STUDENT'S PERSPECTIVE OF USING QUORA: AN AUTHENTIC LEARNING EXPERIENCE IN DIGITAL PLATFORM

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to explore the effectiveness of *Quora* based on the perception of higher education students at Islamic State University of Semarang, specifically about authentic experience of reading and writing practice in expression of asking and giving opinion. Descriptive method was used as the research design. Questionnaire and interview were used to investigate student's attitude toward the *Quora* platform. Based on student's questionnaire and interview result's analysis, the experience of doing authentic practice is interesting. The study showed that more than 85% of students admit the effectiveness of *Quora* to give authentic learning experience and to help them adapt in the real situation.

Keywords: Student's perspective, *Quora*, authentic learning

INTRODUCTION

Productive language skills and receptive language skills are two main language skills in language learning. Speaking and writing competency are classified as productive skills, and the competency to perceive information is classified as receptive or passive skills. However, ability to write is one of the language skills that plays an important role in mastering English. Being able to write in target language writing is able to help someone communicate and deliver meaning in writing. However, without meaningful practice, improving written communication skills is impossible.

The basic goal of any language learning and teaching process is to facilitate communication between students and speakers of the target language. However, preliminary study has revealed that learning to write is only possible through in-class practice. The ability of the teacher or lecturer to help each student write for actual usage and context is limited. Students were discovered to be having trouble writing in English because they were afraid of utilizing inappropriate

structure and grammar and vocabulary. This situation, their nervousness makes them feel as though it will be tough to improve their writing ability.

As a means of written communication, writing is widely regarded as the most challenging among all language competencies. Harmer (2004) stated that the process of composing writing is time-consuming and not easy to do, and it demands language skills, including proper grammar and vocabulary, which are acquired through strong reading and listening competencies. However, extensive planning without useful practice is useless. Based on the preliminary survey conducted in August 2022, students did not have enough writing practice since they composed in un unreal context or circumstance. In addition to the aforementioned elements, pupils must deal with the issue of anxiousness. As they had writing only for completing assignments in English language subject at school, they are not confident enough when doing free writing.

The author provides workable platform to help readers get beyond these obstacles and successfully complete the learning process for developing writing skill; especially in written expression about asking and giving opinion. Creating meaningful learning through authentic learning activities is undoubtedly something that can be pursued to enrich the learning environment. It is thought that by offering students exercises or simulations that mirror real-world issues and circumstances, the gap between the classroom and the real world can be closed (Ozverir et al., 2017).

This study focuses on how well *Quora* facilitates meaningful learning. The media platform was created to allow users to ask and answer questions about various topics. This platform has a variety of themes and interests, a column for answering questions and sharing opinions, and of course writing tools for sharing specific issues and soliciting feedback from the public. The purpose of this study is to evaluate the success of using to give authentic experience of learning written expression of asking and giving opinion at UIN Walisongo Semarang. The data were analyzed to answer the research problem that is How effective is to give authentic experience in learning English writing?

Doyle cited in Andersson and Andersson (2004) explained that the concept of authentic learning concept can be examined through several dimensions includes learners, subjects, and learning situation. Based on students or learner's perception, authenticity is the need to feel that learning process is meaningful and useful in their real life. From a technical view, it can be said that the activity must accommodate student's actual learning, and from a 'situational learning' point of view, the activity must be learned in a context that corresponds to practice in a real situation.

The fundamental tenets of authentic learning activities are as follows. One crucial rule is that they must be applicable to actual circumstances (Diamond et al., 2011). Brown et al. (1989) emphasized that teaching and learning contexts for authentic experiences are those activities that are similar to activities carried out by people outside of the classroom, but without the elements that would prevent students from learning. According to Fitzsimmons and Lanphar (2011), authentic learning can encourage interest and enjoyment in learning, and when students are motivated and enjoy what they are doing, they are more likely to try new things and develop new skills. Another explanation about authentic learning is purposed by Berardo (2006), who stated that authentic learning can make students highly motivated in learning and able to change student's negative perspective about learning. Authentic learning is believed to be able to promote the language use in the real world. This research also promoted that using authentic

material helps the students use their knowledge that they acquired in the real situation. He also underlined that one of the most beneficial authentic material resources for teaching and learning is from the internet, because it is easily accessed with many variations of activities.

