

The Use of Padlet Application to Teach Writing in Hybrid Learning: A Reflection of Online Teaching in Pandemic Era

Aulia An Nafik¹

aulia@unika.ac.id¹

CLT Unika Soegijapranata, Semarang, Indonesia¹

Abstract. Technology plays a role in supporting language learning. This is especially important in the current situation where physical meetings and face-to-face learning processes cannot be performed optimally due to some health protocol rules. The effectiveness of technical tools depends on the experience and knowledge of the teacher who applies or uses them to facilitate the flow of the teaching-learning process. Today, some many tools and applications help teachers support the teaching and learning process. One of them is the Padlet application. This paper is reflection of the use of Padlet application in a hybrid teaching-learning process during the second semester of academic year 2021/2022. The paper aims to explain students' perception regarding the implementation of hybrid learning and the use of this web application to support the teaching-learning process, specifically teaching writing skill for the first-year university students. The writer observed two classes of Basic Writing for communication science students of a private university in Semarang. Students' responses to a questionnaire were used to find out the student's reflections on the use of the application during the hybrid learning process. The finding showed that Padlet is very useful to teach writing in hybrid learning. It can facilitate students to work collaboratively and enhance students' engagement in writing activities.

Keywords: Padlet, teaching writing, hybrid learning

1 Introduction

We all know that all aspects of the world have changed greatly since the occurrence of Coronavirus Disease (COVID) at the end of 2019. This pandemic has forced humans to adapt to the new normal of living and nobody knows when this situation will be over. This is supported by the statement from the World Health Organization (WHO). It states that COVID-19 is likely to haunt the world for a long time. One of the aspects which is influenced by this situation is educational activities. The teaching-learning process has changed significantly amid the pandemic. Traditional classroom setting or physical presence in the classroom is considered risky to be conducted. Schools and institutions have been suggested to be closed and students

are studying from home. Due to school closure, many institutions conduct emergency remote learning to substitute the physical meeting. However, the situation has become better. Some institutions have started to conduct offline meetings with some conditions. One of them is limiting the number of students attending offline meetings to avoid crowds in the classroom. In implementing the condition, some institutions applied a shifting system. It is a system that manages the attendance of students joining the offline class in which some of the students come to school to have face-to-face meetings and some join the class virtually from home. Therefore, the teaching-learning process is conducted both online and offline. For this situation, teachers have to figure out how to prepare the classroom setting to be a hybrid style of learning. They have to discover some ways to keep the teaching-learning process moving forward and to keep students engaged with the lesson.

Nowadays there are a varied number of tools and applications that can be utilized to support teachers in creating engaging learning processes, such as Wordwall, Quizizz, Kahoot, Padlet, etc. Each of the applications offers certain features. They help and support teachers in creating fun and meaningful activities during class. Padlet, formerly called Wall wiser, is a web 2.0 tool for interaction on the virtual wall and has been used for the simple instructional task, as well as complicated tasks among experts (Dewitt et al, 2015) [5]. It is a free application to create an online bulletin board that can be used to display information on any topic. Jagathan (2016) [9] stated that this application is a useful web tool to have collaborative learning in the classroom. It is a web app that allows its users to post notes on a digital wall. In line with the idea, Fuchs (2014) [7] stated that Padlet is a free multimedia wall that allows real-time interaction both among students and between students and the teacher and it facilitates the whole class participation and assessment. In addition, a previous study conducted by Dewitt et. al. (2017) [5] on the use of Padlet for collaborative learning revealed that it is a tool that can be used to reduce communication gap among students, teachers, and peers. It also can facilitate the interaction among students. As we know that interaction plays an important role for teaching-learning process in language classroom. It is because through interaction students can build their confidence as language users and also construct their knowledge (Luk & Lin, 2007) [11]. However, in hybrid learning mode, interaction either among peers or with the teachers becomes lower due to spatial and technical issue which often occurred. Therefore, Padlet can be a good alternative application that can be employed in hybrid learning modes in which communication and interaction often becomes a challenge. Regarding its effective function, Padlet can be used to support activities in writing class, especially in the hybrid learning style. This paper is reflection of the use of Padlet application in the hybrid teaching-learning process during the second semester of the academic year 2021/2022, specifically in basic writing classes.

