WRITING ON THE WALL: INTEGRATING PADLET IN ESP WRITING CLASSROOMS

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ARTICLE

ABSTRACT

Learning to write English on a wall is what a Padlet may look like to those who have used this virtual pinboard. This digital tool is easy to use yet effective for assisting students in learning to write. This study investigated the effectiveness of integrating Padlet on students' writing skills in English for Specific Purposes (ESP) classrooms. 78 ESP students at a State Islamic University participated in this study. To collect data, pre and post-tests were administered. The data was analyzed using the t-test for independent samples. The results from the pre-post tests showed a significant enhancement in students' writing skills. The results revealed that the integration of Padlet is effective in improving students' writing skills in English language learning. Lastly, practical and essential suggestions related to the result of the study are discussed, particularly for future researchers, English language teachers, and ESP students.

INTRODUCTION

The increasing use of technology has made an impact in the classroom. However, the development of various Web 2.0 tools and applications in recent years has further enriched teaching and influenced the mode of learning. These applications, which are designed for a variety of purposes, enhance students' classroom experiences by making learning more engaging, effective, and meaningful. One of the applications that can be used in the classroom, particularly in language classrooms, is Padlet. It is a permitted and accessible web application, which enables students and teachers to make virtual walls on which they can write and share images, videos, or files. With Padlet, teachers can create, moderate, and delete posts and freely administer the page. Hence, this allows both teachers and students to utilize Padlet as an academic tool for teaching and learning.

Padlet, as a pedagogical tool, is unquestionably beneficial. Padlet is particularly useful because students do not need to create an account. This application is similar to an online sheet of paper, but it is displayed on the website, where students can write any content anywhere on the page, with anyone, and from any device with an internet connection, such as smartphones, tablets, and computers. Thus, it engages students' performance (Ojha & Acharya, 2021) and promotes students to generate, express,

and develop ideas creatively. As mentioned by Sangeetha (2016), Padlet is a great virtual writer's journal for collecting and developing ideas, sharing images and even video documents, and modifying and sharing them freely on the wall. In addition, it provides the opportunity for students to contribute while learning from others in a non-frightening environment.

Padlet can also be interpreted as a tool that is very useful for creating collaborative learning among students. It made following conversations and responding to one another easier and more enjoyable as it was more visually appealing and easier to access (Ali, 2021). They can easily participate and ask questions anonymously, which foster spontaneous critical engagement (Deni & Zainal, 2018). Padlet can also be used as an assessment tool. It can be used to assess students' writing skills (Jong & Tan, 2021), and it enables students to respond to one another's posts, which can encourage peer assessment (Adachi et al., 2018). Thus, it is significance to note that Padlet encourages both independent and collaborative learning engagement and allows them to have direct connections among their friends as mentioned by Gill-Simmen (2021).

A number of studies have found that the integration of Padlet in language classrooms could improve students' achievement, promote students' participation, develop teaching and learning effectively, and make learning meaningful (Fadhilawati et al., 2020; Haris et al., 2017; Taufikurohman, 2018). Furthermore, a study on the use of Padlet in the classroom by Beitz (2019) contributes to the development of a positive collaborative and flexible learning environment in which students can learn through Padlet at any time and from any location, especially if they own their own devices. In line with this, Mahmud (2019) found that Padlet helped students sharpen their writing skills while collaborating with friends. Etfita and Wahyuni (2021) have also shown that Padlet worked well for learning and supported collaborative activities beyond the classrooms.

Another study also revealed some potential for the use of Padlet in the classroom. Teng et al. (2020) found that Padlet can promote students' self-regulation in online learning activities covering reading and writing skills. A study by Ali et al. (2018) also demonstrated that Padlet can greatly impact students' writing skills. Padlet is not only beneficial to the students' writing skills, but through Padlet, students gain new knowledge, such as new vocabulary. Additionally, Padlet is also believed to improve the student-centered learning environment as students can actively contribute by creating posts, adding information, giving feedback on their friends' work, and learning from each other.

In a nutshell, a convincing conclusion can be depicted from the aforementioned studies that Padlet is potential to enhance learning activities, engage students' participation, and increase their achievement. However, the effect of Padlet on students' writing skills in English has not been clarified in the literature, especially in the English for Specific Purposes (ESP) context. Consequently, at this point, the present study purposes to fill this gap by examining the effect of Padlet on ESP students' writing skills. In order to achieve the purpose of this study, the research problem is specified in a single question as follows: Does integrating Padlet improve ESP students' writing skills?

