

Enhancing EFL Students' Writing Skill Through LSP (Learn Social Platform): A Case of Indonesian Students

**Arimuliani Ahmad¹⁾, Estika Satriani²⁾, Fauzul Effita³⁾, Alber⁴⁾
^{1,2,3,4)}Universitas Islam Riau**

*corresponding Author, email: arimulianiahmad@edu.uir.ac.id

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Abstract

In the industry revolution 4.0 era, the Indonesian government also strives to socialize the education change to increase the quality and effort to build up the students of higher education learning style more autonomously. This research aimed to explore the effectiveness of using Learn Social Platform toward students' writing skills and explore students' perspectives of using this platform in one of the private universities in Riau, Indonesia. This research was a mixed-method approach. There are 38 undergraduate students as the sample of this research. The researchers used two kinds of instruments such as writing test for analyzing quantitative data and interview for qualitative data. The result showed that the use of this platform can give a significant effect on students' writing skill which was revealed by students' post-test was higher than pre-test. In addition, interview data reveal that students felt enthusiastic to use this platform because it is very helpful to increase their English skills which complete material and tasks. In a practical case, the students expected to get feedback as soon as possible on the same day from their lecturer.

Keywords: *Learn Social Platform, writing skill, EFL students, e-learning*

Introduction

Nowadays, the innovation of technology and its impact on education have become a crucial reason for many teachers to integrate it into learning. One of the innovations in e-learning. Many types of e-learning have been widely used since 2015 such as e-module, Facebook, Instagram, Padlet, Google Classroom, Edmodo, and Learn Social Platform. It encourages students' participation in learning supports student-centered learning. It provides a learning opportunity for students to learn based on their willingness. Furthermore, the teacher can monitor their students' progress automatically, then the teacher can maximize it to create a social learning environment. Effective e-learning needs collaboration and commitment between students-teacher and student-students to create a virtual learning society.

Teaching and learning through e-learning is like a solution for a limited time provided by school or university each course (Freitas and Parades; 2018). Especially for writing, EFLs (English for Foreign Language students) thought that it is a kind of hard skill that should be mastered because of many reasons. To meet this issue, a lecturer should change that paradigm. Writing skill needs much competence involved, such as vocabulary, grammar, content, punctuation, mechanic, and organization (Jacob in Haswell, 2007). It means that many things should be considered in designing effective teaching and learning process. Inline, it needs much time to practice and LSM such as Platform can be an option to support it.

To react to government policy for e-learning, our major implement Learn Social Platform as the first e-learning implemented officially in our English major. Furthermore, Learn Social Platform is a unique media and an innovative way of learning English online. The content provided has been supported by the University of Cambridge. This Learn Social Platform integrates all communication tools and reviewing from classmates in English learning as well as the lecturers concerned. By using this online media, students can learn based on their willingness, do exercises and interact in virtual society to support their learning. Wherever they are, students can complete the tasks assigned by the lecturers due to their language competencies such as reading, writing, listening, and speaking. Students can improve their skills from the review given by the lecturer and classmates before collecting their duties as the final project.

Several studies show that teaching and learning by utilizing e-learning give positive impacts in teaching and learning (Ahmad, 2017; AL-NAIBI et al., 2018; Ingalls: 2017; KALELIOĞLU: 2017; MacKenzie et al.:2017; Mtebe: 2015; Saulnier, 2015; Seyal and Rahman: 2015; Ummunnakwe and Sello: 2016; Wang et al.: 2012. Due to writing skill, Wang et al. (2012) conducted their research by using Facebook Group as a Learning Management System (LSM). This research found that the students feel satisfied with using this media in learning. Secondly, Saulnier (2015) conducted his development research by using Flipped Classroom approach to integrate the course and technology in the classroom. The result showed that this media can increase students' focus and participation in learning so that students' learning outcomes improved. Besides, AL-NAIBI et al. (2018) also conducted their research by focusing it on writing paragraphs by using Edmodo. The result presented that the students' writing skills in the paragraph can be improved significantly by using this media. In line with related studies which success in integrated technology in learning, the researcher assumes that in this millennium era, teachers should consider the importance of it and can implement it as students' needs, students' character, and the course character itself.

