

Students' Writing Test Using an Integrated-Multimedia Website: A Case Study of English Professional Class

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ABSTRACT

Since its inception, the demand for high technology in teaching learning is escalating. Presumably, a demand emerges in assessing students' achievement by using technology. In language teaching learning, it is undeniable that the technology is also applied in assessing students' language skills including writing. In assessing writing, in a common type, the process is carried out manually or typed in a word document. Based on the results, this research aims to explain the development of an integrated multimedia website for assessing writing and the potential of using the website for writing test. Questionnaires were distributed to 28 students joining English Professional Course at BINUS Online Learning to evaluate the promptness of the website for the test and the students' sense of the website functionality. The result denoted that the website contribution is well-equipped to use as a tool and to test the writing skill. Moreover, the users were comfortable to exert it for undertaking the writing test. Equally important, the developments on the website require continuous improvement, especially for the variation of the questions including to add video and audio integration eventually.

CCS Concepts

• Information systems → Information systems applications • Software and its engineering → Use cases

Keywords

Technology; integrated-multimedia; website; ESL; writing test

1. INTRODUCTION

The rapid development of technology has influenced many sectors of mankind's lives. In this point, it exhibits the impact on education paradigm including language teaching-learning processes. Basically, the technology is renowned as Information and Communication Technology (ICT) that have been used as tools, not only for presenting the material but also for assessing

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students' skills since 1997 and has offered some advantages [1], [2].

Not surprisingly, the implementation of ICT has also been used as a tool in students' skills assessment for language learning; notably the writing assessment. In the beginning, the writing assessment urged for the using of paper-pencil based. Over recent decades, it transformed into Computer Based Testing (CBT), Computer Based Assessment (CBA), and now it is becoming more sophisticated by using Online Assessment, E-Assessment and Web Assessment [3] [4] [5] [6].

Importantly, multimedia in a website refers to the text, picture, graphic, animation, video, and audio. It verifies that those aspects in multimedia will create a good E-assessment which allow the participants to comprehend the preferable test. Moreover, it can decrease the feeling of stressful and develop self-assessment which lead for better score [7].

Previous research called the attention of advantages of using ICT in language assessment. Jamil [3] shed the insight on the advantages of ICT that provide a chance for the test developers or teachers to set the same test for examinees either in small or large number of test takers.

The number of students participates in a writing test becomes a consideration to finally decide the best method for test implementation. As in BINUS University Online Learning, students are obliged to take English Professional lecture. In this online learning method, the students locate in different places. In this case, the writing test should accommodate the students' need. Therefore, ICT based writing assessment becomes the most visible solution. In addition, there are many providers offer a ready ICT based writing test and it will be simply used. However, the need of skills in writing and the topic of the test can be dissimilar. Consequently, developing an ICT based on writing test in the type of integrated multimedia web is the best option since it will accommodate the need for the users.

Based on the reason, this paper aims to explain the development of an integrated multimedia website for writing test at BINUS Online Learning and the potential of using the website for general writing test.

2. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

The integration of ICT into the world of teaching has been much improved. This attracts public attention because in the context of education, ICT refers to the various sources and devices (software and hardware) that are oriented for education [8]. Coupled with the advantages offered, an effective ICT integration in the

learning process should involve learners with varying potentials. In this sense, lecturers harness multimedia to present an unstructured problem into an exciting learning that can motivate and challenge students in solving problems [9].

3. RESEARCH METHOD

The study selects BINUS Online Learning English professional class which consists of all students in writing test using integrated multimedia website development. In this point of entry, the test invited 28 students in a computer laboratory class for the purpose of testing a multimedia site. The reason for choosing a laboratory at BINUS University is to ensure that the internet runs well and that students undertake test at the same time.

Subsequently, the team of research distributed questionnaires to respondents in the classroom. At a closer look, this questionnaire consisted of two parts. The first part aims to evaluate the promptness of the integrated multimedia in undertaking the test. The second part aims to explore students' understanding of the functioning of the website in the process. In this spectrum, the research also poses several open questions that aim to acquire students' opinions on the multimedia sites provided.

4. FINDINGS & DISCUSSION

4.1 The Integrated Multimedia Website Development

The integrated multimedia website was designed to accommodate the need to assess BINUS Online Learning students joining English Professional class. In this writing test, students have to do at least two types of writing. First is business writing and second is essay writing. Business writing is aimed to assess their understanding in writing emails or business letters, while the essay writing is the idea for them to share ideas with a minimum 200 words. Therefore, it is needed to develop an integrated multimedia website which answered their need for different location.

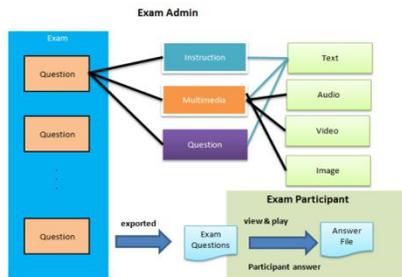


Figure 1. Application Design.

