THE USE OF WIX TO FACILITATE ENGLISH GRAMMAR LEARNING: AN INVESTIGATION OF STUDENTS' PERCEPTION

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Abstract

In pedagogical settings, the effective use of blogs has enabled knowledge sharing, facilitated learning, and contextualized knowledge learned in the classroom. Building upon those advantages of blogs, this study utilized Wix, a web builder functioning as a blog, to facilitate English grammar learning. Further, this study investigated how the use of Wix facilitated English Department students to use and apply grammatical items and patterns learned during the course accurately, meaningfully, and appropriately in context. In this study, students were asked to post some paragraphs every two weeks by using and applying grammatical items and patterns learned in their Wix site. This biweekly assignment served to provide them the opportunities to activate the grammatical knowledge they have learned during the course in the authentic context. To achieve the purpose of the study a mixed methodology consisting of quantitative (survey) and qualitative (interview) data was employed to 17 English Department students of Duta Wacana University attending Basic Grammar course. The results of the study indicated that the use of Wix helped the students understand and apply grammatical items and patterns in real contexts of use and foster appropriate and accurate grammar use. Likewise, students enjoyed the whole process of creating their Wix site from choosing the template to layouting their Wix and they became more aware to the importance of learning grammatical items and patterns.

Keywords: blog, Wix, English grammar learning

Introduction

A weblog or a blog is an online diary which provides a place for people to share their experience, thoughts, ideas, writing, photos, videos, or other media online (Wang, Fix, & Bock, 2005). It also functions as a social media wherein people can see, read, and give comments to each other's posts. As a social media platform, it allows people to interact with each other, engage in discussion with the readers or the other blog's writers using various modes.

In the last few years, blogs have gained their popularity in pedagogical setting (Davis, 2004). Many educators claimed the benefits of blogs in engaging students in learning process. There have been some studies on the use of blogs reported that blogging promotes learning motivation, improves writing skills, grammatical competence, vocabulary knowledge, and critical and analytical thinking, and facilitates students' learning process (Smith, 2009; Bakar, Latif, and Ya'acob, 2010; Said, et al., 2013; Rahmany, Sadeghi, and Faramarzi, 2013; Aydan, 2014). What is more, blogs provide opportunities for learners to experience technology-augmented learning environment which is far more interesting compared to traditional learning environment (Ozkan & Bada, 2012).

While there have been some studies and evidence about blogging in pedagogical setting, the use of blogs to facilitate English grammar learning is still at its infancy, specifically in Basic Grammar class. Studies on the use of blogs to facilitate English grammar learning are even limited on numbers. Accordingly, this study attempts to investigate students' perception on the

use of blog to facilitate grammar learning. For this purpose, Wix, a free web-builder site, was chosen as a platform for students to set up their blog.

Method

This study is aimed to investigate students' perception on the use of Wix as a web-based platform to facilitate their grammar learning. For this purpose, this study was conducted in Basic Grammar class for the first semester students of English Education Department of Duta Wacana Christian University, Yogyakarta. Conducted from August 2017 until November 2017, this study involved as many as 17 students as the participants. Prior to the study, the researcher conducted a survey on students' online experience and found out that most of the students, 15 out of 17 students (88%), worked online outside the class to do their assignments. The data revealed that 12 students (70.5%) spent three to four hours a day on the Internet, 5 students (29.5%) spent one to two hours a day on the Internet, and none spent less than one hour a day. The data has suggested that the students have considerable online experience with the Internet. Nonetheless, regardless of the time they spent on the Internet, 4 students (23.5 %) claimed to use a blog before, and the rest of the students (76.5%) said that they never used a blog before the Basic Grammar blog-writing assignments.

Basic Grammar is a course which prepares the first semester students of English Education Study Program with the foundations of English grammar, such as the use of part of speech, present, past, and future tenses, phrases, and clauses. Basic Grammar is a content-rich course with students having to do some grammatical exercises each meeting. To help students contextualize the grammatical knowledge, they were assigned to write a paragraph consisting of five to ten sentences based on the grammatical items being discussed in class and post it in their blog. The blog assignments covered 14 weeks and contributed 30% to the final score of the course. The students were assigned to create their individual blog using a free web builder platform known as Wix. They were given the freedom to choose the template of their blog using the available templates in Wix. Also, they were free to interact with, share, and personalize their blog.