Furthermore, many researchers prove that LMS gives a good contribution for the teaching and learning process, unfortunately, the phenomenon happens in the classroom that many students have difficulties in writing a good paragraph. Furthermore, previous studies show that researchers implemented LMS to teach the English language without activating feedback from lecturers and other students in the virtual class. In writing scope, peer assessment and lecturer's feedback are needed to revise and edit students' writing before releasing the final product. By utilizing Learn Social Platform, the virtual class will support the processes of writing until rewriting the final product.

This research tested the hypothesis of the effect of the utilization Learn Social Platform on students' writing skills. Besides, this research also exposed the students' perception toward this media. Because of Universitas Islam Riau has the policy to adopt blended learning to classroom interaction which consists of 70% face-to-face meeting and 30% for virtual learning. Indeed, the ICT and LSM cannot replace a lecturer role in learning, therefore become a reason to integrate them is needed.

1. Writing Paragraph

The definitions of writing vary from many experts. Rivers (1981: 249) explains the notion of writing is the information or the expression of ideas successively in a new language or target language. According to Brown (2001: 336), writing is a process of thinking. Furthermore, Urquhart and McIver (2005: 5-6) are expressed as a process of repetition in which the students go through the revising and rewriting stage in producing writing. Harmer (2007) explains how writing improves the focus of students on the use of language. It happens that students pay attention to how to use good and correct language while writing. This activity provokes the development of students' language skills as they attempt to solve the problems that they face in the writing process.

Based on the explanation above, the researcher concludes that writing is a series of processes done to produce good writing. It is carried out continuously to improve the results of his writing. These processes are performed in both writing paragraphs, essays, and scientific works in the form of several stages such as pre-writing, concept, reviewing, revision, and rewriting. Furthermore, Seow (2002), Zemach and Rumisek (2005); Tompkins (2013) describes the writing process which includes three stages of pre-writing, drafting, reviewing and revising, and rewriting. In the pre-writing stage, students choose what topics will be developed and then collect ideas that will be written in the paragraph can be by brainstorming such as listing, freewriting, and clustering. Furthermore, the student must arrange the sequence of ideas to be developed. The second stage is drafting. At this stage, students have begun to write down the ideas that have been prepared in the pre-writing stage into a paragraph as a systematic structure.

The third stage is reviewing and revising. At this stage, the students review the structure and content that has been written in the previous stage. For review, the student can read his/her writing from beginning to end and then add gap information or reduce irrelevant information. Besides, students can also exchange their writings with classmates. Commonly, students are rarely able to detect their faults but by reading others' writing, that the reason why pair-assessment is needed to check the errors and missing information that exist in writing. After this stage is done, students need the help of others who are more competent than themselves as a proofreader to help to correct the errors in his writing whether it is a grammatical error or any content in the writing. In this last stage, the students re-examine the errors and shortcomings of his writings for his writing logically.

Inside writing, several important components must be considered according to (Brown; 2001, Jacob et al. (1981) dan Haswell (2007) namely; 1) content which includes the main phrases, supporting ideas, the development of good ideas is one's experience, illustrations, descriptions, opinions and more, 2) organization which includes the introduction, the sequence of relevant ideas, the conclusions, and appropriateness of the writing length, 3) syntax, 4) vocabulary, 5) mechanics which includes spelling, punctuation, quotes, and more.

