USING FACEBOOK TO MOTIVATE SMP STUDENTS TO WRITE

PAPER

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BY

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. Background of the Problem

The invention of Internet and the rapid of Information Technology (IT) development in our life create opportunities for language acquisition. Teachers and learners may explore Internet as a wide source of media in teaching-learning English language. Internet with its services provides these opportunities for those who want to find the new alternative of media source for teaching-learning language.

Furthermore, most of Internet services are free and interesting. You do not have to make a small charge at all for accessing or being a user/member of them. Besides, they are designed with interesting interface and features to attract Internet users to access. In this paper, I try to use these opportunities to motivate Junior High School (SMP) students to write.

Learning to write in foreign language learning is an uphill struggle for most students. Even with simple writing exercises, students often lose and do not complete them (Tessema, 2005). In addition, Nunan in Tessema (2005) states that creating a good piece of writing is considered an extremely difficult skill, even in one's own language. The difficulties of writing often makes students feel frustrated. Students may assume that writing is a boring activity. This condition will lead students into a trap of lack motivation to write.

Because the difficulties of writing often catch students into the lack of motivation, this paper will try to explore the new media as an effort to encourage students to write. The new media will be used in motivating students to write is a kind of online social network that is well-known as Facebook.

The reason why this paper chooses Facebook as a medium to motivate students to write is based on assumptions which have some interesting features to response by writing comment(s) on comment box. As Abram and Pearlman (2008), the Facebook Product Manager, say "Facebook offers you a ton of cool things to do: add photos and videos, write notes and messages, share links, give gift, save the world, save the cheerleader...the possibilities are truly endless". The features available in Facebook generally require its users to write on the features if they want to give comment(s).

In addition, Facebook as one online social network that is available on Internet can be accessed through a certain type of cellular phone besides through computer. The use of computer in learning language will provide a strong intrinsic motivation (Muehleisen, 1997; Warschauer and Whittaker, 1997), being autonomous learner (Mayora, 2006; Nowlan, 2008), and effectiveness (Kitao, 1995) for the students. We need this intrinsic motivation rather than the one comes from outside influence. In other words, we like to see our students do the subjects we are teaching with their own interests rather than because of outside pressures such as homework, test, and other tasks (Fox, 1998). Furthermore, using cellular phone to access Facebook will provide students to write anytime and anywhere easily.

Finally, writing on Facebook is considered to increase the motivation of the students because what they write is published and other facebookers, term for Facebook user, may give comment(s). Like writing on the blog, Facebook provides the status box to be updated and comment boxes for friends to put their comments toward status that has been updated. This is an interesting activity and it shows students' autonomous to express their ideas (Eastmant, 2005; Ramirez, 2010). Moreover, Facebook is a virtual place to build interaction like a pen pal. English teachers need this virtual place to build interaction between students and their environment more interactive than a book or magazine (Muehleisen, 1997; Campbell, 2003; Nowlan, 2008). Basically, Facebook is a kind of online social network that almost has writing activity on every single feature.

B. Limitation of the Problem

Based on the background above, the writer was interested in knowing the students' motivation to write. The writer limited this paper to the students of Junior High School (SMP). The teacher chose SMP students because they had studied Internet subject. They had studied how to operate and most of them have had e-mail.

C. Formulation of the Problem

The problem can be formulated as follow: "How does a teacher can use Facebook to motivate students to write?"

D. Purpose of the Paper

The purpose of writing this paper is to describe using Facebook as one of online social networks available on Internet to motivate students to write. It is important for teacher to explore all interesting features found in Facebook to encourage his/her students to write.

Using Facebook as a tool in writing class is also aimed at encouraging students to take apart in social interaction and find interesting material for them to interact with friends in virtual place. It is also considered to make students feel free and collaborative, and enjoy their writing activity as one of difficult skill in English language learning especially out classroom.