2. Literature Review

The pandemic situation that has lasted for more than two years has forced teachers and educators to find effective ways to keep the teaching-learning process going on. Distance education is one of the effective ways that can be employed during the limitation of face-to-face learning. It became very popular recently even though it was established a long time ago and has been applied for some purposes. Keegan (1988) [10] defined distance education as individualized teaching with limited teacher-student interaction, in which the student and teacher are separated by time and space, therefore various communication channels in an organized structure are

required to carry out the learning process. During the pandemic era, distance education, which is known as Pendidikan Jarak Jauh (PJJ) in Indonesia, is considered an essential strategy to avoid new clusters of COVID-19 in educational institutions. Distance education or PJJ is characterized as an open and independent learning process that can be conducted from any distance by optimizing the use of various communication media (Permendikud number 7, 2020) [16]. This is similar to the statement of UNESCO which explains distance education as an educational process and system where a significant portion of teaching is carried out by someone or something removed in space and time from the learners. Therefore, structure planning, well-designed courses, special instructional techniques, and methods of communication by electronic or other technologies are several elements required to conduct distance learning.

There are some types of distance education; correspondence model, audio-based models, televisual models, computer-based multimedia models, and mobile models. (Burn, 2011) [4]. In the current era, computer-based multimedia models are the most used. These models include computer-mediated communication, internet-based access, online course (e-learning), online conferences such as webinars and webcasts, and virtual classes. They have been used significantly to continue educational activities amid the pandemic. For that reason, both students and teachers need to adapt to the way the activities run virtually. Heiden et. al. (2011) [8] called the nowadays generation digital native. It is a generation that is digitally and media illiterate, technology savvy, and the generation that tends to be more able to use other learning approaches than the former generation. The trend of learning approaches that are commonly used is online learning or e-learning. Online learning is a process taking place in a virtual classroom environment, where both teachers and students collaborate. In online learning, the teacher as the instructor usually applies different strategies to convey the right amount of input. While the students as the participants should try to gain as much information as possible to understand a certain lesson (More, 2007) cited in Amiti (2020) [2]. There are three ways of online learning; asynchronous, synchronous, and synchronous hybrid online learning.

Asynchronous online learning is an unsynchronized method of learning, granted that the attendance of the teacher and the students can be distinct (Amiti, 2020) [2]. The teacher may decide to deliver the lesson through videotape, YouTube, digital video, DVD, or Podcast while students can respond through the use of communication modes like email. The opposite of asynchronous is synchronous online learning if it is seen from the side of the student's attendance. In this model of online learning, teachers and students should meet online on any platform chosen. They then cooperate just as they do in a classroom. According to Amiti (2020)[2], a synchronous learning environment is an environment where the teacher and students meet online on a specific online platform for discussing the lesson. One of the advantages of synchronous online learning is the real-time sharing of knowledge and immediate access to the instructor to ask some questions and receive answers. (Skylar, 2009) [18]. The last model of online learning is synchronous hybrid learning. It is the combination of synchronous and asynchronous learning. (Amiti, 2020) [2]. This online learning is one of the most commonly applied in the current situation where the teaching-learning process should keep continuing though there are many limitations encountered amid the pandemic era. Most educational institutions employed this learning mode because it is considered to be more convenient for students with a lack of internet networks to follow the lesson. The synchronous hybrid style of learning allows students to follow the lesson asynchronously, such as receiving the materials

from the teacher in form of video, files, etc, and they still have a chance to meet the teachers by attending a video conference in a specific time agreed by both teachers and students.

The limitation of educational activities during the pandemic era has now changed into a new normal situation. It is a new form of social interaction in all life sectors that relies on Standard Operational Procedures to control the spread of Covid 19. (Rita & Safitri, 2020) [17]. In the new normal, schools and educational institutions are allowed to reopen yet the health regulation needs to be obeyed. A hybrid learning style is a solution for the new situation. It is a learning model that blends the power of direct face-to-face in-class and online class. (Bryan & Volchenkova, 2016 cited in Nashir & Laili, 2021) [13]. It emphasizes the significance of the traditional learning process, and it is also necessary to design a learning model in which technology needs to be integrated into it. (Nashir & Laili, 2021) [13]. The concept of hybrid learning is the combination of an online learning environment by gaining the flexibility of distance or outside of classroom learning and face-to-face classroom instruction. (Hantea et al., 2013 cited in Alnajdi, 2018) [1]. Some previous studies on hybrid learning imply that this style of learning has its stronger effectiveness viewed from many aspects. A study by Midaglizole & Arikani (2014) [12] showed that hybrid learning is more effective compared to the online or face-to-face learning model. Its potential benefits increase the interest of some higher education institutions to develop hybrid programs or courses. Employing this learning mode in a new normal situation is confirmed by some scholars to be a good solution. Febrianto (2020) [16] stated that this learning model can solve the problem of fully online learning encountered by rural communities in which they are not equipped with adequate infrastructure. Another previous study on hybrid learning conducted by Sutisna & Vonti (2020) [20] stated that there has been an increase in terms of digital literacy levels through the process of hybrid learning. It is because both the teachers and students are required to optimize the use of technology to support the learning process.