METHOD

This section provides information about specifics regarding five issues: research design, participants, research instruments, data collection, and data analysis. This study is a quasi-experimental one as it tries to investigate the effects of integrating Padlet on students' writing skills. The subjects of this study were 78 students from two classes taking English for Specific Purposes at Universitas Islam Negeri Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang who enrolled in even semester in 2021. 38 students in class A were involved in the experimental group, and 40 students in class B were in the control group. The

experimental group was exposed to integrating Padlet into writing activities, whereas the other class as a control group was not.

In this study, two research instruments were employed to obtain the data. The first instrument was a writing test that was used as a pre-test before the treatment and a post-test after the treatment, with the aim of evaluating the effect of integrating Padlet on students' writing skills. While the second instrument was a scoring guide for writing skills. The pool of the data collection was undertaken as follows: First, students were assigned to write an essay to assess their entrance behavior, which was considered a pre-test. Second, two different teaching and learning methods were employed throughout the treatment sessions. Accordingly, in the experimental class, students were assisted by Padlet in the teaching and learning activities. Meanwhile, in the control class, students were exposed to traditional teaching and learning methods where they were given various model essays to learn. Following the stage of the specified treatment for both groups, students were assigned to write a new essay related to the topic provided, which was measured as a post-test.

As a result, the data for this study consisted of students' writing scores from a writing test given prior to treatments (pre-test) and students' writing scores from a writing test given at the end of treatments (post-test). The data from the writing test was scored using an analytical scoring guide and the inter-rater method to obtain highly reliable scores on the students' writing. The students' writings were graded by two different raters. Those raters were carefully chosen because they have experience teaching writing, developing writing tasks, assessing writing skills, and rating students' writing. Finally, data analysis followed these activities. The collected data was then analyzed statistically using the t-test analysis for independent samples to determine the effectiveness of integrating Padlet on students' writing skills.

FINDINGS

Based on the aims of this study, this section reports the results of both pre-test and post-test. The independent sample t-test was conducted to explore possible statistically significant differences between the means of the control group and the experimental group. In this regard, the results of the pre-test showed that the mean score attained by the control group was 34.8000 with a standard deviation of 5.39135, while the mean score of the experimental group was 33.4000 with a standard deviation of 4.94512. Hence, it can be claimed that the two groups were homogeneous in relations to their writing skills before the treatment, as presented in the following Table 1.

Table 1: Pre-test Statistics for Control and Experiment Groups

Group	N	Mean	Std Deviation
Experimental	38	62.9839	7.22335
Control	40	62.8444	8.22045

In regards to the post-test results, it was discovered that the difference between the two means of the control and experimental groups is statistically significant. The post-test results showed that the experimental group had a higher mean score than the control group, which was 87.3621, whereas the control group had a lower mean of 67.8667, with a sig. (2-tailed) of.000. This demonstrates that students who are taught by integrating Padlet outperformed students who are taught traditionally or the control group, respectively. Table 2 provides detail on the post-test results.

Table 2: Post-test Statistics for the Control and Experiment Groups

Group	N	Mean	Std Deviation

| Experimental | 38 | 87.3621 | 4.74322 |
| Control | 40 | 67.8667 | 6.99745 |

DISCUSSION

Subsequent to the above descriptive presentation of the analysis, it has been clearly indicated that integrating Padlet in writing class has an excellent result on students' writing skills, as the noticing results show. It revealed that the students' writing skills in the experimental group who were exposed to Padlet in the process of learning to write were better than those in the control group who were exposed to traditional teaching methods such as using model essay. The findings, then, were expected to support the theories that Padlet could improve students' writing skills. This result supports the results study of Ali et al. (2018), who discovered that Padlet could help students develop their writing skills. They also stated that students were able to successfully show the Padlet integration in their writing activities.

Based on a deeper analysis, the findings of this study occurred for a number of reasons. One of the reasons might lie in the role of Padlet, which provides an opportunity for students to improve their writing skills as it can facilitate their learning activities. Through Padlet, students have more possibilities to learn and practice writing skills attentively, as it is not only easy to use but also enables them to learn beyond the classroom, at anytime and anywhere. This result agrees with Beitz (2019) and Ali et al. (2018), who found that Padlet promotes a flexible learning environment where students can access it and practice writing whenever and wherever they choose. Thus, it is worth nothing that when students have more time to practice writing and have better learning experiences, ultimately, it improves their writing skills.

