Japanese Learners' Perception of Using Padlet in Japanese Composition (*Sakubun*) Skills

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ABSTRACT
Integration between the Industrial Revolution 4.0 and the education sector requires teachers and students to utilize nowadays technologies, one of them by using Padlet. Padlet is a web-based application that enables users to write or pin-up files such as pictures to the virtual walls on Padlet. This study aims to find out the use of Padlet to enhance the students' interest in Japanese basic writing class (*Shokyu Sakubun*) and how this application can improve students' Japanese composition skills. This mixed-methods study gathered quantitative and qualitative data using the questionnaires to obtain students' perception of using Padlet in Basic Japanese Writing courses. Involving a class of twenty-two students enrolled in basic writing courses at university in Bandung, West Java, and this study attained the data through observation of four class meetings. The findings showed the students think that Padlet can assist them to learn Japanese writing (*sakubun*) for beginners, as Padlet has various features that accommodate writing activities. It is fun and interesting because students also able to insert photos and Padlet can improve students' writing ability through learning from peers. However, several students had troubles with the internet connections, and felt the inefficiency related to practicing writing Japanese characters by hands.

Keywords: Japanese learners, Padlet, students' perception, writing

1. INTRODUCTION

Writing is a productive skill because it generates ideas, thoughts, or feelings in writing. Writing skills are important skills for foreign learners to master (Fageeh, 2011), including Japanese language learners. However, learning to write Japanese essays (*sakubun*) is a subject that is considered difficult by most Japanese learners. The need of expressing and developing ideas (Cahyani, 2005), applying sentence patterns found in textbooks, writing kanji, expressions, and using particles when conveying an idea or idea into the form of written Japanese is the most difficult thing (Aneros, 2013). This, too, is experienced by students currently learning the basic level of essay writing (*shokyu sakubun*) due to the lack of understanding certain subject matter deemed necessary to have a full grasp on writing essays or being competent in Japanese such as sentence patterns, lack of understanding of how to write essay content based on certain lines adjusted to the themes in textbooks. Making it difficult and in turn; confusing the learners about what must be written. Direct guidance from teachers during the learning process plays a very important role in the process of learning *sakubun*, such

as explaining grammar, providing feedback on the essays written by students. However, since the Covid-19 pandemic, teaching, and learning activities around the world have been carried out at home by implementing distance classes also better known as E-learning (electronic learning). In this case, using technology to solve the learning process problem at home is the right solution. Likewise, the teaching and learning process in universities currently involves mobile and online applications. Various types of the latest technology-based learning media are offered to meet the needs of learning in various fields/scopes, including language learning. There are lots of applications and webs used by teachers; such as Facebook, Edmodo, Padlet, Blog, Youtube, Google Classroom, Zoom, Webex, or Google Meet.

Several studies have shown that learning via the use of the internet can make the learning process easier than before (Yunus & Salehi, 2012), then leading the teaching and learning activities to change its form; from teacher-centered to student-centered (Fageeh, 2011). Moreover, there is an increase in the learning process, also making it much more effective and interesting

(Baharuddin & Badus, 2016). Padlet (formerly Wall Wisher) is a web-based tool (online application) and multimedia friendly wall for drafting ideas and collaborating online (online wall). This platform can be used by learners and educators to send notes on the same page, containing links, images, audio, video, and document files (Fuchs, 2014; Sangeetha, 2016). These indicated that Padlet is an online whiteboard that functions to share information that can be accessed by related parties in the learning process and can carry out learning that is pivotal to the learner. Based on several studies on writing skill, it is known that Padlet is an educational platform that can help in language learning, especially in learning to write. Research on Padlet media as a means of supporting writing learning has been carried out by several researchers. The use of Padlet in learning to write can motivate and make students more active in writing opinions (Ellis, 2015), in addition to direct discussion activities between teachers and learners, as well as between students written on the Padlet wall (Klein, 2013) making classroom activities collaborative (Fuchs, 2014). However, few studies have investigated the use of Padlet in writing Japanese composition (*sakubun*). Based on the explanation above, the use of Padlet is expected to help the process of learning sakubun in the Japanese basic essay writing lesson (*Shokyu Sakubun*). This research was guided by the following questions.

