USING GOOGLE DOCS FOR COLLABORATIVE WRITING IN TEACHING WRITING DESCRIPTIVE TEXT TO ENGLISH DEPARTMENT STUDENTS

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Abstract
This paper discussed about how to applied Google Docs for collaborative writing in teaching writing to English Department students. Google docs as a feature Google served for all its users can be used collaborative writing in which all students in one class can contribute to make a good writing. Collaborative writing means that students write a text and sharing ideas with others students and it will be corrected and supported by another students By using Google Docs for collaborative writing, students can interact and write together with other students in developing their writing. They can give comments to other students and edit other students' drafts in same time. It will help them to get more ideas in writing as they combine their ideas with others ideas.

Key words: *Writing, Collaborative Writing, Descriptive Text, Google Docs*

A. INTRODUCTION

D. Writing is one of the four main skills that must be mastered by the foreign language learners. It could be like that because writing plays an important role in learning English. However, learning writing in English is also difficult especially in Indonesia since English is still a foreign language for Indonesian learners.

There are some difficulties of writing that students face in learning writing. *First*, the students have lack of ideas in writing. Before students begin to write they must have an idea to write about. *Second*, the students are weak in using the correct grammar. Sometimes, the students already have ideas in their mind to write something, but they write a text by using incorrect grammarr. *Third*, the students are seemed unmotivated to write. It is because the learning and teaching process are not interesting for students.

In English Department, teaching and learning writing is started from the second semester. The specification of the text that will be discussed is Descriptive text. The texts that must be mastered are descriptive text about people, tourist attractions, and famous historical buildings. In its practice, students are asked to

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pay attention to social functions, text structures, and linguistic elements that are true and contextual.

In addition, in writing a text, the students usually ask to write a whole of text individually. Writing individually make students less confident in conducting their own writing that makes some students tend to look at their friends' writing and imitate afterwards. Another problem that students face in writing is from the lecturer's ways in teaching. The lecturer may also use an uninteresting media and strategy in teaching writing. These will be a monotonous process that the students will always face when they are studying how to write something. It will surely affect the result of their writing.

Consider to the problems above, writing class should have interesting learning process especially for English department. One of the media that can be used by the lecturer in teaching writing is ICT. ICT (Information and Communication Technologies) means the technologies that support delivering information and communication. It gives challenges and opportunities for lecturer and students to bring technology effectively in teaching and learning process. Along with the development of ICT today, there are many free online media that can be used as media for teaching and learning writing; such as blogs, WebPages, and social networking system (Facebook, Twitter, Yahoo, Google+, and etc.). One appropriate media that can be used by the lecturer and students in teaching and learning writing to the English Department students is Google Docs.

Google docs is one of the feature of Google served for all its users that can be used as a media for collaborative writing in which all students in one class can contribute to make a good writing. Google Docs, an online application, is a promising tool for collaborative learning Zhou et al (2012). It can facilitate collaborative writing and editing among students. Haring-Smith (1994) defines collaborative writing as involving more than one person who contributes to the creation of a text so that "sharing responsibility" becomes essential. By using Google Docs, the students work in collaborative writing where they can make improvements on each writing they work on. They can gain skills of writing by commenting, for example, mechanics, grammar, ideas of the writing and other writing aspects. With the use of comments in Google docs the students can remain each other about the mechanics, grammar, ideas of the writing and other writing aspects that they use in their writing.

From the explanation above, the writer would like to help the English Department lecturer in teaching writing by promoting these media and strategy to English Department students.

E.

F. DISCUSSION

1. Preparation

Before the process of teaching and learning begin, the lecturer and students should prepare everything that will be needed during the teaching and learning process. Preparation is very important thing that should be done by the lecturer and students before the process of teaching and learning.

a. Preparation of Media

In implementation of Google Docs for collaborative writing, lecturer must prepare several media that are needed in teaching and learning process. The first tools are laptop/computers and internet connection. These kinds of supported media are needed in using Google Docs. The second tool is Google Docs itself.

b. Preparation of Google Docs

The preparation stage starts from the previous meeting. First, the lecturer informed the students that they will use the Google Docs for their next meeting. In accessing Google Docs students should create a Google account first because Google Docs is a part of Google. In creating Google account students need computer with Internet connection. Second, students have to open web page https://accounts.google.com and then enter the username, password, date of birth, gender and phone number. Students can also enter their current email address as an optional. Finally, students press "Create your account" button and the account is created.

c. Preparation of the Material

This material will help the teacher to deliver the lesson to the students. For this paper, the first material needed is a video about descriptive text. The example of descriptive text video that will be showed is about a famous place. Therefore, the famous place chosen is Mount Fuji. The video can be obtained through the internet. The specific site teacher can use to search for the video is YouTube.com.

