. The feedback will help students on revising and enhancing their knowledge and skill about writing.

c. Post-teaching

The final activity, post-teaching, lecturer ask whether the students understand or do not understand about the topic. Then, based on the feedback the students get from the other students and lectures, they are asked to rewrite or correcting their writing before giving feedback and suggestion over the writing. Lecturer also asks the students or next group of the topic to prepare the next presentation and discussion.

2. The Advantages of Using Instagram as A medium for Discussion in Paragraph Writing Course

Based on the three previous activities above (pre-teaching, whilst teaching and post-teaching), there some advantages of using *Instagram* as the medium in paragraph writing course. First, through the feedback and suggestion given in *Instagram* students will improve their ability in writing skills. It also motivates them more in learning writing through the comment and corrections they get over their writing.

Second, Using *Instagram* makes the learning and teaching can be done outside the classroom. It makes students and lecturer is possible to have fun and enjoy the class in different area and time.

Third, the use of *Instagram* as medium for writing also improves students' grammar and vocabularies. Through the feedback given by other students and lecturer, students can improve their grammar comprehension.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

Based on the previous discussion, the use of *Instagram* is not only for sharing photo and video, but also can be a medium for discussion in the writing course. The caption and comment feature makes the discussion activities can be done in online learning-teaching. It can be concluded that the discussion on students' writing can be done through *Instagram* as the medium. The discussion is done by uploading and discussing the materials and students' writing. The discussion is in form of giving suggestion and feedback from other students and lectures. The used of *Instagram* also give benefits in improving students' motivation and writing abilities. It also help lecture in applying the 21th century skills.

In order to achieve a successful teaching process, the lecturer ought to have well prepared before the activities is started. It can be done by preparing the lesson plan and material. Then, lecturers should give clear instruction of the use *Instagram* as the medium for discussion. The activities also can be done with good internet access. Moreover, the students should really pay attention to the feedback given by others students and lecturer. Lecturer also should give time limited in the comment section.

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