1. What are the students' perceptions of using Padlet as a learning media?

2. What are the students' perceptions of using Padlet during the learning process?

3. What are the students' perceptions regarding the use of Padlet in learning essay writing (*sakubun*)?

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Padlet use mechanism

Use of Padlet can be done through accessing the official website, http://Padlet.com or by using the Padlet applications available on both android and iOSs operating systems. If you are using the android or iOS application version, you need to download it first. The first thing to do is to register on the Padlet website using a Google, Facebook, or Microsoft account. Padlet provides two account options, free or paid. After the web page opens, we can click the "Make a Padlet" button. From this step, we can create our first 'wall' and then choose the available format types according to the purpose of writing. On the next page, set and modify the wall format. These modifications can be in the form of creating a title, changing the background image or displaying the theme according to the topic, creating a unique and attractive web address name, changing the display material, or setting the level of privacy (Fuchs,

2014). After finishing writing on Padlet, the writing can be downloaded or exported in PDF, spreadsheets and can even be embedded in a blog or website. In short, Padlet is easy and practical to use, it all depends on how smart and creative a person is in using the existing features to create an attractive thematic display.

2.2. Padlet using mechanism

Padlet has several features that could help learners and teachers during the teaching process. First, students open the teaching Padlet wall through the web address that has been made and shared by the teacher without having to sign up first. After the web opens, students can double-click the Padlet box; students can write on the wall and can also upload photos, images, audio, video, document, copy links, and others. This online whiteboard can be accessed by all participants (learners and teachers) to express thoughts or post content (Kaya, 2015), and even functions as a place to collect assignments (Sangeetha, 2016). By integrating Padlet in learning, students engage collaboratively, this can be seen from the activities of learners in adding posts containing links, videos, pictures, files, and many others (Klein, 2013). Likewise, Padlet as a learning medium can encourage all students to participate in class activities (Fuchs, 2014) and establish communication in the form of real discussions between teachers and students or other learners and lecturers (Klein, 2013). In addition, students can access them directly, see comments made by fellow classmates and teachers, and for teachers working on the same research, Padlet can also help strengthen relationships between teachers and students, increase motivation and self-esteem and could even function as a medium for communication between students outside of the classroom (Rashid et al, 2019).

Another advantage of using Padlet as a medium in learning to write is that students can interact with each other when working on assignments, discuss learning materials, have time to think and analyze, and can correct their mistakes (Mahmud, 2019) through their friends' essays or feedbacks from lecturers. Awaludin et al. (2017) revealed that the use of online whiteboards can be used as a communication medium for shy students to express their opinions through writing. This is what could help improve their ability to write essays. Thus, the use of Computer Mediated Communication (CMC), especially Padlet can be applied to other language learning.

3. METHODS

A quantitative approach, a survey method using a questionnaire instrument was carried out in this study. Singh (2006) said that the survey has been further classified into four categories: (a) Descriptive, (b) Analytical, (c) School survey, and (d) Genetic. This

study was conducted descriptive by distributing questionnaires. The population in this study was Japanese language learners in semester 2 at a state university in West Java. Samples were taken using a purposive sampling technique that only focused on students who were taking the *Shokyu Sakubun* 1 course since online learning was implemented due to the COVID-19 pandemic, as many as twenty-two people consisting of seven males and fifteen females. The age range of the research subjects was 18-20 years old.