Additionally, based on Christmas (2014), students will be fully participating in authentic learning activities practice. Since in authentic learning is possibly to make students learn from the more expert members or even natives in the community, the process of learning will run smoother. As many practical experts said, learning through experience is much better than limiting students to learn only about theory.

 is a website designed to allow users to ask and answer questions about various topics. This platform has a variety of themes and interests, a column for answering questions and sharing opinions, and of course writing tools for sharing specific issues and soliciting feedback from the public. Since its content involves asking members for their opinions on specific issues and receiving their opinions in writing, it is aimed that this platform will encourage authentic learning experiences.

Students were required to practice asking and providing opinions in after numerous theories were explained. They created an account and began asking and responding to other users' questions and comments. This exercise encourages genuine relationships and communication of English which they could not get at classroom.
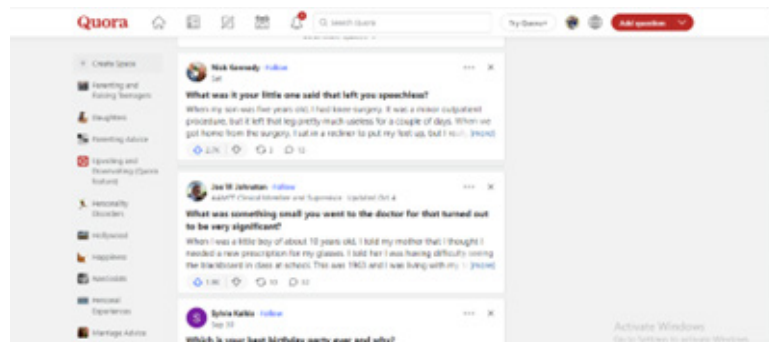

Figure 1. Features of Quora

METHODS

The study was done through descriptive research approach. The population consists of second-year students of UIN Walisongo Semarang's Faculty of Ushuluddin and Cultural Sciences. Although there are 437 students in the entire population, Airasian and Gay (2000) suggested that a 10% minimum sample size be used for a descriptive study. 90 students were selected as research samples by the researchers. The samples were chosen at random. A questionnaire serves as the research tool. Descriptive analysis was used to analyze the data. Twelve questions with the choices "agree" or "disagree" made up the questionnaire. On the basis of certain prior and pertinent literature, the questionnaire items were created. The instrument's dependability has moderate reliability with coefficient was .075. It makes the instrument can be used in this research since it is reliable enough.
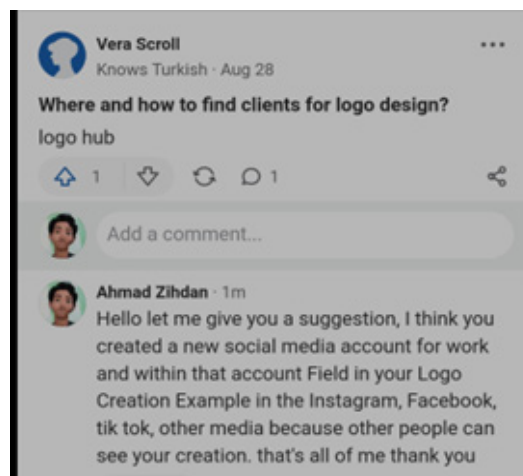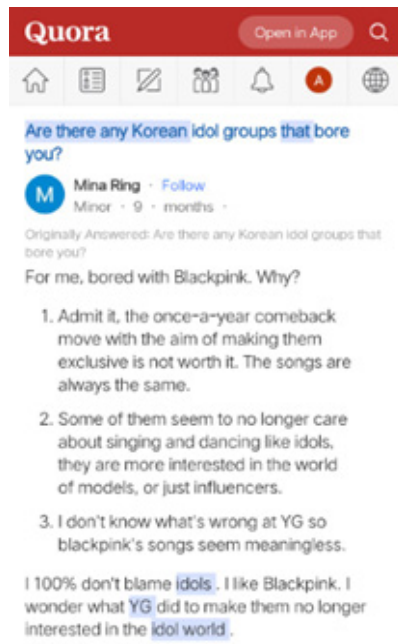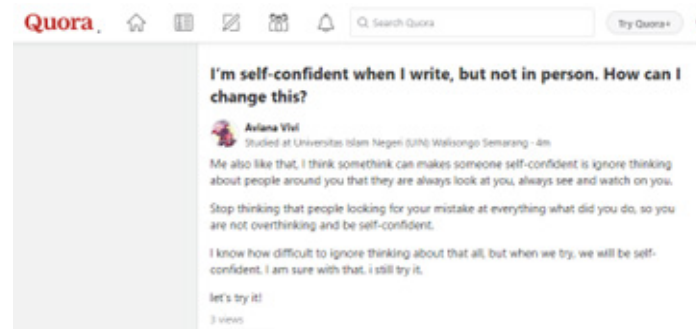
Figure 2. Sample of Student's Writing at Quora