Many experts give statements about the criteria of a good paragraph such as Mc Crimmon (1998: 88); Zemach and Rumisek (2005), Savage and Shafiei (2007). They argue that a good paragraph must fulfill some requirements as unity, complete, coherence, and logic. The first one is unity. A paragraph must have one main idea (usually expressed in the main sentence). This is marked by the reader's easy to guess the way the story is told by the author. The second one is complete. The written paragraph must be complete and complete so that it can answer all questions relevant to the developed topic. The third one is coherence. Sentences are written must be logical and sequential so that no occurrence jumping idea. And the last is logic. The sentences developed should be sufficient and logical in light of the evidence presented in the paragraph.

2. Learn Social Platform

Learn social platform is one of the learning platforms that provide the opportunity for the learner to learn the English language in many ways and concerns. (<https://trial.learnsocial.online>) it integrates daily communication tools and peer review into English courses. Whenever students have to complete a speaking or writing exercise, they first submit their work to their Study Group for review and after revision, they can send it to the lecturer to be marked. Students can see one another's answers and give feedback. Students can improve their answers before submitting them to the lecturer for the final grade.

There are many features provided such as social learning, many courses in one platform, accessible by any device, available online and offline, various exercise types, automatic grading, local language support, testing, reporting, admin of classes, teacher

feedback. All of these features can support the teaching and learning process to ensure students' engagement and students' autonomous learning. Students can learn the English language the way they want to.

3. Learn Social Platform in Teaching Paragraph Writing

Paragraph Writing is one of the basic level courses in English Language Education of Teacher Training and Education Faculty. This course is provided to 2nd-semester students. It aims to improve students' understanding of paragraph writing. Particularly, it discusses how to write according to the essence of the paragraph and the structure of the paragraph, and then encourages students to be able to write simple sentences that fit the method and pattern and are sustainable and sustainable. Hedge (2003) argues that there are two major viral issues in English language learning especially in the Paragraph Writing course is the limited time for learning and the lack of genuine readers for student writing. This is understandable because weighing the length of the stages that must be done to produce writing is not accompanied by the time provided for this course. With the use of Learn Social Platform that can be accessed through computers and mobile phones that allow lecturers and students to study wherever and whenever.

Prewriting is an early stage that students must do to gather ideas that are relevant to the topic. In this stage, lecturers are expected to stimulate students to collect and develop relevant ideas. In this phase, Learn Social Platform provides stimulus to brainstorm students' that relevant to the topic to be developed. They need to access some sections such as vocabulary, grammar, and reading sections. In the second stage, students begin to draft paragraphs by observing the relevant vocabulary in assembling sentences into paragraphs. This allows students to easily copy, paste, cut, delete, and automatically correct for local errors. This makes it easier for students to write the desired paragraph concept.

The third stage is reviewing and revising. At this stage, the student must make the reduction and addition of words or sentences. After completing the paragraph, the student must reread what has been written and then add what is otherwise irrelevant to the main sentence. Besides, grammatical, spelling and other errors are also a concern at this stage. To get feedback for virtual society, the students need to submit their task to the group by clicking the bar "submit to group" The last stage is rewriting. At this stage, students need a proofreader to correct the paragraphs that have been written. With this Learn Social Platform, students become more easily and quickly get feedback either from classmates or lecturers who lecture course. After knowing the weaknesses, the student is required to rewrite the improvements under the suggestions and send the final result by clicking "submit to the teacher" to be assessed by the lecturer. If you submit it to the teacher, it means that the students are already sure about their writing because their writing cannot be revised anymore"

Method

This research used a mixed-method design. This design applied for this research because it was considered suitable for this research background and the purpose of this research which applying Learn Social Platform to enhance students' performance for Paragraph Writing subject and then to explore students' perception of it. The population of this research is second-semester students of English Language Education of Teacher Training and Education Faculty of UIR (Universitas Islam Riau). The sample of the research was taken as purposive technique, so that, 2A class was selected as a sample of this research. They consisted of 38 students with similar characteristics. Furthermore, in applying this e-learning, the lecturer integrated it with the face-to-face meeting as blended learning.

