EXPLORING STUDENTS' PERCEPTION IN WRITING ACTIVITIES OF ENGLISH FOR BUSINESS USING LEARNENGLISH.BRITISHCOUNCIL.ORG

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Abstract

The ability to write effectively in English for Specific Purposes (ESP) is a crucial skill for students aiming to engage in the global professional community. English for Business is a course designed to prepare students with workplace-ready English skills, emphasizing the importance of writing proficiency. To support writing skill development, incorporating innovative strategies such as utilizing websites as learning media is essential. This study focuses on students' perceptions of using the website learnenglish.britishcouncil.org as a tool to enhance their writing activities in English for Business. A descriptive qualitative method was adopted, involving 14 Management students from STIE Semarang as participants. The data were collected through semi-structured interview and document analysis. The findings showed that the use of the platform was has positive impact to the students. The students found it engaging, practical, and helpful in enhancing their writing performance. Students were satisfied with the interactive exercise, real world example and user-friendly platform, which supported their writing activities. This study underscores the potential of digital platforms like Learn English by British Council to facilitate effective learning experiences in ESP contexts and enhance students' readiness for professional communication.

Keywords: students' perception, writing, English for business, website

INTRODUCTION

Since most occupations need proficiency in English, enhancing students' ability for English for Specific Purposes (ESP) is important to enable them engaging with the worldwide professional community. At STIE SEMARANG, a higher education in Semarang, there is an English for Business subject for supporting the students' readiness of English skills that need at workplace. This subject is taught in the 1st semester. The materials which are taught focus on fourth skills: speaking, listening, reading, and writing. Most work occupations merely demand standard language usage. They must, however, be adept at reaching a greater quality in their writing and understanding abilities at the higher level (Shriganeshan, 2017). Therefore, for enhancing students' writing, the lecturer needs to find an appropriate technique, so the students can achieve the skills needed.

Nowadays, the use of on-line learning is common for learning especially English. The lecturer must know how to maximize technology as the media. The benefits of using technology in classroom for adult learner can help the lecturer to build students' engagement and simplify the lecturer's role (Sholikhi, 2020).

Website is one of technologies which can be used as the learning media. Media is necessary for teaching English language skills as well as writing skills. English lecturers

can use a variety of media, including blogs, websites, and journals, to teach writing skill. Website is rather appropriate for young people, though. They become a fundamental requirement for students to learn, and they may be the most accessible and user-friendly media in the classroom (Nasta et al., 2022).

Writing is an essential skill that students should learn since it fosters critical and in-depth thinking, both of which are necessary to produce quality writing (Axmadalievna, 2022). Writing is also essential to education, a means of subsistence, and fundamental societal functioning. Students who study writing will acquire the skills necessary to write well (Malvado et al., 2022). It is hoped that using websites in writing activities can bring different experiences to students while improving their writing skills.

There are several studies about the using of technology in teaching writing for English for Specific Purposes. Previous research has explored the integration of websites and digital tools in English language teaching. Friatin (2018) conducted a research investigating the use of Facebook groups as a mechanism for enhancing students' motivation and pleasure in writing practice. The findings showed that using Facebook groups in writing activities could enhance students' learning experiences by giving engagement and enjoyable atmosphere. Another findings by Sakkir et al. (2016) found that the majority students had a positive attitude towards the use of social media for improving their ability in writing. The positive attitude arising from the dynamic, accessible, and engaging characteristic of social media in enhancing students' feeling of connection and motivation in their learning process.

A research by Fadillah (2021) was examined about the use of Padlet for writing activities. The result revealed that the students' mostly examining the use of Padlet in writing tasks mostly had a positive perception about the platform. Most of the students agreed that the use of Padlet in writing activities could increase their engagement in learning. The research showed that the use of Padlet was not only engaging but also enhancing the students' writing performance. Another digital platform can be used for writing activity was Writeabout.com. According to Safda and Refnaldi (2019), their study indicated that the use of Writeabout.com as a writing platform could augment students' interest and improved students' writing competency. The website facilitated students in sharing their work, receiving critiques, and obtaining inspiration, so augmenting their participation in the writing process and promoting skill development. Moreover, as quoted by Nugroho & Rahmawati (2020), the use of Instagram significantly enhanced the writing

skills of Indonesian ESP students focused in Sharia Banking. The students' perceptions of using Instagram in their writing class were mostly positive, with many students finding it fun, inspirational, and advantageous for receiving feedback and improving their writing skills.

