Assessment of Learning Design with Padlet on the Writing Skills of German Language Level A2-B1 CEFR

Kharis[1], Dhea Elvira Ressa Putri[2]

[1,2] Universitas Negeri Malang

Email: [1.] m.kharis.fs@um.ac.id [2.] eyseelv@gmail.com

Abstract: This study aims to answer the questions, how students respond using Padlet for writing skills in German language level A2-B1 CEFR and how the use of Padlet for this purpose to be optimized. In summary, 21 students participated, which consisted of 2 males and 19 females, within the range of 19-22 years. Data are obtained through a closed and open questionnaire and were analyzed with content analysis and context analysis techniques. This research has identified the needs, comfort, satisfaction, and the reasons for using Padlet platform. Optimizing the use of Padlet is expected to make students more active in the learning process of writing skills in German. This research has an essential finding: before the implementation of online learning, internet availability, and the adequacy of smartphones as an infrastructure of learning should be considered.

Keywords: online learning, Padlet, writing skills in the German language

Introduction

German writing skills become essential in line with the many writings on the website or blog. Related to this phenomenon, research conducted by Farmer et.all; proofed that blogging activities can improve students' learning abilities and realize their way of learning (Farmer and Barlett-Barg, 2005). With the growing use of technology, learning served online so that the learning activities can be done anytime and anywhere. A study from the Pew Internet Project shows that 11 percent of American adults use social media Twitter or similar applications. Interestingly, most of the users are young people (Coeckelbergh, 2011).

However, although students were wishing to participate in using technology, they are not able to accept the technology as a part of learning sources in the classroom (Wynn, 2013). In many cases, students do not want to use the internet for academic purposes. Students want to distinguish the functions of social media for academic or social purposes (Veira, Leacock, & Warrican, 2014). This is because they are not accustomed to the task of social media services as learning media. However, nowadays, social media is used not only for social interaction means. Many platforms are developed for education and learning. Thus, the use of social media should be used as a means of supporting e-Learning activities (Ann Rosnida & Zainor Izat, 2018).

The German Language Department of State University of Malang gives a lecture *Aufsatz II* to practice the writing skills of students so that students can write German level A2-B1 standard CEFR (Common European Framework of Reference), which is the framework used to assess the ability of foreign languages, in this case, German. Language skills are divided into six levels, namely elementary use of language (A1 and A2), independent use of language (B1 and B2), and competent use of language (CI and C2). Glaboniat shortly explains receptive and productive skills that must be mastered by German language learners in accordance with level (Glaboniat, Müller, Rusch, Schmitz, & Wertenschlag, 2013).

The German language ability and skills of students of the German Language Education Study Program State University of Malang in the third semester of 2017 are illustrated in the results on the writing skills in the midterm and final semester exams with the average score of

72.6. It can be assumed that students' writing skills need to be improved. Therefore, students still need to get more to writing skills.

Based on the background of the mentioned above problems, the lecturer of *Aufsatz II* had used a blog as a platform in German text writing skills A2-B1 level. The use of blogs as a writing platform is based on several reasons. The primary use of blogs is to publish messages in the form of text, photos, videos, or audio, write statuses and information, ask questions, or view and read the status of other users. Sulistyo's research shows that by using BALL (blog assisted language learning) English foreign language (EFL) learners improve their writing competence and become more active in two-atmosphere online classrooms: collaboration and competition between learners (Sulistyo, Mukminatien, Cahyono, & Saukah, 2019). Bicen and Cavus stated that blogs could be used in education because they are in accordance with the characteristics and trends of students in interacting on social media (Bicen & Cavus, 2012).

Related to the use of online media in learning, currently, microblogging media, which is smaller than a blog, is the latest technology in the web 2.0 era (Ebner, Lienhardt, Rohs, & Meyer, 2010). Research by Ebner et.all indicates, that media microblogging can be seen as a new form of communication that informally to support learning outside the classroom (Ebner et al., 2010) to train critical thinking skills, (Rathakrishnan, Ahmad, & Choi, 2018), as well as skills assessment (Ramachandiran & Mahmud, 2018).

This research use platform Padlet as a platform microblogging in writing skills German. Padlet is chosen as a writing medium because of significant reasons, including ease of access, attractive appearance, and ease of data access by the account owner. In addition, Padlet lecturers can create learning classes in a more specific class group, and students can join the group. The lecturer organizes groups in the Padlet for learning and discussion in it. Based on the background, as mentioned earlier, the research questions are the following:

1. What do students think about writing learning through Padlet?
2. How do to optimize Padlet as a medium of writing learning?
3. Can Padlet as media be used in other courses?