The first step to develop this website was interviewing 6 lecturers teaching English Professional at BINUS Online Learning. From this interview, it was gained some points to consider in developing this website. One of consideration was it should accommodate the online students. Second, that for the first step, a text type of writing should be developed. The next step would be integrated with listening and reading in the form of integrating audio and video.

From the detailed discussion with the lecturers, the first step was creating the grand design of the website was accomplished. As it can be seen in figure 1, this multimedia website application design consists of two big part, Exam Admin, and Exam Participant. In Exam admin, it can be found questions which consist of Instruction, Multimedia, and Question. The instruction contains a

rule a participant should do or follow. The multimedia presents text, audio, video or image. It can also be a combination of text and audio, video and audio, image and text. The combination of the multimedia types depends on the need. An administrator is able to set and choose these types based on the objective the students should be assessed. The Exam Participant's part refers to the result of the students writing. It only consists of two big parts; Exam Question and Answer File. This answer file is the type of website downloaded in which a lecturer or teacher can check the students' writing results.

After creating the grand design or platform, the first step was developing the website for writing a test which only accommodates text type of test. It only consisted of instruction, a text type of test and questions.

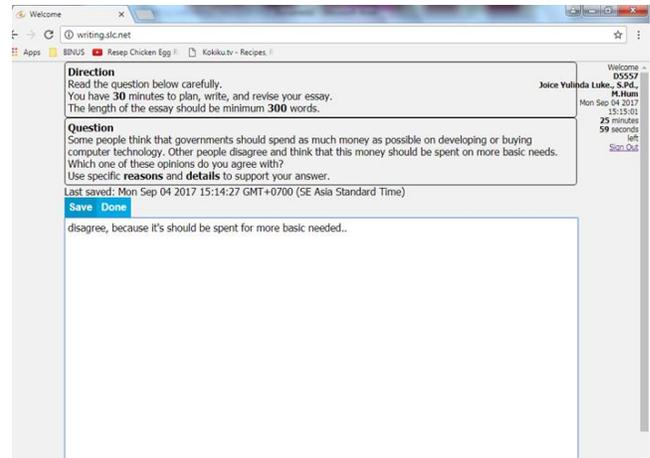


Figure 2. Text Type Writing Test.

Figure 2 shows the interface of the writing test in the type of text only. In this type of test, a student or participants are asked to read the instruction, then to start the test. Whenever the participant clicks the start button, the question appears. Time allotment is given on the top of the right counting down as required. Below the question, there is a space for the participants to answer the question. This test is equipped with the auto save mode which enables the system safe whether the participants click the save button or not.

The next steps are still in progress especially to integrate video in the multimedia website which links to the text type test and the last is integrating video, pictures and reading the text on this website.

4.2 Integrated Multimedia Website Evaluation

From the questionnaire distributed to the students, it can be gained some information about the integrated multimedia website for writing an assessment. The five items are used to categorize to get the idea of the question; SD for strongly disagree, D for disagreeing, N for neutral, A for agree and SA for strongly agree with the question. This division is taken to get the strong impact of the answer. The percentage is used to present the result.

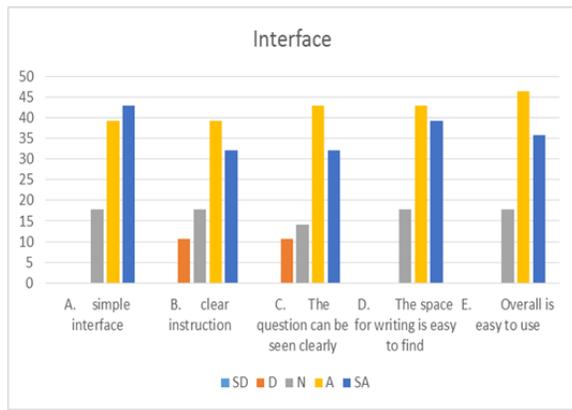


Figure 3. Text Interface.



Figure 4. The Time Allotment.

Figure 3 indicated that most participants agree that this integrated multimedia website has a simple interface. It means that it is easy to use. None strongly disagree that it has clear instruction but less than 17% disagree with it. Almost 17% is in the position of neutral. From the point of available space for writing, more than 85% in the position of agreed and strongly agreed that space is easy to find on the website and again only 17% stated neutrally. For overall, none disagree with it, rather 83% agree and strongly agree that overall, this website is easy to use except that 17% stated neutrally.

Figure 4 exhibited the participants respond toward the question of time allotment given to do the writing test. Less than 10% of the participants disagree that it is easy to see the time allotment on the screen. The clear time allotment for the participants is very important for them to manage their time in doing the test. More than 42% students agree and almost 30% strongly agreed with it. This website screen also shows the time to start the test. 40% agree and each almost 30% strongly agree and in neutral position but 10% disagree with it. When it is asked the time for a break to continue to the next question more than 50% agree and 15% strongly agreed with it. Almost 90% is categorized to agree that the website presents clear time allotment on the screen.