The implementation of using Padlet in sakubun learning was held 4 times, from July to early August 2020. During the COVID-19 pandemic, *sakubun* learning was carried out online. Giving and explaining learning materials in the form of PowerPoint presentation and discussion activities were carried out using the WhatsApp group. Meanwhile, assignments were uploaded to Padlet. Students were given a Padlet link(https://Padlet.com/aneros_noviyanti/t2be8mlyozqs. This is for students to able to see the instructions needed for completing assignments and to upload them (Fig. 1.). Based on Sangeetha's (2016) research, the use of Padlet in learning is for class discussions, posting assignments, seeing the grades given by teachers and sharing, and uploading files. Feedback and assessments are affixed to the student essays uploaded to the Padlet. The data collection used a closed questionnaire with as many as 30 questions. In addition, a closed questionnaire help eases researchers to focus more on analyzing the data obtained that does not/would not deviate from the expected answers. The purpose of selecting a questionnaire as a data collection instrument was to determine students' perceptions of the use of Padlet in basic level *sakubun* learning. The questionnaire adapted from Mahmud (2019) consisted of 12 questions and 18 questions prepared according to the research questions. It is supported by Singh's statements (2006), in which descriptive research uses the questionnaire as a research tool for data collection. All survey questions utilised a 5-point Likert scale. Each question item uses a Likert scale, namely: Strongly Disagree / SD (1), Disagree / D (2), Neutral / N (3), Agree / A (4), and Strongly Agree / SA (5). The questionnaire was filled out online by students using Google Form. The percentage of the results of each questionnaire question item can be found via a google form.

Figure 1 Padlet in basic level *sakubun* learning.

4. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This section presents and discusses findings related to research questions regarding Japanese learners' perceptions of using Padlet in basic level *sakubun* learning. The results of the study were obtained from the answers related to the questionnaire presented to 22 first year students. These students have used Padlet in online *sakubun* learning as much as four times. Each question from the questionnaire was analyzed and calculated in a percentage format. The findings of this study will be described in accordance with the research questions.

4.1. The students' perceptions of using Padlet as a learning media

This sub-section will present questionnaire data in the form of a percentage format regarding student perceptions of using a Padlet as a learning media. There are seven questionnaire questions related to this matter. Table 1 shows that almost all respondents in this study agree that Padlet is an online medium that can be used to share information in a class (SA = 18.2%, A = 63.6%), share or write anything (SA = 4, 8%, A = 13.6%), besides that Padlet that are well-made and well-delivered could be useful towards teaching process (SA = 27.3%, A = 59.1%), even by teachers and lecturers alike, Padlet are used as a platform for collecting assignments during learning and teaching process (SA = 19%, A = 57.1%). Then most respondents thought that Padlet were easy to use as a place to share interesting ideas, however, a stable internet connection was needed when learning online (SA = 27.30%, A = 50%). Then half of the respondents (SD = 13.6%, D = 36.4%) answered that the use of Padlet requires a large amount of money, while almost half of the respondents answered they were doubtful about this.

Table 1. Analysis of student's responses: learning media

Item	Likert Scale				
	1 SD	2 D	3 N	4 A	5 SA
1. Padlet is an electronic medium for sharing information in a group / class	-	-	18,2%	63,6%	18,2%
2. Padlet is an application that can be used to share or write what we want to write	-	-	18,2%	68,2%	13,6%
3. Padlet is a medium created to assist teaching in the form of text, photo links and others	-	-	13,6%	59,1%	27,3%
4. Padlet is a website that is used by teachers during teaching and learning activities, especially for assignment submissions	-	-	23,8%	57,1%	19%
5. Padlet requires a good smartphone for use outside of the classroom	-	4,5%	27,3%	54,5%	13,6%
6. Padlet requires a stable internet connection for online learning	-	-	22,7%	50%	27,3%
7. The use of Padlets costs a lot of money	13,6%	36,4%	40.9%	4,5%	4,5%

4.2. The students' perceptions of using Padlet during learning process

The questionnaire data presented in Table 2 represents students' perceptions of using Padlet in the process of teaching and learning activities. This question consists of five questions. Table 2 shows students' perceptions of using Padlet related to learning strategies, effectiveness, and achievement. The use of Padlet applications in the teaching and learning process is an alternative in improving student achievement, but only half (SA = 4.5%, A = 45.5%) of respondents agreed. While almost half (N = 31.9%) of respondents answered neutral and a small proportion (SD = 4.5%, D = 13.6%) of respondents answered that the use of Padlet could not improve learning achievement. Based on table II, it also shows that most respondents agree that the use of Padlet is easy and the online learning process becomes more organized (SA = 9.1%, A = 68.2%), besides that; through posting on the Padlet, made learning collaborative (A = 68.2%). Nearly half (45.5%) of respondents answered that Padlet made learning time

smaller/quicker, although half (50%) of respondents answered neutral and one respondent disagreed. However, almost half (SA = 4.5%, A = 41%) of respondents agreed that through the use of Padlet, the interaction between teachers and students was reduced, and eleven respondents thought they were doubtful or neutral, while one respondent disagreed.