In order to collect the data on students' perception on the use of blog to facilitate their learning, a questionnaire survey was conducted at the end of the semester. The questionnaire consisted of four sections, the first section was about students' demographic, the second section was about students' perception on using Wix to facilitate their grammar learning, the third section was about students' attitude towards the use of Wix, and the last section was about students' perception on the challenges of using Wix in grammar learning. Further, a semi-structured interview was conducted to get better insight of students' perception in using Wix to facilitate their grammar learning. Interview questions were created in parallel with the topic being discussed and the items in the questionnaire.

Findings

This study is aimed to investigate students' perception in the use of Wix, as one of free blogging platforms, to facilitate grammar learning in Basic Grammar class. For this reason, a questionnaire survey with a five-point Likert type scale from 1 to 4 representing for "Strongly Disagree", "Disagree", "Agree", and "Strongly Agree" was employed to explore students' perception on the use of Wix to facilitate grammar learning. Table 1. below illustrates the sections of the questionnaire survey used to gather the data. The findings, then, sequentially

presented students' perception on the use of Wix to facilitate grammar learning, students' attitude towards Wix, and challenges in using Wix.

Table 1. Sections of the Questionnaire Survey

Section	Description
Students' demographic and blogging experience	Age, gender, students' previous blogging experience
Students' perception on the use of Wix in facilitating grammar learning (questions 1 – 5)	Contextualized grammar knowledge, technology-based learning experience, grammar competence, vocabulary competence
Students' attitude towards Wix (questions 6 & 7)	Students' degree of motivation, interest level of blogging to facilitate grammar learning
Challenges in using Wix (questions 8 – 10)	Internet connectivity, blogging skills

Students' Perception on the Use of Wix to Facilitate Grammar Learning
Based on the findings on students' perception on the use of Wix, as indicated in Table 5, statements 1 and 2 have the highest frequency with 94.1% of the students were in agreement that Wix blogging assignments helped them in applying grammatical items and patterns in context and in improving their grammar competence. The third highest statement with the total of 88% agreement (consisting of 47% agreed and 41% strongly agreed) was the use of Wix in helping students to be more precise in applying grammatical rules in their posts. Moreover, the findings indicated that 76.4% (consisting of 47% agreed and 29.4% strongly agreed) of the students believed that Wix blogging assignments have improved their vocabulary knowledge. The statement with the lowest percentage of agreement was related to students' view towards the development of technology for their learning experience.

In response to the interview question about students' perception on the use of Wix in facilitating their grammar learning, most students claimed that doing Wix blogging assignments helped them activate and apply the grammar knowledge they have discussed in class in context. By doing so, they claimed that they understood the use and functions of grammar knowledge better. Another mentioned that doing Wix blogging assignments helped them improve their writing skill.

Table 2. Students' Perception on the Use of Wix

Statement	Frequency			
	Strongly Disagree	**Disagree**	**Agree**	**Strongly Agree**
1. Wix blogging assignments helped me contextualize grammatical knowledge I have learned.	0.0%	5.8% (1)	35.2% (6)	58.8% (10)
2. Wix blogging assignments improved my grammar competence.	0.0%	5.8% (1)	52.9% (9)	41% (7)
3. Wix blogging assignments helped me to be more precise in applying grammatical rules in my writing before publishing it online	0.0%	11.7% (2)	47% (8)	41% (7)
4. Wix blogging assignments improved my vocabulary knowledge.	11.7% (2)	11.7% (2)	47% (8)	29.4% (5)
5. Wix blogging assignments helped me keep up with the development of technology for my learning experience.	5.8% (1)	11.7% (2)	17.6% (3)	64.7% (11)

Students' Attitude towards the Use of Wix

In general, the students showed positive attitude towards the use of Wix as indicated in Table 3. Responding to the statement "I liked Wix", 88.1% (consisting of 52.9% agreed and 35.2% strongly agreed) of the students expressed agreement. Similarly, for the statement "Wix motivated me to do my assignments", 76.2% (consisting of 41% agreed and 35.2% strongly agreed) of the students responded positively.