Few research has investigated the use of learnenglish.britishcouncil.org in improving students' writing activities, as shown by the previously stated results. This platform distinguishes itself from other online English learning tools with its distinctive combination of pedagogical approaches, customized material, organized courses, and interactive elements. The website delivers a thorough and captivating learning experience, with a variety of instructional resources and self-assessment options via quizzes and activities. Based on these benefits, Management students might use learnenglish.britishcouncil.org as a valuable platform media to improve their writing skills.

This study aims to investigate how the use of learnenglish.britishcouncil.org can influence students' writing activities in English for Business course. Specifically, it will explore the students' perception of the platform's effectiveness in influencing the students' writing performance, as well as its role in fostering engagement and practical application of writing skills in business contexts. This study focused on the specific topic within English for Specific Purposes (ESP) offering significant insight into how digital platforms can facilitate skill development in certain professional fields.

Ultimately, the study aspires to contribute to the broader understanding of integrating technology into ESP education, offering practical implications for educators and curriculum developers. It is expected that the findings will highlight the potential of interactive digital tools to create engaging and effective learning experiences. These insights are anticipated to benefit not only students but also educators and institutions seeking to enhance the quality and relevance of ESP instruction.

METHODOLOGY

This study used descriptive qualitative design. The researchers conducted semi-interviewed and documentation method. Participants of this study were the students of Management Program at STIE Semarang. They were 1st semester students who take English for Business Subject. There were 22 students who joined the subject and 14 students who participated to be interviewed. This study was conducted at STIE Semarang

campus for two months during English for Business Subject conducted. The students used Learn English from British Council as the media in doing writing activities. This research used documentation and semi-interview questions as the instruments. The questions focused on the usefulness, the ease of use the features, the students' satisfaction, the effects of learning activities, and the weaknesses of using learnenglish.britishcouncil.org in their writing activities. After collecting the data, the researcher proceeded the data by transcribing the interview answers, then evaluate the students' perception about using learnenglish.britishcouncil.org when doing writing activities and the reasons why students should use the website to improve their writing skills. The interview conducted face to face in the classroom after the students used the website.

RESULT/FINDINGS

At the beginning of the lesson, the lecturer explained the material on writing emails. This included five key aspects that should be part of a business email, a sample business email, and the different types of business emails. The lecturer delivered the material using PowerPoint slides and then asked students to practice writing business emails on learnenglish.britishcouncil.org.

The interview findings showed positive feedback from participants regarding the use of learnenglish.britishcouncil.org for learning effective email writing. The results are summarized as follows:

Usefulness

Students found the platform highly beneficial for motivating them to write in English and improving their email writing skills.

Student 1: "At first, I could not write email letters well. However, through this website, I improved my writing because there are examples that guide me step by step in writing emails."

Student 8: "The website is so helpful for someone like me who lacks proficiency in English. I can do several exercises that help me build sentences for email writing."

This finding supports Åberg et al. (2016), who noted that using websites can improve writing skills and foster independence.

Ease of Use

Students appreciated the platform's clear instructions and engaging features, which made it easy and motivating to use.

Student 2: "learnenglish.britishcouncil.org is not hard to use because there are instructions guiding us for each task."

Student 10: "The platform's varied features motivate me to complete all the writing tasks there."

These observations are consistent with Nurawalia (2021), who found that online learning tools with interactive features have a positive impact on students' engagement and learning outcomes.

Satisfaction

Students expressed satisfaction with the platform due to the immediate feedback it provided, enabling them to revise their mistakes and learn more effectively.

Students 3 and 9: "I enjoy this writing task because the website allows me to revise whenever I make a mistake."

Research by Göçer Demirel et al. (2023) and Kutlu (2013) supports this, suggesting that immediate feedback enhances writing skills by offering students opportunities to learn from their errors.

Improvement in Writing Performance

Students reported significant improvements in their writing, particularly in organizing ideas, vocabulary usage, grammatical accuracy, and understanding of professional writing styles.

Student 6: "The website helped me organize my ideas better. Before, I struggled to structure my emails clearly, but now I feel more confident because the exercises showed me how to plan and write step by step."

Student 14: "The examples on the website showed exactly how business emails and reports should be written. They helped me understand the right tone and structure for professional communication."

These findings align with Alsubaie and Madini (2018), who emphasized the effectiveness of online platforms in improving students' writing skills.

Lack of Personalized Feedback

One challenge identified was the lack of personalized feedback on students' work. While the platform provided automated corrections, some students felt these were too generic to address specific issues.

Student 13: "The exercises were helpful, but sometimes the feedback felt too general.

I wanted more detailed comments on what I did wrong or how to improve specific parts of my writing."

Student 11: "The platform gave corrections but didn't explain why something was wrong. Personalized feedback from a teacher would be more useful."