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Below is the result of questionnaire on students' belief and attitude about the *Quora* platform.

Table 1. Students' Beliefs on the Value of Using *Quora*

No	Statement	Agree %	Disagree %
1	This activity has pedagogical value	89.00	11.00
2	This activity is able to improve my reading and writing skill	96.00	4.00
3	This activity is able to give opportunities to improve the quality of my writing	93.00	7.00

According to the answer to the first question, the majority of students think the platform is useful for their pedagogical development. Here, value refers to how the platform might aid students in honing their writing abilities. The second assertion, which deals with students' opinions of the tool that helped me enhance my writing, also yields positive results. The answers to question three show that everyone who took part agrees that the platform gives students a chance to encourage growth in the caliber of their work. Participants were asked in question four wheth-

er or not additional students should use the *Quora* platform. It demonstrates that 96,00% of participants concur that the *Quora* platform benefits them increasing their ability to read and write. In conclusion, Table 2 shows that, notwithstanding the opinions of certain students, the majority of students believe that the *Quora* platform has educational value, particularly in terms of enhancing writing skills.

Table 2. Students' Attitude toward the Platform

No	Statement	Agree %	Disagree %
4	This activity cannot improve my confidence of writing	28.00	72.00
5	This activity cannot support meaningful learning	12.00	88.00
6	This activity can be time and cost consuming	12.00	88.00
7	It is difficult to do this activity	24.00	76.00

The chart demonstrates that the majority of students disagree with the claim that the *Quora* platform cannot help students enhance their writing abilities. Eighty-eight percent of students said in another response that this platform can help their meaningful learning since it provides them with real-world learning opportunities. Seventy two percent of pupils also concur that using this platform will boost their writing self-confidence. Seventh question shows that the majority of students have no trouble using or operating the *Quora* platform. Students appeared to approach this platform with a positive attitude in general. Table 3 demonstrates that the majority of students believe the *Quora* platform is a useful tool for providing students with real-world learning opportunities.

Table 3. *Quora* Effectiveness

No	Statement	Agree %	Disagree %
8	This activity can decrease my anxiety toward writing	36.00	64.00
9	This activity can increase my interest in learning	88.00	12.00
10	This activity promotes challenge of practicing my English in real life	92.00	8.00
11	This activity promotes authentic learning experience	88.00	12.00
12	I can practice my English based on my level of difficulty and interest through this activity	87.00	13.00

The eleventh question was posed to students to find out how they felt about how *Quora* may boost their confidence in real-world writing practice. The findings show that many students believe this platform has helped them feel less anxious about writing. Question 12 reveals that the majority of students believed *Quora* to be an effective medium for their writing instruction since it can be tailored to their level of interest and difficulty.

