# The Students' Preference on Online Learning Platform for English Writing Skills

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## Abstract

The technological development has influenced the educational aspect in supporting the teaching and learning process can be run online. Online learning has been started commonly used for teaching English. This process is also facilitated by the existence of the online platforms. The teachers need to know the students' preference towards the online platforms in order to achieve effective and efficient of online learning. It has evolved into the indicator for evaluate the online learning for teaching English writing skills. Thus, the schools and the teachers can determine which online platforms are appropriate to use on the students. Thus, this research aimed to find out the students' preference on online learning platform for English writing skills in Senior High School 1 Bagan Sinembah. The criterions are language learning potential, meaning focus, learner fit, authenticity, positive impact and practicality. This is descriptive studies with detail analysis of students' preference on online platforms like Zoom, E-learning, WhatsApp (WA) and Schoology. E-questionnaire was distributed to the students for collecting the data. E-learning obtained the highest percentage from natural science students with 74,0% and WhatsApp got the highest percentage from social science students with 68,3% as the suitable online platform for English writing skills for the students to learn and improve their writing skill when use the tools of those platforms. Therefore, it can be concluded that the students had different preferences in choosing the online platform for learning English writing skills. This preference leads us that the online platforms can give the benefit of the students' writing skill. It can be as the consideration for the teacher and decision-maker at school to choose the appropriate platform for students to be used.

**Kata Kunci:**

*Kemampuan menulis Bahasa Inggris, Media pembelajaran daring, Preferensi pelajar, dan Kemampuan menulis*

**Abstrak**

Perkembangan teknologi telah mempengaruhi aspek pendidikan dalam mendukung proses belajar mengajar dapat dijalankan secara online. Pembelajaran online sudah mulai umum digunakan untuk pengajaran bahasa Inggris. Proses ini juga dimudahkan dengan adanya platform online. Guru perlu mengetahui preferensi siswa terhadap *platform online* untuk mencapai pembelajaran online yang efektif dan efisien. Indikator ini telah berkembang menjadi indikator evaluasi pembelajaran online untuk pengajaran keterampilan menulis bahasa Inggris. Jadi, pihak sekolah dan guru bisa menentukan platform online mana yang cocok digunakan pada siswa. Oleh karena itu, penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui preferensi siswa terhadap platform pembelajaran online untuk keterampilan menulis bahasa Inggris di SMA 1 Bagan Sinembah. Kriterianya adalah potensi pembelajaran bahasa, fokus makna, kesesuaian pembelajar, keaslian, dampak positif dan kepraktisan. Ini adalah studi deskriptif dengan analisis detail preferensi siswa terhadap platform online seperti Zoom, E-learning, WA dan Schoology. E-kuisioner dibagikan kepada siswa untuk mengumpulkan data. E-learning memperoleh persentase tertinggi dari siswa IPA sebesar 74,0% dan Whatsapp memperoleh persentase tertinggi dari siswa IPS sebesar 68,3% sebagai platform online yang sesuai untuk keterampilan menulis bahasa Inggris. Dengan demikian, dapat disimpulkan bahwa siswa memiliki preferensi yang berbeda dalam memilih platform online untuk belajar keterampilan menulis bahasa Inggris. Preferensi ini menuntun bahwa media daring dapat bermanfaat bagi peningkatan kemampuan menulis siswa. Hal ini dapat menjadi pertimbangan bagi guru dan pihak sekolah untuk memilih platform daring yang sesuai untuk digunakan.

## INTRODUCTION

The technology has frequently developed and improved in affecting the human life. Many aspects get the impact from the technology changes such as industry, health, tourism, charitable movement, economy and also in education. In education, the technology-based application is contributing to support the

teaching and learning process in this time (Koç et al., 2016). That contribution from the technology can be important when it collaborates with the learning and teaching system process to be supported in education field. There are four elements that students should master and one of them is mastering how to manage the information, media and technology skills. It is based on the partnership for 21st century skills as the one of frameworks in education side used in teaching and learning. The ability to access and evaluate information, analyze and develop media, use and manage information, and effectively utilize technology for study are among the information, media, and technology-related abilities that students should be familiar with because the students is called by digital generation (*Framework for 21st Century Learning*, 2009).

Due to this occurrence, teachers need to be able to develop a creative environment for teaching and learning in order to engage students in class whereas, learning is considered can be more attractive through the online system for education and entertainment in students' life. As Suherdi (2012) mentioned that students' skill has connection with information literacy, media and technology in developing their life and competitive career. Because of teaching and learning processes can take place both face-to-face in the classroom and via a device; it is expected of the teacher to be able to develop the learning process in accordance with the needs of the students.