Besides, to gather the data, the researcher used writing test which provided by Learn Social Platform for quantitative data and interview for qualitative data. This online test is prepared to be accomplished in around 45 minutes. After that, to analyze the students' writing, the researcher adopted Jacob's theory, further information see appendix 1. To see the significant effect of students' writing skill after getting treatment, the researcher used a dependent sample t-test by using SPSS software. The result of data analysis was compared by t_{observe} and t_{table} . If $t_{\text{observe}} > t_{\text{table}}$ so that H_0 is rejected. It means that there is significant effect of using Learn Social Platform on students' writing skill. But if $t_{\text{observe}} < t_{\text{table}}$, so H_0 is accepted. It means that there is no significant effect of using Learn Social Platform on students' writing skill. For the questionnaire, the researcher adopted a questionnaire from Coldwell et al. (2006).

Results and Discussion

This section presents the result of the implementation of Learn Social Platform in teaching Paragraph Writing which consists of two parts.

1. Quantitative Result

The following table exposes the significant improvement of students' writing performance before and after getting treatment. The statistical data can be seen as below:

		Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pair 1	Pre-test	63.68	38	6.439	1.045
	Post-test	89.61	38	5.375	.872

Figure 1. Statistical of Comparison Mean between Students' Pre-test and Post-test Score

Refer to figure 1, it can be seen that there is a significant difference between mean score from pre-test score to post-test score. Students' mean score is 63.68; it significantly rises to 89.61 after getting treatment by using Learn Social Platform. It proves that the treatment can improve students' writing performance.

To test the research hypothesis whether there is a significant effect of using Learn Social Platform or not can be seen from statistical data below:

Paired Samples Test								
		Paired Differences		95% Confidence Interval of the Difference		t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	Lower			
Pair 1	Pre-test-Posttest	-25.921	8.042	1.305	-28.564	-23.278	-19.870	.000

Figure 2. Statistical result of t_{observe} between Students' Pre-test and Post-test Score

Statistical result of figure 2 shows that t_{observe} is 19.870 and then t_{table} is 1.697. If $t_{\text{observe}} > t_{\text{table}}$, H_0 is rejected, in contrast, if $t_{\text{observe}} < t_{\text{table}}$ so that H_0 is accepted. In line, t_{observe} is (19.870) $>$ t_{table} (1.697), so it can be concluded that there is a significant effect of using Learn Social Platform toward students' writing performance of paragraph.

Furthermore, to know the students' perceptions toward this media, researcher used interview to present the qualitative data as following.

2. Qualitative Result

From the interview, researchers could identify the students' perception and expectation of using Learn Social Platform. 4 main questions asked by the researcher and students were analyzed as follows:

1st Question: What do you think about the use of Learn Social Platform to enhance your learning proficiency?

Many students indicated that the Learn Social Platform can be an easy way to learn and practice English because it provides many materials and exercises include vocabulary, pronunciation, grammar, speaking, writing, listening, and reading. They also said that it is helpful to be learned independently because it can automatically assess the students' answers except for productive skill such as speaking and writing section.

2nd Question: Do you think that this Learn Social Platform gives advantages toward your writing? How?

Many students stated that the Learn Social Platform can give the contribution to their writing because it gives writing model and also appropriate pictures are given for each unit so that the user can adopt the model and brainstorming their mind to the assignment. Besides, learning other sections such as reading helps them to generate an idea in the current topic. In addition, learning grammar and vocabulary help them to write their idea easily. For editing process, the feedback from pairs and lecturer help them to revise their writing that commonly unrealized by themselves. They said that commonly, they did not realize that they produce errors even though they have checked their writing personally.

3rd Question: When you access the Learn Social Platform including downloading the material and submitting the assignment, do you face any barriers? How?

Many students stated that sometimes they have a problem accessing the material because of the internet connection. But actually, it can be solved by downloading the material when they get a good connection, then all downloaded material can be accessed offline. But it cannot be done for writing and speaking skill only.