Table 2. Analysis of student's responses: learning process.

Item	Likert Scale				
	1 SD	2 D	3 N	4 A	5 SA
8. Padlets were easy for me and the online learning process became more organized	-	-	22,7%	68,2%	9,1%
9. Padlets narrowed my study session	-	45,5%	50%	4,5%	-
10. Padlet helps me with my learning achievement	4,5%	13,6%	31,9%	45,5%	4,5%
11. Through posting on the Padlet, collaborative learning takes place	-	-	31,8%	68,2%	-
12. Padlets are ineffective due to lack of interaction between students and lecturers	-	4,5%	50%	41%	4,5%

4.3. The students' perceptions regarding the use of Padlet in learning essay writing (sakubun)

In this sub-section, the results of the questionnaire data analysis regarding students' perceptions of using Padlet in *sakubun* learning will be presented. In Table 3 most of the respondents agree that the use of Padlet in *sakubun* learning is practical (SA = 9.1%, A = 63.6%), respondents also responded that they were comfortable in writing *sakubun* via the use of Padlet (SA = 4.5%, A = 59.1%). Apart from that, most of the respondents agreed that they prefer posting essays that would also attached photos (SA = 9.1%, A = 54.5%) as it was believe that it could help increase creativity (SA = 13.6%, A = 40.9 %) and motivates learning (SA = 4.5%, A = 59.1%). Even so, 31.9% of respondents were neutral and 4.5% of respondents disagreed. Several studies have shown that the use of Padlets in learning to write in classrooms could help create collaborative learning; this is also applicable during online *sakubun* learning. In correlation to the above explanation, based on data acquired, it is known that most respondents agree with the notion that the use of Padlet during online *sakubun* learning could help create collaborative learning, such as learning new concepts (SA = 13.6%, A

= 54.5%) and new vocabulary from classmate's post (SA = 9.1, A = 54.5%) which then can be used as a guide when writing *sakubun* (A = 63.6%). %). Furthermore, most (SA = 13.6%, A = 54.5%) of the respondents agreed that the use of Padlets in *sakubun* learning could help train the respondent's Japanese writing skills. In order for the essay written (and uploaded to the Padlet) to be easily understood by others, most of the respondents agreed that caution was needed when using Japanese (SA = 4.5%, A = 50.1%), respondents have to also check certain difficult vocabularies using a dictionary (SA = 22.7%, A = 45.5%) and respondents must also check sentences that have been written prior to posting them. (SA = 18.2%, A = 54.4%).

4.4. Discussion

The COVID-19 pandemic has a major impact on the education world. There are various challenges that must be faced in online learning, such as; how a teacher/lecturer teaches and how students can receive learning and also, the limitations of physical meetings in learning. To deal with a situation like this, one of the solutions is to utilize online media in the form of online learning, one of which is the use of Padlet. Padlet are educational platform that can be used by teachers, such as sharing information/learning materials and collecting assignments (Sangeetha, 2016). Online learning of *sakubun* in this study is focused on collecting tasks, namely writing essays (*sakubun*). Based on the data analysis described above, it is known that Padlets can facilitate students in learning to write online, especially writing *sakubun*. Padlet creates collaborative learning, facilitates feedback from teachers/lecturers, as a medium for students to learn from reflecting on previous assignments or feedbacks, helps increase students' motivation, and helps the mastery of students' Japanese grammars and vocabularies. This is in line with the research done by Rashid (2019) and Mahmud (2019) which states that learning occurs when students can learn from classmates' posts and feedback from teachers. Doing assignments and tasks on Padlet will help extend students' learning time outside of the classroom and encourage autonomous learning.