It is impossible to separate technology from English language training. Rapid technological development and use is supporting effective language education. The results of this study support past research on the application of technology in teaching English. Using digital platforms and media can considerably increase student motivation and the quality of their education, according to Suhartono and Laraswati's (2016) analysis of this study. Digital learning materials, particularly those in a visual and interactive format, can increase students' understanding instead of

being delivered by something abstract and unseen. Finally, the research validated the findings of Alyani's study, which suggested that an effective writing exercise might foster a positive learning environment, enabling both students and teachers to achieve their learning objectives (2016). Both studies found that engaging students in writing exercises encourages them to develop strong writing abilities. With a positive learning environment, students can improve all area of their writing, including the topic, organization, word and sentence clarity, and grammar. All the elements working together will produce a strong piece of writing.

Those reading and writing exercises through *Quora* were actual, as opposed to in-class role-playing (Littlewood, 2011). The students engaged in reading, writing, asking questions, and sharing their thoughts with others. They employed the target language for actual transactions and conversation, and a genuine reader actually read what they said. One crucial component of authentic activities is tasks that are relevant to real-world situations (Doyle, cited in Mather, 2011). Students practiced reading and writing in English with numerous people, including foreigners, outside of the classroom during the exercise. The activity gave the students a real-world setting in which to put the knowledge or skills they had learned or rehearsed in class into practice, however this time the scenarios were often unplanned and unstructured. For instance, one student said that through *Quora*, they had spoken with many people, including target language user, in scenarios that had been different from members in the classroom. In the classroom, they had practiced how to ask and provide opinions in English with only thieir peers.

Both education and technology are evolving. As we can see, education technology is evolving in this manner. We discovered that the teaching and learning processes can be supported by computer integration in educational technologies. Technology-based education has now become popular. Installing any platform that might enhance a student's learning process is common practice among parents, instructors, and students. Based on their convictions that the platform offers educational value for them, they are taking this step. They perceive a betterment, an elevation of understanding, and an advance in some facets of life.

According to a study by Zhang (2016), a teacher's and students' attitudes while selecting a learning platform will allow them to optimize the benefits of the platform itself. They gain more advantages the more wisdom they employ. Another study by Jati (2018) found that several beneficial platforms can be used for independent study and that they significantly aid students learn English. In this study, *Quora* is a platform that offers authentic writing experiences, particularly in publishing opinions in response to specific issues.

This study demonstrates that education is all about growth. The goal of this digital platform's usage is to combine educational value with technology to support students' meaningful and independent learning. Students that are capable of meaningful and independent learning are those who can actually practice communication in a variety of settings. Independence in this context refers to a student's ability to freely access knowledge, validate it, and confirm it, even when their teacher is distant. According to Jati (2018), teachers who are willing to learn more about learning and technology and who want to use it in their actual teaching will discover a lot of opportunities for how technology could genuinely benefit the teaching and learning process. Therefore, the distance and the lack of physical educators would not be an issue when learners able to cope appropriate technology for learning.

The final finding of this study demonstrates the effectiveness of *Quora* in enhancing students' authentic learning experience. This platform also encourages students to learn independently so they can take the beneficial from it and implement the educational value to a wider situation and area.

CONCLUSION

This study's main goal was to investigate how well *Quora* works from the perspectives of EFL students. One group's pretest-posttest findings revealed an improvement in the caliber of the pupils' writing. After engaging in the activities repeatedly, students' writing significantly improved. It is clear from the examinations that have been done that *Quora* has an effect on improving student writing ability. Regarding student perspectives and attitudes about this platform, the majority of students concur that it effectively encourages students to study English writing in a meaningful and independent manner. Future research can evaluate the platform's effectiveness based on teachers' perspectives, while this study restricts its analysis to just the viewpoint of students.

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