4th Question: What is your expectation of further using the Learn Social Platform for learning English?

Almost of students stated that this platform needs to upgrade the group study system. They said that they cannot enroll more than one group while they have different lecturers for each subject such as lecturer for reading, speaking, grammar, listening. Furthermore, it must be better if we can meet up in virtual learning by video call (video conference), so that conference feature needs to be involved. Besides the progress test must be better if separated each skill, because this platform only provides test which includes grammar, language use, and vocabulary. Another expectation is lecturer can give responses and feedback faster than before, hopefully on the same day.

The result reveals that Learn Social Platform gives a significant impact on students' writing skill but at the same time it also has some barriers to use. The effectiveness of this platform is in line with several studies which also implemented LMS (learning management system) and ICT in teaching writing (Alharbi, 2015; Ummunnakwe and Sello, 2016; Al-NAIBI et al., 2018). Furthermore, Learn Social Platform allows the students to get pair assessment and other interactions toward learning writing. It is also supported by Alharbi (2015) which implements three kinds of LMS to enhance students' such as Blackboard, Blog, and Wikis. His finding reveals that LMS can provide students interact in a virtual class, to give responses and get feedback from other students and lecturers. In addition, this platform is also helpful

for students to learn independently and integrated the course material with language skills and other linguistic components meaningfully.

Utilizing this platform is a new trend for these students so that there are various respond appeared either the students felt it gives advantage or disadvantage in learning. As explained previously, this platform is considered as good media to facilitate students to learn whenever and wherever they are independently (Singh, O'Donoghue and Worton, 2005; Coldwell et al., 2006; Paechter and Maier, 2010). Besides, it also gives contribution for increasing students' writing skill because it facilitates interactions among student-student and lecturer-student related to editing and revising process of writing. It indicated that this platform has fulfilled the principle of good practice related to LMS (Chickering and Gamson's in Lai & Savage, 2013). Another advantage is this platform provides automatic assessment except for productive skill. So, the students can learn from the mistake that they have done to get a better result from learning by doing.

Despite all advantages given, several barriers faced by the students in learning by using this platform. First, the student expected that this platform revises a limited system of group study which only allows students to enroll in one group study. Besides, it must be better if there is a video-conference available so that they can feel as face-to-face learning. Next, the students also expected to get feedback directly from their lecturer. They feel it is important and a pleasure to get a notice from their lecturer to revise their writing. The last barrier is they feel uncomfortable accessing this platform because of some networking trouble even though they also can access it offline as long as they have downloaded the course material before.

Conclusion

Based on the explanation before, it can be concluded that this platform can be a good optional virtual environment to enhance student independent learning as long as a lecturer as an instructor can maximize it as well. Particularly for writing, it must be ensured that the processes of writing can be done effectively and consistently. The limitation practice of traditional learning can be solved by this platform. Recognizing the advantages and disadvantages of using e-learning, lecturer and students need to consider the principle of good practice to perceive significant overcome in experiencing e-learning in learning (Chickering and Gamson's in Lai and Savage, 2013) such as 1). Good teaching encourages contact between students and faculty, 2). Good teaching develops reciprocity and cooperation among students, 3). Good teaching encourages active learning, 4). Good teaching gives prompt feedback, 5) Good teaching emphasizes time on task, 6). Good teaching communicates high expectations, and 7). Good teaching respects diverse talents and ways of learning.