3. Methodology

This study attempted to examine the students' perception regarding the use of Padlet to support the run of the hybrid teaching-learning process, especially in basic writing classes for first-year university students. In doing so, the writer observed first-year students of the communication science department of a private university in Semarang. To gather the data, the writer conducted observations and distributed an open-ended questionnaire to the students to gain deeper valuable data about their perception of the use of Padlet in writing class during hybrid learning.

The observation aimed to find out some aspects in the implementation of hybrid learning, such as platform and media used in conducting the hybrid learning, and also the run of the class during hybrid learning. In addition, it was not only conducted to observe the class and the behaviour of the students but also to observe the online activities in the learning management system used by the institution, which is called Supercyber. Further, the open-ended questionnaire used to collect data on the reflection was adapted from Priyadarshani and Jesuiya (2021) [15] and Dewitt et. al. (2017) [5]. The survey contained 10 items which consisted of 4 items regarding the implementation of basic writing class and how influential it is in their writing skill, 2 items had the students describe their opinion on the run of hybrid learning, and

the other 4 on their reflection of the use of Padlet to support the learning process of the basic writing class.

The survey was distributed at the end of the semester via WhatsApp groups to 92 students. Students were asked to complete the survey and returned it in two weeks period directly to the teacher's email. The data of student perception was collected from the student responses of the survey. To analyse the collected data, thematic analysis was employed. It is a method for identifying, and reporting patterns or themes within data. (Braune & Clarke, 2006) [3]. There were some steps conducted in this analysis. The first step was observing the meaning and patterns of the data to be familiar with them. Then, creating initial codes which represent the meaning and pattern. After that, deciding the codes by rereading the data and identifying some excerpts. The next step was collating codes with the supporting excerpts. Grouping the codes into some themes was the fifth step of this analysis then followed by evaluating and revising the themes. The final step of thematic analysis was writing the narrative. In addition, inter-rater reliability was done to avoid subjectivity.

4. Finding and Discussion

4.1 Observation

In a semester, there were 16 meetings in total conducted in a hybrid learning style. Hybrid in this case refers to the teaching-learning process in which some individuals participated in person (coming to the site just like a traditional classroom situation) and some of them participated virtually. The teachers teach remote and in-person students at the same time using technology, such as video conferences. (Steele, 2022) [19]. For this situation, th

e classrooms being used have been equipped with adequate technology to support both online and offline learning at the same time and the teachers were given a technical briefing to be able to operate all the needed equipment. It was done to minimize any technical problems that might be encountered by the teachers.

The first meeting of the class was conducted full online in which google meet was employed as the platform for video conferencing. In the meeting, the teachers explained the technical details of the hybrid learning style they would apply for the whole semester. It included managing the shifting system for the students attending the class on site (offline) to avoid crowds since at that time health protocol was required to be implemented. The teachers divided the class into two groups, groups 1 and 2. Each group alternated to come to campus each week. By doing so, all of them had their chance to have face-to-face learning and virtual one.

The hybrid learning started in the second meeting in which group 1 had the first chance to have a face-to-face meeting. In conducting this learning model, the main medium used was the Supercyber. Every important detail about the class, such as the attendance list, important link to access video conference, material, assignment, and announcement, was put on it. All the students were required to access the Supercyber regularly to be updated on any information about the class. The class activities were conducted by employing computer-based multimedia models, such as computer-mediated communication, internet-based access, online video conference, or virtual classes. (Burn, 2011) [4]. Computer-mediated communication (CMC) was

highly needed to keep the teachers and students in good communication during the hybrid teaching-learning process. According to Pratiwi (2014) [14] communication is considered CMC when it requires people to exchange information through computers or other devices which have similar technology systems as computers, such as smartphones. The real application of CMC in this hybrid class was when teachers used Padlet as a medium for the students in writing practice.