Due to the existence of the internet, education is now easily accessible to everyone. Richard & Haya (2009) said that the internet is helpful in assisting students in both creating and disseminating their information. For online students studying almost any subject, the instructional materials provided on web pages are frequently quite instructive and useful.

As the development of technology information and the internet, learning can be done online and make e-learning appears as the choice of using a system of online learning. Bates (2015) said that the development of the technology can support the era of online learning as a part of education site. Many terms can be used to access the online learning system and one of the supporting tools is by using electronic devices that are connected with internet connection. Online

learning integrates students via the internet with the studies (Johnson & Manning, 2010). Online learning or online education becomes something that has been called by learning that carried out from the Internet network.

Due to the growth of online learning, many countries in this world have done this trend to make the learning process become access easily even the teachers and the students do not meet face to face in the classroom. Online learning is a virtual learning system that integrates internet connection with the teaching and learning process (Jena, 2020). The interaction of teaching and learning activities can be carried out from the distance with the help of internet and online.

In making the teaching and learning online process become running well, the media platform is needed to cooperate with the internet connection system. The online learning platform is a way of structuring the instruction that fosters optimal organization of content and interaction with students and which is used by most courses, schools, and universities (Gomez, 2016). The online platforms can promote both inquiries based learning and independent learning skills since online platforms facilitate interaction between teacher and students although they are not in the same room.

Online learning platform makes the process of the interaction between teacher and the students become optimize even the learning process goes on virtually not face to face. According to Raja & Nagasubramani (2018), the power of information and communication technology is to increase access and emphasize the importance and standard of education. The technology in shape into an online media platform provides a variety of tools to help the teacher in managing their classroom and course.

Specify into the English language skills, writing is one of those skills which students should learn it. Good writing skills are important for students to excel academically and for career opportunities (Graham & Perin, 2007). Writing is a crucial skill, and being able to write well gives students a distinct advantage. Writing skill requires a well-structured method of implementing ideas in an organized and prepared form (Braine & Yorozu, 1998). The students start

learning to communicate language through written form as they begin to interact at the school level.

The use of an online platform as a tool can support the online learning process. Online platforms can be used as the solution in delivering the materials in online. Some studies that conducted related to this topic based on the kind of online platform, there are Cahyono (2015), he found the Edmodo as an e-learning media in English Learning is good to use because it was attractive template, communication feature, post feature to share the materials, library feature as a learning resource, assignment, and quiz feature, polling feature, progress report feature, and profiles feature. In addition, a study is conducted by Hafsah et al. (2016), he showed that in teaching writing, it was possible to integrate Edmodo into a genre-based approach. Also, Edmodo facilitated students' engagement cognitively during classroom sessions.

Besides, the next study is done by Munawaroh (2016), she found that classroom interaction in using Quipper school at State Vocational High School 2 Buduran Sidoarjo can be a choice for teaching English. Also, Soh et al. (2018) explained that online learning tools integrated into writing instruction resulted in greater improvements in students' writing performance.

Furthermore, Friatin (2018) showed that the students' perceptions toward the use of Facebook group in teaching and learning EFL writing showed the positive influence that the application of the Facebook group gave positive effects to the students' writing. Afterward, Salam (2020) found that Google classroom can be used as one of the alternatives to access online learning. Through Google Classroom, the students can be more active in joining the discussion. Students' preference also has been conducted by some researchers towards the online learning process. Kobayashi (2017) showed that students more prefer to choose to record the online slide presentation with the audio-based internet and self-efficacy is one of the factors this happen. In addition, Veerakumar et al. (2020), he tried to find the students' preference in using online learning based on their learning activities during the Pandemic covid-19, that process impacts their daily learning process including educators and gained the materials. The last is Amin & Sundari

(2020), they found that those are three kinds of the digital platform can be used as the alternative emergency in remote teaching such as Video conference, LMS, and messenger application.

Based on the history of the research above, online learning becomes a crucial issue for research topics especially in the development of technology. Especially for the student's preference on the online learning process conducted during this situation. In previous research still shows various online platforms without define where the appropriate online platform that students prefer to use. Thus, based on those aspects, the researcher will investigate the students' perception and preference on online learning platforms for English writing skills as the specific purpose to be examined. All of these levels were chosen because they used online learning platforms in study English during this Covid-19 pandemic.

