A Hermeneutical Study of Using Mobile Phone in 4.0 in Writing Skills

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Abstract: Mobile phones become an affordable device in our lives since it is ubiquitous and the function is now not only for communication but also beyond that. This study aims to give the readers more insight into the use of a mobile phone in writing skills by using a hermeneutical approach. Participants were undergraduate students at age 18-20 (N=16). The descriptive analysis results reveal that a significant number of students notice that writing is considered the most challenging skill since they have to organize all aspects to produce good writing. Thus, a hermeneutical approach is needed to examine their difficulties in writing skills.

INTRODUCTION

Mobile phones become an affordable device in our lives since it is ubiquitous and the function is now not only for communication but also beyond that. When it was invented for the first time, it was used for communication purposes only. Today, it allows the users to store data, download, and deliver multimedia like an extravagant handled computer. The mobile phone can be seen as another brilliant invention in this era. Advanced technology has been found, including internet access, voice-message, short message service features, cameras, and even video calling. These features authorize students to access, practice efficiently and communicate well in language learning (Chinnery, 2006). Therefore, mobile phone utilization in industry 4.0 as a multi-tasking device through the development of the internet brings a massive number of users and becomes a crucial part of modern daily life.

Mobile phone as a portable and affordable device gives a potential use in a pedagogical context. The ubiquitous mobile phone urges the researcher to ask, "How will the mobile phone features support language learning?" The answer is "in some ways" since mobile phones can be upgraded from the functions (Reinders, 2010). The considerable interest in using a mobile phone to support language learning has been urged since it is an affordable and increasingly powerful device (Reinders, 2010; Chinnery, 2006; Traxler & Kukulska-Hulme, 2005). In education, mobile phones are being used by scholars toward a new paradigm, so-called mobile

learning or m-learning (Halder et al., 2015; Muyinda et al., 2007). Therefore, the use of mobile phones enables assisting in all aspects of language learning skills, including writing.

Writing as a productive language skill can be seen as quite an unfavorable skill for foreign language learners. The reason is that the skill needs a long process from generating, organizing, and translating the ideas, and in the end, we have to be able to produce a text. Harmer (2004) states that writing urges learners to focus on exact language use and write what they think. Moreover, the difficulty of learning writing may increase when they meet non-native speakers (Siddique & Nair, 2015). The other challenges can be found from the students, such as they cannot write English correctly because they think it is a complex skill, misuse of accurate grammar and vocabulary, and organize the sentences into good paragraphs.

Moreover, it requires performing several activities that often need to be done simultaneously. For instance, while expressing ideas, students need to think about the appropriate vocabulary, the spelling of the words, mechanics, style, and the correct structure to arrange good English sentences. The complexity of the writing skill thus can affect EFL students' writing performance (Sultana & Zaki, 2015).

After looking at that phenomenon, can the reader have the same interpretation as the writer does? Can the mobile phone enhance students' writing skills? In conducting this research, the researcher uses a hermeneutical study, emphasizing subjective interpretations of social phenomena and thinking meanings. The specific approach is a hermeneutical circle to examine mobile phone utilization for fostering students writing skills. Thus, the strategy forms are the opposite of the common strategy, which stresses objectivity and independence from interpretations in knowledge formation.

LITERATURE REVIEW

There have been some studies related to that topic. According to Siddique & Nair (2015), mobile phone use in writing skills has more impacts, including cooperation, collaboration, face-to-face interaction, fun learning, and a conducive learning environment in a classroom. Additionally, some pedagogical implications can be reached by using this device in learning writing. Shalbag (2014) examines that using mobile phones can help learners overcome their writing anxiety inside or outside writing classes. The findings stated that 70% of the students are more pleasant and have good linguistic features when using short message service (SMS) features to assist their learning writing.

According to Chan et al. (2015), participants in this study view the value of their smartphones as devices to help them in their studies, careers and, to make friends and contacts (building of social capital) are confirming their acceptance of the dominant, subliminal message sent out by these smart devices. This study strongly suggests communication between people and other people with technology and technological know-how at the level of engendering learning by designing and modifying personalized learning applications. This study has a more nuanced view of learning: it empowers and satisfies, but it can be a "double-edged" sword. This nuanced perspective of the value of their learning is new as participants view smartphones as engendering both increasing and diminishing returns. In another study, they also state that the study presents the experience of learning with smartphones directly and evocatively to encourage readers to enter imaginatively into the experiences described. It provides the means for deepening our understanding of the lived experience of learning with smartphones. As this is a study in progress, the findings are preliminary. Thus far, the insights are that learning was highly personalized and reflective of learners' needs and purposes. Participants generally perceive this learning as highly valuable, although they understand that it also has negative implications. Their identities and relationship with their use of technologies are fluid and contingent upon context (Chan et al., 2013).