Pertinent to the next reason, as an essential tool, Padlet enables students to feel confident and comfortable expressing ideas (Awaludin et al., 2017), as well as to share images, videos, or documents on the wall, which definitely helps them develop their writing skills. It is believed that images, videos, and other related documents can be used in writing activities, particularly in pre-writing activities; hence, they can help students write better and finally improve their writing skills. Stannard (2015) and Arif et al. (2020) stated that Padlet is ideal for students learning activities such as brainstorming and pre-writing activities. Hence, it is understandable that in the writing process, brainstorming and pre-writing activities play an important role in improving students' writing skills. By using Padlet that contains relevant images or documents as a pre-writing strategy, this will make it easy for students to start writing and develop their ideas well. In other words, integrating Padlet into their writing activities is beneficial for them. They not only learn how to express ideas and write better, but they also learn other skills along with it (Arif et al., 2020).

The next reason may point to the fact that the attractive nature of Padlet and its features can facilitate the learning of writing activities. Padlet seems to make a positive contribution to students' writing skills as it provides possibilities for teachers and students to interact with each other, do self-assessment, and give feedback on each other's writing. Teachers may use Padlet as a tool for teaching writing. They can easily review and track students' work by opening the Padlet, as it is visible on the wall. On the other hand, for students, they could get direct feedback from both teachers and their classmates without having a one-on-one meeting with their teachers and classmates. When students learn from their classmates' posts and their teachers' feedback, then learning activities occur. The "class wall" turns into a source of learning. Consequently, by receiving open feedback from both teachers and other students, students can enhance their writing skills. This statement supports the findings shown by Mulyadi et al. (2021) that comments and feedback from teachers and classmates can assist students to do reflection and self-correction, which supports students to have a better understanding and helps them to write better.

A recent pedagogical study emphasizes Padlet's importance to improve students' writing skills. According to Rashid et al. (2019), Arif et al. (2020), Ramachandrian and Mahmud (2018), and Ali (2021), Padlet empowers students to engage in learning, decreases anxiety levels, facilitates interaction among students and teachers, and enhances writing skills throughout peer learning. Moreover, Padlet could be effectively utilized in writing activities among students with lower abilities as they have a model of an essay to learn from. The publication of writing on the wall makes it available for reading by other students in the class. Similarly, Fadhilawati et al. (2020) and Mulyadi (2021) specified that Padlet made students enthusiastic to learn writing, interested in the lesson, comfortable sharing their writing, and great for helping them improve their writing skills. Thus, it can be postulated that as a learning tool, Padlet is a suitable tool to reduce anxiety, reduce communication gaps among students, teachers, and peers, and motivate them to engage with one another.

It is also essential to highlight that, based on the results of this study, integrating Padlet into writing activities encourages communication as well as collaboration. Padlet enables students to communicate and work collaboratively with their classmates. It means that in the learning of the writing process, students can communicate and work collaboratively in developing ideas, revising, and editing their writing product (Mahmud, 2019). Working collaboratively is believed to allow students to have an authentic experience in communication and work together with real friends and teachers. Students are able to post their writing on the Padlet's wall, and their classmates can add to it by giving comments, revising it, and editing it directly. Similar to this, Etfita and Wahyuni (2021) and Mulyadi et al. (2021) found that having experience working collaboratively on accomplishing their writing tasks helps students build their confidence in learning to write and finally producing writing effectively and independently. Thus, it is reasonable to reveal that collaborative learning activities, particularly collaborative writing, can positively impact students' writing skills.

CONCLUSION

In light of the research problems and data analysis results, it is possible to conclude that integrating Padlet into students' writing activities resulted in a significant improvement in their writing skills. Padlet has offered positive effects on students' writing skills due to several factors that influence it: it facilitates students' practice of writing skills thoughtfully as they can learn beyond the class; it enables students to feel confident and comfortable expressing ideas without any pressure; it provides possibilities for teachers and students to do self-assessment and give feedback to their classmates' writing; it encourages students to involve in class activities and reduces their anxiety; and finally, it improves students' writing skills. Thus, it is significant to note that the implication of this study is to provide information that the integration of Padlet works well for improving students' writing skills. Thus, it is recommended for teachers and students, particularly ESP students that the integration of Padlet be maintained to facilitate students' improving their writing skills. Furthermore, future researchers should conduct studies with a large sample of both ESP and English department students to add to and shed light on the body of knowledge and to better understand students' experiences with the integration of Padlet in writing classrooms.

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