**METHOD**

The present research belongs to descriptive research that described the detail the students' preferences toward the online learning platforms. This research was particularly relevant where information was required directly from those experiencing the phenomenon under investigation and where time and resources were provided.

Furthermore, there were 29 classes with the totals of the students 1042 students. There were 830 students as the participants who filled the perception e-questionnaire and 198 students who filled the preference e-questionnaire. Which consisted of 401 natural and 429 social science students who filled out the perception questionnaire, meanwhile there were 92 natural and 106 social science students who filled out preference questionnaires. The link of questionnaire was delivered through students' WhatsApp group class. The questionnaire was developed and reorganized by using the theory from Sugiyono (2008) and Jamieson et al. (2013).

Moreover, the questionnaire wasvalidated by the expert in psychology field. The validators have checked and judged the items of questionnaire that consist of introduction, indicators, sub-indicators, and statement whether suitable or not with the purpose of the research that is to find out students' preference.

**Table 1 Questionnaire Items (Preference)**

| Indicators | Number of Statements |
|---|---|
| 1. Language learning potential | S1 – S3 |
| 2. Meaning focus | S4 – S6 |
| 3. Learner fit | S7–S10 |
| 4. Authenticity | S11 - S12 |
| 5. Positive Impact | S13 - S16 |
| 6. Practicality | S17 – S20 |

*Adapted from Jamieson et.al (2013).*

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

### *Findings*

From the data obtained of natural and social students, the data shows the natural science students have various choices according to their preferences of using online learning platform for learning English learning writing skills. The Natural science students' responses were analysed by the six criterion of preferences questionnaire and were described by the following table below:

**Table 2 the scores from Natural Science Students' Preference**
**toward Online Learning Platforms**

| CRITERIA | Online Learning Platforms (%) | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | ZOOM | WA | E-LEARNING | SCHOOLOGY |
| LLP | 66 | 62 | 70 | 62 |
| Meaning Focus | 73 | 65 | 74 | 58 |
| Learner Fit | 56 | 58 | 66 | 51 |
| Authenticity | 70 | 71 | 75 | 65 |
| Positive Impact | 69 | 64 | 77 | 60 |
| Practicality | 79 | 67 | 82 | 68 |

In a summary of overall scores, the four online learning platforms used on this research received a great number of preferences, with scores ranging between score 51%-82% on the six criteria. E-learning got the highest score of all the six criteria, and then Zoom got the second rank in all of aspects, followed by WhatsApp in the third position and Schoology in the last position. There are some

differences from the category that can show each student have their own choices for choosing the online platform in studying English Writing Skills.
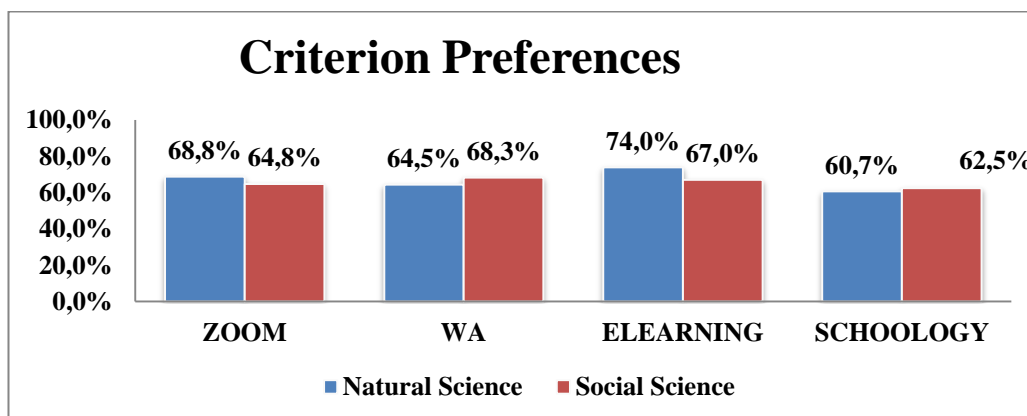
For social science students, the data shows the Social science students have various choices according to their preferences of using online learning platform for learning English learning writing skills. The social science students' responses were analysed by the six criterion of preferences questionnaire and were described by the following table below:

**Table 3 the scores from Social Science Students' Preference toward Online Learning Platforms**

| CRITERIA | Online Learning Platforms (%) | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | ZOOM | WA | E-LEARNING | SCHOOLOGY |
| LLP | 67 | 68 | 67 | 62 |
| Meaning Focus | 68 | 70 | 67 | 62 |
| Learner Fit | 65 | 63 | 66 | 58 |
| Authenticity | 62 | 69 | 68 | 65 |
| Positive Impact | 58 | 68 | 64 | 58 |
| Practicality | 69 | 72 | 70 | 70 |

To sum up of overall scores, the four digital learning platforms used on this research received a great number of preferences, with scores ranging between score 58-70% on the six criteria. According to social science students, Whatsapp got the highest score of all the six criteria, and then E-learning got the second rank in all of aspects, followed by Zoom in the third position and Schoology at the last position. The six indicators of CALL evaluation will be as a guideline to know the students' preferences. On all the criterion of the results from this study deals with the students' preference towards the online learning platform during online learning process.

Based on the graph below, it can be interpreted that students' preferences for the media platforms used during online learning have differences between science students and social studies students. This can be seen from the level of preference of each media platform such as zoom, WA, e-learning and schoology as shown in the graph below.

**Graph 1. Percentage of Natural and Social Science Students'
Preference toward Online Learning Platform**

For science students, e-learning is the preferred media platform by students, this is because this media platform is easier to use because it provides facilities and features for students to develop writing skills. From social students, Whatsapp is the online platform that easy to use for the students. Perhaps the students can easily open the platform every when.

*Discussion*

Students' preferences for the media platforms used during online learning have differences between natural and science students. This can be seen from the level of preference of each media platform such as zoom, WA, e-learning and schoology as shown in the previous section. For science students, e-learning is the preferred media platform by students, this is because this media platform is easier to use because it provides facilities and features for students to develop writing skills. Overall, all online platforms still have their advantages and disadvantages according to the indicators that have determined them.

Afterward, according to Kobayashi (2017) showed that students prefer to choose various online platforms to support the online learning process. It is similar with this present research that natural science studies prefer to choose various online platform appropriate to what they need in learning English writing skill, such as zoom as the online learning platform to see face all of the students and teacher. Through this online learning platform, the learning can be shared as

easy as seeing the content material directly. Then, the students and teacher can interact with audio visual in sharing the information through WhatsApp.

This finding almost similar with Reyes-Chua et al. (2020) conducted research about the status of the implementation of the e-learning classroom in using various platforms and found that the process of online learning is helped by utilizing the platforms such as Google Classroom, Edmodo, FB Messenger, Schoology, We Meet, etc. Then, all the students had good experiences in the e-learning classroom as an alternative study during the pandemic. Some struggles that faced by the students and the lecturers are from lack of resources, the difficulty of wi-fi connection, etc.

Natural and social science students have different preferences in choosing online learning platform in help them gained the learning materials. Natural students choose E-learning as their preference for online learning platform used in learning English writing skill. From the result, they assumed that E-learning can support their writing skill which there are many filters provided by the E-learning itself, the natural science students believe with the facilities accessed on E-learning can make easy to express the writing skill assignment and material. It is supporting with Liaw et. al. (2007) that they found E-learning as the online learning platform for learning English become enjoyable, interesting and be more active. It also supporting with Liu & Wang (2009) that using e-learning as tools to share and deliver information globally with easy steps as a broadcasting or doing some activity for learning. Besides that, social studies perceived that WhatsApp as the online learning platform for their preference for learning English writing skills. They believe that this online platform is flexible used to give response of the assignment in writing directly and comfort in changing the written text.

As Alqahtani et al. (2018) mentioned that using WhatsApp as a platform for learning writing can deliver message easily, such personal or group chat, video and pictures also can be shared in a real time. Using WhatsApp as the online learning platform become easier to support and facilitate the teaching and learning process in make the time be efficient.

**CONCLUSION**

The responses from natural and social science students' preferences on online learning platforms for learning English writing skills shows different scores in each online platform choices. There are several criteria that become as a role for students in determining preferences for using online learning platforms including language learning potential, meaning focus, learner fit, authenticity, positive impact and practicality on the four online platforms used. Zoom, WhatsAp, E-learning and Schoology are the online platforms provided. From those the online platforms, students have positive perception on them because the percentage shows a high percentage of both these online platforms. E-learning is the platform that has the highest score preference for Natural science students, meanwhile WhatsApp as the highest score preference of online platform for social science students. Therefore, students have different preferences on each online learning platform according to the appropriate criteria.

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