A. Procedure of Using Google Docs for Collaborative Writing in Teaching Writing

The procedure implemented Google Docs for collaborative writing in teaching writing descriptive text will be based on four stages of writing: *Planning, Drafting, Editing/Revising and Publishing*. Here's an explanation of each stage.

1. Planning

Planning is an important initial activity in writing. Therefore, before carrying out the actual writing activity, students are involved first in this stage. Below is a detailed description of its activities.

a. Before the students getting ready to write, the first stage is the lecturer shows a video about a famous place to stimulate the students' analysis. Therefore, the famous place chosen is Mount Fuji. The video can be downloaded from YouTube with the following link: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Xy8fR4pJNmo#

b. The next step, after the students watch the video, they are asked to mention the description of Mount Fuji based on the video, such as the view, the visitors, the atmosphere etc,. Then, the lecturer explains that the students just mention parts of the descriptive text. The lecturer also explains the definition, the structure and language features of descriptive text.

c. After understanding the concept of descriptive text, the students are assigned to write a descriptive text about a place that they know well. Then, the lecturer asks them to sit in group consisting of four students to discuss the topics about places to write about.

d. Then, the students write down the points of the content about the place that they will describe.

2. Drafting

a. After the students have discussed the topic, the students start to write the first draft on the paper. In writing the draft, the students write individually, each student write one topic sentence, and there will be four topic sentences that should be develop into the paragraph. After all of students have finished their first draft, they are asked to share it with their friends in group to have the correction.

b. After the first draft have finished, it is time to write the second draft in Google Docs in the Laptop/computer, the steps to open Google Docs have been explain in the one of sub-chapter in chapter II.

c. Then, after Google Docs is open, the students begin writing down the second draft in Google Docs. There are four topic sentences that develop by four students. For topic sentence 1 is written by student A and develop into the paragraph. After that, student B continues to write the topic sentence 2 and so forth.

3. Editing/revising

a. Editing/revising stage is done after all of the students have finished their second draft. Then, each students read again the draft, all students in group can view/add/edit/revise the text simultaneously.

b. All aspects of writing can be revised. There are the aspects of writing content, organization, vocabulary, language use, and mechanics.

More importantly, Google Docs tracks all the changes and tags each edit with the responsible Google account holder's name. It means that, all of the group members will know who writes, revises, and edits the text in the document.

Furthermore, the students also can do chatting with all of group member. The students just click the **comment** box to chat with others if the students do not agree about other members opinion about ideas of writing. This process is done in this step until the paragraph is considered good enough to be published.

As a reminder, this activity is done outside of lesson time. The time given is until the next meeting. Media that can be used by students for editing and revising in Google Docs also vary such as a personal computer, laptop or Smartphone.

4. Publishing

Each group is supposed to show their final version of writing to others by using projector in the class. Other group can read the paragraph and see what edits or changes the group has made and who has made the changes. Finally, the lecturer assesses the final version of group writing.

Once the document has been assessed, it can be published by selecting the "Publish to the Web" option under the "Share" drop-down menu. The the document can be accessed and seen by anyone anywhere in the world.

C. The Advantages of Using Google Docs for Collaborative Writing in Teaching Writing

There are many media that can support teaching and learning writing to English Department students. Google Docs is one of them that support the collaborative writing among the students. Google Docs has several advantages

when it is used as a media in teaching and learning writing. There are advantages of using Google Docs in teaching writing in English Department as below.

First, Google Docs is a collaborative free edited web-based space. This feature provides collaborative writing environment and for students to develop their writing skill. Students can interact and work together with other students in developing their writing. They can be co-author a piece of text using Google Docs, giving comments to other students and editing other students' drafts in same time. It will help them to get more ideas in writing as they combine their ideas with someone else ideas. With the features of Google Docs, collaborative writing is no longer bound by time and space. If the students cannot finish the writing task within class time, they can save their work, store it online, and then continue writing anytime and anywhere.

Second, Google Docs gives opportunity for lecturer to observe students development in doing writing. Lecturer does not only have to assess the final product of the students writing but also the improvement that are made by the students within the teaching and learning process. By using Google Docs, assessing students' development can be done by observing students writing.

Last, the advantages of Google Docs students can use Google Docs everywhere. All the students need to use Google Docs is a computer with internet connection and a standard web browser. The text in Google Docs can be accessed everytime and anywhere if there is computer or laptop with internet connection. Therefore, students always can practice their writing in Google Docs every time, not only in the classroom.

G. CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

Based on discussion above, it can be conclude the use of Google Docs is very helpful for the lecturer in the efficiency of the assessing time of students' tasks. It is very recommended for lecturers because fourth reasons. First, Google Docs can help lecturers to adjust the development of technology in their teaching process. Second, The lecturers can help the students to develop their writing ability by using Google Docs collaborative environment where the students working together with their friends in their writing. Third, lecturer can help students to understand the writing process, specifically revising, editing and publishing process. Last, Google Docs not only can be used for descriptive text but also for all genres of text.

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