METHODOLOGY

Sample

The population of the study was 30 students age 18-20 years in private institutions. From the population, only 16 students were willing to respond to the researcher questionnaire voluntarily.

Data Collection and Data Analysis

This study uses a hermeneutical study, which focuses on describing and interpreting students' interpretation of learning writing using mobile phones. The instruments are the questionnaire and interview. The findings are distributed into empirical themes and transcendent themes.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Hermeneutical Study of Using Mobile Phone in Teaching Writing

Hermeneutics

According to Lubis (2016), etymologically, *hermeneutics* is derived from the word *'hermeneutic,* which means interpreting or the art of interpretation. It is often related to the word *'Hermes'* as well, a God in Greek mythology who sends the messages from Gods to humans by firstly interpreting and conveying the messages to the humans the way they can understand. Nowadays, hermeneutics covers the interpretation of many things such as a sign, symbol, religious rituals, artworks, literature, history, and psychology. Thus, it can be said that hermeneutics is a method to interpret or analyze something that has meaning. Lubis (2016) classified hermeneutics into:

a. *Theoretical Hermeneutics*: Hermeneutics finds the meaning or understanding based on the author of the text. The figures of this type are Schleiermacher, Dilthey, and Emilio Betti.

b. *Philosophical Hermeneutics*: It is impossible to find the objective meaning or understanding. The figures of this type are Gadamer and Heidegger.

c. *Critical Hermeneutics*: The purpose of critical hermeneutic is to reveal the interests of the author of the text. The text is considered as something suspected because it could be a fake consciousness. The figures of this type are Jurgen Habermas and Karl Otto Apel.

In hermeneutics, the hermeneutical circle plays a crucial role since it is a process of interpreting something in which we continuously move between smaller and larger units of meaning (moving back and forth) to determine the meanings of both. There is a relation between the whole text and its parts. There is an interaction between the interpreter and the text, meaning, and context, which is dialogic and dynamic.

Hermeneutical Study of Using Mobile Phone in Teaching Writing

The participants who chose writing skills as the most challenging skill in English learning have some reasons. The first reason was that some stated that writing was not easy because sometimes their vocabulary mastery was limited, and they did not know how to write a good paragraph or even a good sentence. Other respondents argued that sometimes they got confused when writing in the formal language since it was different from the spoken language. Besides, the verb of the English language was too much and sometimes inconsistent, making them feel a burden to memorize all the verbs using the conventional method.

The second reason was about different verb usage. Some participants answered that legal writing or formal writing was the most difficult in that skill. Another participant stated that essay writing was the most difficult because it used different verb usage. However, someone argued that all materials in writing skills were accessible, but he needed practice.

The third reason was about media they usually used to assist in learning writing. Most of them argued that electronic media was the best way to help in learning writing. Another student stated that group discussion and offline dictionary could be one alternative in assisting learning that skill.

The fourth reason was about what kind of device which they usually used in learning writing skill. Most of the students stated that the mobile phone was their favorite device in assisted writing learning. Just one respondent argued that he/she usually used his/her laptop to help him/her learn writing.

The fifth reason was about how often they used a mobile phone in learning writing. This question was intended for the respondents who answered the mobile phone as their favorite device to learn writing. Almost all of them argued that they frequently used their device because they might use them anywhere and anytime.

The last was about what kind of application which they usually used in enhancing their writing skills. They had different answers, and there were some applications they usually used, such as an electronic dictionary, mobile phone features like notes, text messaging, camera, blog, social media, etc.

The hermeneutical circle plays in the analysis that mobile phones may enhance students' writing skills. When we look at the title, the big question is whether the mobile phone can improve writing skills since writing is a complex and challenging skill in English learning. However, we have to look at the phenomenon as a whole part. Examining back and forth that question about the phenomena and making sure that mobile phone is used not only for communication but also for English skills, especially writing skills. They use their device frequently to assist their learning of writing since it is portable and affordable. Therefore, using a mobile phone in writing skills can be utilized by using a hermeneutical approach to enhance students' writing achievement.

CONCLUSION

The utilization of mobile phones promotes some advantages in the pedagogical aspect, especially in learning writing. As a facilitator and source, the teacher may guide the students

to maximize their mobile devices to become helpful devices. The mobile phone will be able to organize different types of E-learning and change the classes from a static mood of a teacher-centered environment to a student-centered environment with a dynamic method. From students' roles, it gives more opportunities for the learners to have learning autonomy. They may design learning styles based on their strength and weaknesses. This learning autonomy lets the students learn anywhere and anytime since they can use their mobile phone features and applications. The data show that most respondents use mobile phones in assisted writing learning because it is ubiquitous and affordable, and they can use it anywhere and anytime. Using a mobile phone in writing skills using a hermeneutical approach can be used as an alternative to overcome students' difficulties in that skill.

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