Table 3. Analysis of Student's responses: padlet use in *sakubun* learning

Item	Likert Scale				
	1 SD	2 D	3 N	4 A	5 SA
13. Writing *sakubun* using Padlet is more difficult for me than without using Padlets	-	40,9%	40,9%	9,1%	9,1%
14. The use of Padlets in *sakubun* learning can increase my creativity in writing sakubun	-	13,60%	31,90%	40,9%	13,6%
15. Padlet motivated me to learn to write *sakubun* more	-	4,5%	31,9%	59,1%	4,5%
16. I like to post *sakubun* on Padlet while also attaching photos	-	-	36,4%	54,5%	9,1%
17. I feel comfortable using Padlet to write *sakubun*	-	4,5%	31,9%	59,1%	4,5%
18. The activity of writing *sakubun* on Padlet is a challenge for me	-	9,1%	36,4%	31,8%	18,2%
19. I learned new concepts from my classmates' posts	-	-	31,9%	54,5%	13,6%
20. Padlet gave me a guide on how to write *sakubun*	-	9,1%	27,3%	63,6%	-
21. Through posts written/made by my classmates, I have been helped in writing *sakubun* and my Japanese writing skills have improved		4,5%	27,3%	63,6%	4,5%
22. I think it is practical to write *sakubun* on Padlet	-	-	27,3%	63,6%	9,1%
23. I am more careful and cautious using Japanese when I write *sakubun* on Padlet	-	13,6%	31,8%	50,1%	4,5%
24. Overall, I feel like my Japanese grammar has improved since writing *sakubun* on Padlet	4,5%	18,2%	27,3%	22,7%	27,3%
25. I learn new vocabularies more from my classmates' posts	-	13,6%	22,8%	54,5%	9,1%
26. Using Padlets can help me practice my Japanese writing skills	-	9,1%	22,8%	54,5%	13,6%
27. I always check the sentences I write before posting on Padlet	-	-	27,3%	54,5%	18,2%
28. I'm not worried about writing-mistakes or errors when writing on Padlet	4,5%	5,1%	22,7%	13,6%	9,1%
29. When writing on Padlets, I often check for difficult Japanese vocabularies using a dictionary	-	-	31,8%	45,5%	22,7%
30. My *hiragana*, *katakana* and *kanji* writing skills have decreased as a result of writing *sakubun* on Padlet	-	22,7%	-	45,5%	31,8%

As there are advantages of using Padlet, there are also some disadvantages to it. When using Padlet, students need to have a stable internet connection and it is also required for students to have smartphones that are accessible outside of the classroom. However, respondents also felt that the use of Padlet was ineffective in this study due to the lack of interaction between the teacher and students. This is contrary to the research that proves the use of Padlet in learning will establish communication in the form of real discussions between teachers and other learners and teachers (Klein, 2013, Rashid 2019). Basic level *sakubun* learning requires several important aspects that need attention. Among them are the use of letters in Japanese, such as hiragana, katakana, and kanji. In addition, it also requires sufficient vocabulary mastery and an understanding of Japanese grammar. This is in line with Oomori' and Kono's (2013) opinion that one of the functions of writing at beginner or basic level learners is to acknowledge and train the extent to which vocabulary mastery and understanding of sentence patterns have been learned so far. Through these writing activities, students can train their communication skills in the scope of writing.

5. CONCLUSION

The purpose of this study was to determine students' perceptions of the use of Padlets in *sakubun* learning. This study has found that generally, students' perceptions of the use of Padlets in *sakubun* learning vary widely. Of course, most students had a positive response to the use of Padlets as an online learning medium. The findings of this study provide insights to students in writing *sakubun* through posts written/made by their peers. The present study lays the groundwork for future studies to investigate the use of Padlets that would focus on communication between teachers and students, as well as between classmates so that it has an impact on student achievement in *sakubun* learning. The information in the form of a questionnaire used in this study could not delve deeply into the constraints or problems experienced by students, therefore it is necessary to conduct interviews with students. In order for online learning to be carried out properly, a stable internet connection is needed.

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