Method

The study uses an analysis of qualitative descriptive. The object of the study was 21 students in the German Department at Malang State University, consisting of 2 men and 19 women. They were taking *Aufsatz II* (Composing II) courses and could write German level A2-B1 CEFR standards. Each student wrote an essay at each meeting based on the theme and writing task given.

In the first phase, students are given a tutorial on how to use the Padlet platform, including how to join a group, write essays, provide comments and respond (like), add pictures or videos, etc. Furthermore, students were given the first writing assignment with the theme *Unterhaltung am Wochenende* (Entertainment on the weekend), and the second assignment theme was *Kommentare Schreiben* (writing comments). Students are not given a time limit for writing into the Padlet platform.

Data and metadata are contained from Padlet's system. Then the students filled out a questionnaire to find out their opinion about the Padlet as a medium for writing German. Diagram 1 shows the research process in the classroom by using Padlet as the design of online teaching on subjects *Aufsatz II*.
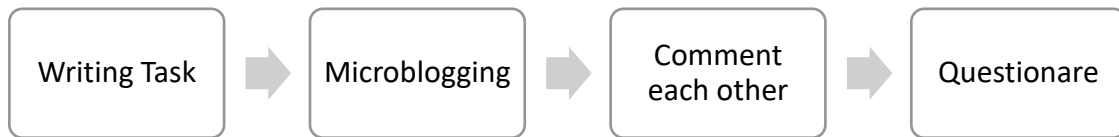
Figure 1: Research process

Result

To answer the research questions mentioned above, students had the writing assignments twice with different themes. Students composed text with *Leitpunkte* as an outline, so that the topic of the essay remains focused. After that, students uploaded the written text into the Padlet platform. Each writing assignment was assessed, and the number of words in the text was counted. Data on the average value and terms count in the essay shows in the following table:

Table 1: The results of the writing assignment

Theme 1		Theme 2	
Score	Number of words	Score	Number of words
84	154	83	104

All student's activities, for example, uploading text, images, sound, and video, and comments, are recorded through the Padlet's metadata. Figure 2 below shows the comparison of metadata obtained on the two themes.
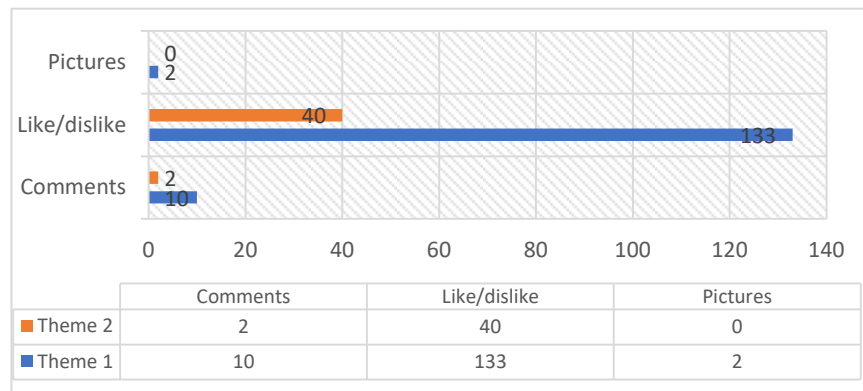

	Comments	Like/dislike	Pictures
Theme 2	2	40	0
Theme 1	10	133	2

Figure 2: Metadata of Padlet usage

Figure 2 shows an illustration of the activities on the platform. There are 12 comments written as a means of discussion between users. There were 12 comments and 173 likes, 11 of which were positive comments and one negative comment. In general, all students show their interest with Padlet. However, in detail, only seven were active. The seven students gave their likes to other students' self- written works regularly, while other students rarely visited Padlet. Some only offer a close sign without giving any comment or critics to the essay of other students.

Interestingly, students more motivated to write essays through Padlet on the first theme. All students worked on assignments within two or three days. This is different compared to the upload time for the second theme essay. Twenty students have submitted their written

assignments after two weeks from the assignment day. In the final phase of the study, the researchers gave the questionnaire to know (1) the students' opinions and experiences in using Padlet, (2) their endurance in using Padlet, and (3) student satisfaction using Padlet.

Data About Opinions and Constraints

To get students' responses about the use of Padlets, researchers have developed an open questionnaire. The analysis results can be seen as follows:

Question 1: *For academic purposes, how many times do you use a blog?* most respondents rarely use blogs (54.19%), and the rest often use blogs (40.86%)

Question 2: *What do you think about the experience of using microblogging?* A total of 10 respondents satisfied with the use of Padlet. 13 respondents do not like the use of microblogging.