To figure out the writing support in this integrated multimedia website, five questions were asked. The first one is word count which is necessary since writing assessment normally requires a minimum or a maximum number of word. This website is equipped with word counting which can be seen from figure 3 that almost 90% agrees with it and only 10% in a neutral position. Thesaurus is also provided for the participants if they know how to use it. It can be seen that almost 60% agree with it. Spelling

check is also one important thing in doing writing. Therefore, the multimedia website integrates the spelling check. Unfortunately, only 50% understand how to use it. They hoped that auto spelling check is provided. Almost 30% in a neutral position which means that there is any spelling check or not, it does not matter for them. This website is not equipped with grammar check. It can be seen that more than 50% disagree when they were asked if there is no grammar check. The last question is about auto saving in which participants almost 90% agree with it.

The last part of the questionnaire is about their attitude or feeling about the writing assessment using this integrated multimedia website. It can be seen from figure 4 that 30% disagree that there is no difference between paper-based test and online test. For them, both types of tests have significant difference while for almost 50% think on the contrary. Being comfortable while doing the writing assessment is also important. Therefore, knowing their feeling in using this website is also important. More than 80% of the participants feel comfortable using this website. The same percentage also is taken from the question that this website supports their writing assessment. Following that, auto save service given in this website put their positive feeling. 90% feel safe in doing the test since all they type are saved and any correction they made is saved automatically. Last but not least, more than 75% feel that this multimedia is supportive. Based on figure 5 and figure 6, it concludes that the website and the interfaces can support them in doing the writing test with high accuracy in the institution.

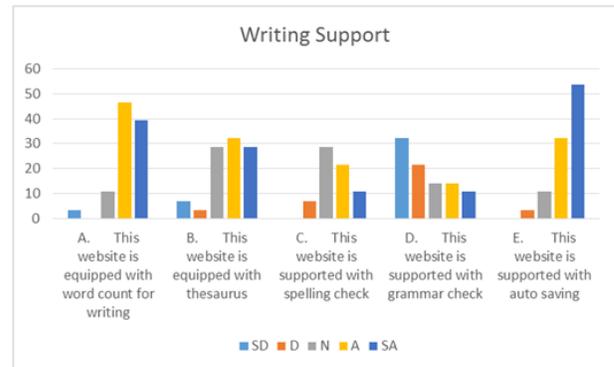


Figure 5. Writing Support.

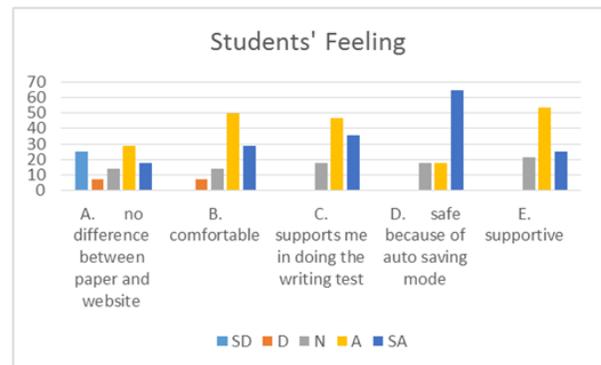


Figure 6. Students' Feeling.

5. RESULTS

Besides the closed question in the questionnaire, an open question was provided for the participants to give opinion and suggestion to the development of the integrated multimedia website for writing test. Some positive feeling toward this website is that they

feel easier to do the test and the program of having writing test using this website is good.

Most of them commented that auto saving made them feel very comfortable and safe in doing the test. They did not feel worried that they lost what they wrote in case they forgot to save it or when there was any technical problem such as electricity black out.

Some suggestions were also provided for the development of the website. Firstly, they required more colorful interface with some pictures on it. It is understood that when they did the test, they only used text type and not the audio and video integrated test yet. The second was the remainder of the time. They suggested setting an alarm at least five minutes before the test ended. It is aimed to give a reminder to check or finish the writing tasks before the test ends. The last, it is suggested to equip this website with grammar check facility.

6. CONCLUSION

Based on the discussion, it can be concluded that this embedded multimedia website can be used for the writing test for students including online learning students. From the result of the questionnaire, the positive response from the participants can be concluded that this developed integrated multimedia is potential to use for writing test. Importantly, the novelty of the research provides all set of questions that have been embedded and integrated in the system. On the other hand, some researchers pinpointed the importance of material preparation that supported the students' achievement [10]. Consequently, this application not only prepares all set of questions, but also the examiner can verify all set of questions in accordance with the necessity.

Since the development of the website for writing assessment is still in the first step, some new developments are still required, especially for the variation of the questions, audio integration, and video integration to support the writing test.

7. ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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