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APPENDIX 1

Scoring Rubric of Writing Paragraph

Level	Score	Criteria
Content	30-27	EXCELLENT TO VERY GOOD: Knowledgeable, Substantive, through Development of the Thesis, Relevant To Assigned Topic
	26-22	GOOD TO AVERAGE: Some knowledge of subject, adequate range, limited development of thesis, mostly relevant to the topic but lack detail
	21-17	FAIR TO GOOD: Limited knowledge of the subject, little substance, inadequate development of a topic
	16-13	VERY POOR: Does not show knowledge of subject, non-substantive, not pertinent, or not enough to evaluate
Organization	20-18	EXCELLENT TO VERY GOOD: Fluent expression, ideas clearly stated/supported, succinct, well organized, logical sequencing, cohesive, completed paragraph structure (topic sentence, supporting sentences & concluding sentence)
	17-14	GOOD TO AVERAGE: Somewhat copy, loosely organized but main idea stand out, limited support, logical; but incomplete sequencing
	13-10	FAIR TO POOR: Non-fluent, ideas confused or disconnected, lacks logical sequencing and development
	9-7	VERY POOR: Does not communicate, no organization or not enough to evaluate
	20-18	EXCELLENT TO VERY GOOD: Sophisticated range, effective word, idiom choice and usage, word form mastery, appropriate magister
	17-14	GOOD TO AVERAGE: Adequate range, the occasional error of word idiom and form, choice, usage but meaning not obscured
	13-10	FAIR TO POOR: Limited range, frequent errors of word idiom form, choice, usage, meaning confused or obscured

Language Use	9-7	VERY POOR: Essentially translation, little knowledge of English vocabulary, idioms, word form, or not enough to evaluate
	25-22	EXCELLENT TO VERY GOOD: Effective complex construction, few errors of agreement, tense, number, word order/function, articles, pronouns, preposition
	21-18	GOOD TO AVERAGE: Effective but simple construction, minor problems in complex construction, several errors of agreement, tense, number, word order/function, articles, pronouns, preposition but meaning seldom obscured
	17-11	FAIR TO POOR: Major problems in simple/complex construction, frequent errors of negation, agreement, tense, number, word order/function, articles, pronouns, preposition and/or fragments, run-on, deletions, meaning confused or obscured
Mechanics	10-5	VERY POOR: Virtually no mastery of sentence construction rules, dominated by errors, does not communicate or not enough to evaluate
	5	EXCELLENT TO VERY GOOD: Demonstrates mastery of convention, few errors of spelling, punctuation, capitalization, paragraphing
	4	GOOD TO AVERAGE: Occasional errors of spelling, punctuation, capitalization, paragraphing but meaning not obscured
	3	FAIR TO POOR: Frequent errors of spelling, punctuations, capitalization, paragraphing, poor handwriting, meaning confused or obscured
	2	VERY POOR: No mastery of convention, dominated by errors of spelling, punctuation, capitalization, paragraphing, handwriting eligible, or not enough to evaluate

Jacob's Theory in Haswell (2007)

Appendix 2

Sample of Students' Writing and Lecturer's Feedback

rm#cp=/root/studygroups/reviews/1522051255981e0meUyyNTM1802DU_1521U128U236UfABCI


This is a list of items submitted by students in your group. Take some time to review the

Connected General English > B1 Pre-Intermediate Close

Unit 1: Things I'm into
 Writing


Review your classmate's response to the question below.


Write about a hobby or interest you'd like to try. Share why it is interesting to you. Follow the example. Then submit your note to your study group.

Version 1 of 1  Report

Reni Ramadani Putri

I have a dream. My dream is be a food vlogger. I would like to traveling country and try food there. Food vlogger gives knowlage to viwers if they want to cook or eat out. I couldn't fullfil my desires because i have to study and look for money first before be a food vlogger :)


 Well Done


 Try Again

Feedback B I U ↶ ↷ ☺

Nice writing but there are some spelling mistake such as
 Knowlage=knowledge, fullfil=fulfill.
 " like to traveling country " can be "like to travel overseas".
 Beware to capitalization (i=I)
 "my desires=my desire (because you just talk about one desire)
 Then, "after" is commonly followed by noun or gerund as noun (after being).
 It is better to you to finish your paragraph with concluding sentence

Score: out of 10.

Percent: % out of 100

Reset
Submit

Student Feedback