Table 3. Students' Attitude towards the use of Wix to Facilitate Grammar Learning

Statement	Frequency			
	Strongly Disagree	**Disagree**	**Agree**	**Strongly Agree**
6. I liked Wix.	0.0%	11.7% (2)	52.9% (9)	35.2% (6)
7. Wix motivated me to do my assignments.	5.8% (1)	17.6% (3)	41% (7)	35.2% (6)

Challenges in Using Wix to Facilitate Grammar Learning

Some students found challenges in using Wix to facilitate their grammar learning, including the extra work, time, and energy they had to spend in doing Wix blogging assignments. This finding was supported by the interview result inferring that in doing Wix blogging assignments, students spent more time not only to write the posts, but also to design the interface. Most of them claimed that they felt the need to have a good blog both in terms of the content and the design. Some of them faced some difficulties in designing the interface and posting up files, as illustrated in Table 4.

Table 4. Challenges in Using Wix

Statement	Frequency			
	Strongly Disagree	**Disagree**	**Agree**	**Strongly Agree**
8. Wix blogging assignments required extra work, time, and energy.	0.0%	0.0%	82.3% (14)	17.6% (3)
9. I found some difficulties in designing the Wix interface and/ or using the features in Wix.	23.5% (4)	52.9% (9)	11.7% (2)	11.7% (2)
10. I had some difficulties in posting up files such as images, videos, or audio in my Wix.	35.2% (6)	47% (8)	11.7% (2)	5.8% (1)

Discussion

The study found that the students had positive perception of the use of Wix to facilitate English grammar learning in their Basic Grammar class. The students positively assessed that Wix, as one of free web builder platforms, has some contributions to the improvement of their grammatical competence as mentioned in the earlier studies about blogs and grammar learning (Bakar, Latif, and Ya'acob, 2010; Said, et al., 2013; Rahmany, Sadeghi, and Faramarzi, 2013; Aydan, 2014). The findings showed that students were more precise in writing their posts in terms of grammatical forms as they were aware that people will read their posts (Zhang, 2009). Also, most of them agreed that the use of Wix augmented their grammar learning by providing a contextual environment to practice and apply their grammatical knowledge. Specifically, the findings indicated that the students managed to developed their vocabulary knowledge through writing some posts with various topics. Interestingly, they also viewed the use of Wix in Basic Grammar class as an effective instructional tool to integrate technology in their learning experience and to keep up with the development of technology.

Likewise, the findings implied that the use of Wix in Basic Grammar class had provided both internal and external motivation in learning. The students mentioned that they liked using and exploring Wix and Wix motivated them to do their assignments as it provided them with creativity in writing and designing a blog. Accordingly, as the students' motivation increased, learning will take place.

Blogs brings some advantages in facilitating grammar learning, yet they also might create some challenges in teaching and learning practices, such as consuming time and computer literacy. The results of both questionnaire survey and the interview showed that blogging required much of their time because they not only made the posts, but also design their blog. Another challenge reported in this study was computer literacy. A few students claimed that they found difficulties in generating their blog in terms of designing the blog, uploading files, and navigating the features due to their lack of knowledge in computer literacy. However, when these findings were further analyzed through interview, these did not seem to be serious issues.

Conclusion

This study is aimed to investigate students' perception on the use of Wix to facilitate grammar learning. For this purpose, 17 students in Basic Grammar class experiencing blogging with Wix as a means to activate and apply their grammar knowledge were involved. The results of this study suggested that the students had positive perception on the use of Wix to facilitate their grammar learning. Most of the participants were all in agreement that Wix was a rich environment which provided them opportunities to contextualize their grammar knowledge and

apply grammatical forms they learned in class, helped them improve their vocabulary knowledge, and helped them keep up with the latest technology development in their learning experience. Obviously, the students enjoyed using Wix and felt that Wix motivated them in doing assignments. It is suggested for possible further research to focus on the challenges students and teachers face in integrating blogs to facilitate grammar learning.

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