This limitation highlights the importance of incorporating more tailored feedback in digital learning tools, as suggested by Koenka and Anderman (2019), who argue that specific and individualized feedback enhances both motivation and performance.

DISCUSSION

The findings from the study underscore the effectiveness of learnenglish.britishcouncil.org in enhancing students' email writing skills. The platform's interactive features, authentic examples, and structured exercises played a significant role in helping students improve various aspects of their writing, including organization, grammar, vocabulary, and overall clarity. The structured step-by-step guidance provided by the platform enabled students to feel more confident and capable in composing professional business emails. These results align with previous studies (Åberg et al., 2016; Alsubaie & Madini, 2018), which have demonstrated the potential of online platforms to enhance students' writing performance while fostering autonomy and self-directed learning.

Moreover, the platform's ability to present authentic examples of business emails is especially valuable for students learning English for business purposes. By exposing learners to professional writing styles and contexts, learnenglish.britishcouncil.org bridges the gap between theoretical knowledge and real-world application. This feature supports the development of critical writing skills that are transferable to professional settings, a key goal in business communication education. The inclusion of task-based activities further reinforces these skills, as students can practice writing in a simulated yet practical environment, gaining hands-on experience in crafting professional emails.

Students' positive feedback on the platform's ease of use and immediate feedback highlights its accessibility and relevance for beginners in business writing. Many students noted that the user-friendly design and clear instructions allowed them to navigate the platform easily and stay engaged with the learning tasks. These findings echo the research of Nurawalia (2021), which suggests that platforms with engaging and intuitive interfaces can significantly enhance the learning experience, especially for students who may feel

intimidated by traditional learning methods. The availability of immediate feedback was also seen as a motivating factor, as it provided students with the opportunity to identify and correct their errors in real time, ultimately leading to better retention and skill development.

However, despite these strengths, the lack of personalized feedback emerged as a notable limitation. Students expressed that the automated feedback provided by the platform was often too generic and failed to address their specific needs or guide them on how to improve particular aspects of their writing. For example, while the platform corrected grammatical errors, it did not explain why certain corrections were necessary or how students could avoid similar mistakes in the future. This limitation aligns with the observations of Koenka and Anderman (2019), who emphasized that detailed, task-specific feedback tailored to individual learners is crucial for fostering both skill development and sustained motivation. Personalized feedback helps learners understand their progress and areas for improvement, which is essential for building confidence and achieving long-term success in writing.

Addressing this limitation could significantly enhance the platform's effectiveness. Integrating teacher-mediated feedback, for instance, would allow students to receive detailed explanations and constructive suggestions tailored to their individual needs. Alternatively, incorporating advanced AI-driven feedback systems that simulate personalized guidance could also address this issue. Such systems could analyze students' writing patterns, highlight specific areas for improvement, and provide actionable recommendations, creating a more comprehensive and individualized learning experience. These additions would not only support students' technical skill development but also help them build a deeper understanding of effective business writing practices.

Additionally, combining the platform's existing strengths with opportunities for peer collaboration and feedback could further enrich the learning experience. Research on collaborative learning in language education suggests that peer interaction can enhance critical thinking, increase engagement, and provide diverse perspectives on writing tasks. By enabling students to review and critique each other's work within the platform, they could gain insights into different writing styles and approaches, further supporting their development.

In conclusion, while learnenglish.britishcouncil.org proves to be an effective tool for teaching email writing, its impact could be amplified by addressing the need for

personalized feedback and expanding opportunities for collaborative learning. The platform's interactive features, authentic examples, and immediate feedback make it a valuable resource for beginners and experienced learners alike, but its full potential lies in its ability to adapt to the specific needs of individual learners. By integrating these enhancements, the platform could provide a more comprehensive and transformative learning experience, ultimately preparing students for the demands of professional communication in the business world.

CONCLUSION

This study investigated five major elements: the usefulness of the platform, the ease of use, the student satisfaction, the improvement of writing performance, and the lack of individualized feedback. The results indicated that the platform significantly influence students writing performance by providing practical, engaging and accessible learning experiences specifically in English for Business course. Students valued its captivating design, practical examples, and organized exercises that enhanced their writing structure, vocabulary, and grammatical precision. The lack of personalized feedback was found as a limitation, highlighting the need for more focused and specialized assistance to tackle particular learning difficulties. To enhance the outcomes, it is recommended that further version of the platform can have functionalities for giving personalized feedback, such as detailed comments from the teacher for tailored teaching. Educators using learnenglish.britishcouncil.org may consider augmenting the platform with supplementary tailored feedback sessions to cater to students' particular writing requirements. Future study might investigate the incorporation of individualized feedback systems and their effects on writing improvement, therefore fostering a more holistic and supportive educational atmosphere for students.

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