Question 3: *What do you think if writing learning continues with Padlet?* From the results of the analysis, many respondents agreed that Padlet was used in learning. As many as 62% of students are very enthusiastic and hope that Padlet can be used in other subjects, the rest do not agree if Padlet is used in learning.

Question 4: *What do you think about Padlet for academic purposes?* In answering this question, students have different opinions. Nevertheless, generally, they were positive opinions. Some respondents showed more interest in Padlet as a medium of learning, as seen in the responses below:

- *Good, because I did not know before what Padlet was. After being used as a learning medium, it turned out that there were many benefits.*
- *Good idea, because writing on paper is boring.*
- *Attractive and efficient, I do not have to hold lectures face to face too long. I can do my tasks through Padlet.*
- *In my opinion, Padlet should be used in more lectures.*
- *The better thing is because we are now in the digital 4.0 era. The use of Padlet is a form of technology utilization.*

Besides these advantages, Padlet, as a writing medium, also has weaknesses. Some respondents more like using a traditional method (paper-based) to do the work of writing, as shown in the following responses:

- *I consider Padlet more complicated. Easier by paper*
- *Padlet requires many requirements to access it*

Question 5: *For academic purposes, how often do you comment on the essays of other participants?* As many as 15 % often stated, 20% *rarely* and 65% *never*. This is the same as the results of research conducted by Viera, Leacock, and Warrican, which stated that the desire to use this tool is to find information that they need for educational purposes (Veira et al., 2014), Students have written some of the responses in a questionnaire as follows:
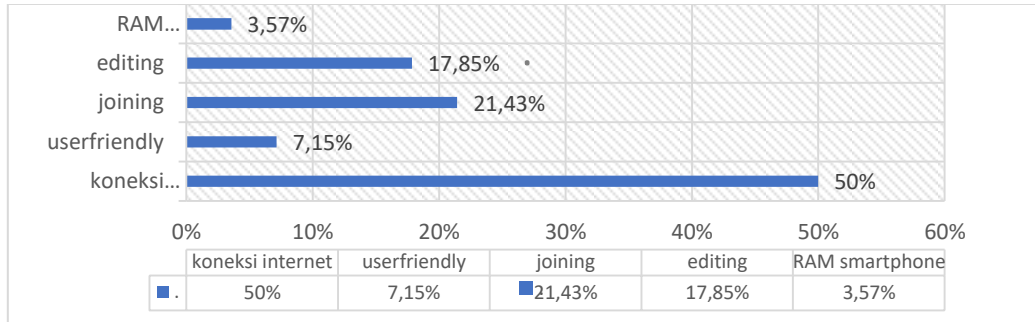
- *I rarely give comments because other student blogs are less attractive.*
- *I have never commented, for fear of being offensive*
- *I never give my comments because I also have not been proficient in writing on blogs.*
- *I never commented, what for?*

Question 6: *Is it convenient to use Padlet?* Most respondents (85%) found, Padlet could support the academic activities, while 15% think that Padlet was very difficult to access due to the limited quality of their smartphone devices, as expressed by the following participants.

- *Sometimes Padlet can only be used and accessed by individual students, so some other students cannot upload assignments or blogs.*
- *Maybe in the future, the system can be improved better.*

Other problems faced by students are presented in Figure 3 as follows:

Figure 3. Encountered obstacles

	koneksi internet	userfriendly	joining	editing	RAM smartphone
.	50%	7,15%	21,43%	17,85%	3,57%

Discussion

The obtained data analysis, either through a questionnaire as well as metadata, shows the effectiveness and students' responses about the use of Padlet during the lesson. Based on the feedback obtained through a questionnaire, the following are several opinions regarding the use of Padlet in writing learning:
 The motivation to write through Padlet is higher than when students write essays with paper;

- Some students still have problems trying to use the Padlet;
- In the second assignment, only a few students interacted online;
- Students are more enthusiastic about using online learning because it can be accessed anywhere and anytime;
- Apart from the difficulties of using technology, this method can be seen as an innovation in writing learning.

In general, students have a positive impression of comfort in performing tasks and discussions through Padlet. However, there is also a negative impression due to some problems in accessing Padlet. This is found by Ann and Zainor, who analyze the influence of students' perceptions on the use of educational Padlet as a learning tool. The results of his research show that students' perceptions greatly influence the frequency of using Padlet. User preferences over approach and learning method, lack of autonomy, and low motivation were identified as factors among students that contributed to Padlet's negative perceptions as an educational tool (Ann Rosnida & Zainor Izat, 2018).