Padlet web app provides some interesting features which can be modified based on what the teachers need. It can be accessed and instantly viewed by all the class participants both online and offline. In addition, any type of file can be posted on this digital wall. Therefore, all kinds of writing activities during the hybrid meeting done by all the students were highly supervised by the teachers. It was an effective way to manage both online and offline class activities at the same time. Besides activities done in hybrid mode, there were some assignments given to the students to allow them to practice more and improve their writing skills. All of them were provided on the Supercyber. Usually, they were given after the class and they were about the material they were just discussing on that day. Based on the observation conducted, the level of students' activeness on online assignments was high. At least more than 80% of them attempted every assignment given. The following table shows their attempts:

Table 1. Students' attempts in online assignment

Class A Total number of students 49			Class B Total number of students 43		
Types of online writing assignment	Students' Attempts	Percentage	Online writing assignment	Students' Attempts	Percentage
Simple, compound, and sentences	47	96%	Simple, compound, and sentences	38	88%
Free writing on self-introduction	46	94%	Free writing on self-introduction	40	93%
A well-structured paragraph	47	96%	A well-structured paragraph	39	91%
Paragraphs	44	90%	Paragraphs	39	91%
Process Paragraph	45	92%	Process paragraph	38	88%

4.2 Questionnaire

Over 92 students received, the survey 67 students responded to it. 39 students sent the survey by email and the other 28 shared google drive links to let the writer access their responses. Of the total of 10 items in the survey, items number 1 to 4 required the participants to describe how

basic writing class impacts their ability in writing. Most of the participants stated that their knowledge of the skills of writing has increased after joining the basic writing class for a semester. Their awareness of writing good grammatical structured sentences, using correct punctuations, and using varied vocabularies in sentences has improved significantly. It was considered a great improvement since all of the participants are not English Department students and English itself is not the language they use in their daily life. Moreover, some of them claimed that they feel more confident to write sentences and develop them into paragraphs after having known the basic skills of writing. Writing practice during the class and assignments given by the teachers have helped and given them a chance to apply the theory they got into real writing.

Regarding the implementation of the hybrid learning style which was the next point of the survey, some students found it quite effective in the situation where there was some health protocol that needed to be obeyed. They had experienced a fully online class for almost two years, therefore hybrid learning was a better learning model for them because they had time to have both face-to-face and virtual meetings depending on the shift they got. However, some participants stated that they prefer to have face-to-face meetings in the classroom because they felt more focused on their studies if they were in the classroom. They prefer this traditional classroom situation since sometimes they have to deal with technical or internet issues, such as power failure, or other issues, for example, an uncondusive learning atmosphere at home.

The next points of the questionnaire points 7 to 10, were about the use of Padlet in their basic writing class. In point 7, the question was about their experience of using it in the learning process in a classroom. Over the responses submitted, 59 students were answering that they have never been experienced it for their learning process, specifically, they knew Padlet after they joined the basic writing class. Most of them wrote that they never knew it before. The next point of the questionnaire was about the effectiveness of this web app to support the writing activity in a hybrid learning style. Most of the reactions were positive. They described this app as a tool that could facilitate them in writing practice during hybrid learning. It was very effective in helping them post their sentences or composition on the digital wall which could be seen in real-time by both their classmates and teachers. Therefore, it was easier for the teachers to give direct feedback or even do some corrections. They stated that teachers' direct feedback was the thing they needed in writing practice. Even though some students were not in the face-to-face meeting they still got it. From here, good communication either between students and teachers or among the students about the topic being discussed in the class were built.

Besides real-time interaction and communication, they mentioned that it was an easily accessible app with modern interesting features which allow users to edit the work, score the work, and even give reactions to it. Some of them claimed that it supported them to work collaboratively during the writing activities. Another positive opinion about the use of Padlet for writing activities in hybrid learning was that it made them actively engaged in the lesson since the teacher always supervised and controlled the writing practices. They could easily know some students who did not join the writing practice and then directly notified them to join. It was a positive force for students to practice.

5. Conclusion

Hybrid learning in the new normal era is one of the solutions to keep the teaching-learning process moving forward. The implementation of hybrid learning cannot be separated from the use of technology. As teachers, we are suggested to explore the technology and be able to utilize it to create fun and engaging activities for the students to facilitate them improving both their skills and knowledge. For language learning, there are many kinds of applications or tools with great features that can be used based on the needs of the class, one of them is Padlet. Utilizing this web application in hybrid learning, especially for teaching writing, has proven to be effective. It increased students' engagement and participation in writing class. Moreover, by employing Padlet the interaction either between teachers and students or among the students improve significantly during the writing activity. One example of teacher-student interaction is when the teacher gave feedback on the student's work then the feedback generates them to ask some questions.

This reflection on the implementation of hybrid learning is expected to contribute new ideas for teachers to find alternative tools or applications for teaching writing. However, this study has several limitations. First, the writer does not compare Padlet with other digital platforms which can support writing activities. Then, the writer only focuses on the student's perception of the implementation of the hybrid learning without analysing the students' performance in writing. It is suggested that future studies can explore more the correlation between the use of a certain digital platform and the improvement of students' writing performance.

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