Besides, the interaction between lecturers and students in Padlet is an essential factor. Without this interaction, students have a perception that Padlet is not much different from traditional learning. The participation of lecturers in a discussion can motivate the students to be active so that students can use Padlet more optimally. This review reinforces the research by Whitton, which identifies that teacher involvement is very instrumental in the success of a class (Whitton, 2009) and because the participating teachers recognized multiple benefits in a student-centered classroom and differences from traditional classrooms (Keiler, 2018).

Another glaring problem is the limited internet to access Padlet. Most of the students have difficulty to access the Internet continuously. It was marked that the platform Padlet cannot be accessed via smartphones because their smartphone is not quite adequate. This becomes one of

the factors of external causes of their negative impression about the use of Padlet because technology is closely related to user perception (Pricopie, 2013). Someday, now or tomorrow, learners will always move to access the material (Ally, 2013). Furthermore, because it is, the study material should be efficiently designed and accessible, and it does not depend on the type of network infrastructure that they use.

Conclusions

Based on the data findings and data analysis, the following research conclusions are:
- In general, the interest of students to use Padlet in learning is very significant.
- The involvement of lecturers directly in a discussion forum can affect the motivation of all students.
- The use of Padlet as a medium for writing German text does have many advantages, but Padlet also has weaknesses. Thus, some considerations are needed in using Padlet as writing media.
- The use of smartphones plays an essential role in determining the effectiveness of Padlet learning.

References

Ally. M. (2007). Mobile Learning. The International Review of Research in Open and Distance Learning. *2007*. https://doi.org/10.19173

Ann Rosnida, D., & Zainor Izat. (2018). "I Love it But I Don't Use It": Students' Perceptions on the Use of Padlet as an Educational Tool for Learning. *2018*, 12.

Bicen, H., & Cavus, N. (2012). Twitter Usage Habits of Undergraduate Students. *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences*, *46*, 335–339. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2012.05.117

Coeckelbergh, M. (2011). What are we doing?: Microblogging, the ordinary private, and the primacy of the present. *Journal of Information, Communication and Ethics in Society*, *9*(2), 127–136. https://doi.org/10.1108/14779961111148640

Ebner, M., Lienhardt, C., Rohs, M., & Meyer, I. (2010). Microblogs in Higher Education – A chance to facilitate informal and process-oriented learning? *Computers & Education*, *55*(1), 92–100. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.compedu.2009.12.006

Farmer, J., & Bartlett-Bragg, A. (2005). Blogs @ anywhere: High fidelity online communication. *2005*, 7.

Glabonat, M., Müller, M., Rusch, P., Schmitz, H., & Wertenschlag, L. (2013). *Profile deutsch: Lernzielbestimmungen, Kannbeschreibungen, Kommunikative Mittel, Niveau A1-A2, B1-B2, C1-C2*. Klett Sprachen.

Keiler, L. S. (2018). Teachers' roles and identities in student-centered classrooms. *International Journal of STEM Education*, *5*(1), 34. https://doi.org/10.1186/s40594-018-0131-6

Pricopie, V. (2013). *Scientific Research and Public Opinion in Europe. A Preliminary Study*. 14.

Ramachandiran, C. R., & Mahmud, M. M. (2018). *Padlet: A Technology Tool for the 21st Century Students Skills Assessment*. *1*, 8.

Rathakrishnan, M., Ahmad, R., & Choi, L. J. (2018). Padlet Online Discussion in Enhancing Students' macro Critical Thinking Skills. *11 January 2018*, *01*(03), 7.

Sulistyo, T., Mukminatien, N., Cahyono, B. Y., & Saukah, A. (2019). Enhancing Learners' Writing Performance through Blog-Assisted Language Learning. *International Journal*

of Emerging Technologies in Learning (IJET), *14*(09), 61. https://doi.org/10.3991/ijet.v14i09.9535

Veira, A. K., Leacock, C. J., & Warrican, S. J. (2014). Learning outside the walls of the classroom: Engaging the digital natives. *Australasian Journal of Educational Technology*, *30*(2). https://doi.org/10.14742/ajet.349

Whitton, D. N. (2009). *Alternate Reality Games for Orientation, Socialisation and Induction (ARGOSI)*. 14.

Wynn, & Monica Flippin. (2013). Student perception of technology in the classroom: A faculty and student collaboration. *An Interdisciplinary Journal*, *26*(3), 21–33.