

## From Classroom to Peer Comment in Facebook: Bridging to Establish Learners' Literacy

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### Abstract

*The phenomenon of using facebook widespread in Indonesia especially among learners. Almost every day everywhere every student has a face book that he/she will visit. They use it actively to comment, make friend, search friends or families, and chat. Based on the result of questionnaire distributed to the forth semester students of English study program of Sriwijaya University, it was found that 97% insisted that facebook is important for two reasons that it can be useful for making communication and developing writing ability.*

*During 2009-2010, the writer brought her lectures in the classroom into internet that is facebook. After lecturing for some meetings in Writing II course, she asked her students to send their works to a group composed by her in her facebook. The groups' names were A\_Layo Writers and Bukit\_Writers. In that groups, the students wrote their paragraphs toward a certain theme and they commented on each other. And it was her finding that most students really learnt how to write a good paragraph by reading and commenting on the peer writing. Another one was Literary Appreciation course. By following a set of questions established from reader respons strategy, the fifth semester students responded some literary works and conventionally written in their workbooks. To discuss their appreciation, the writer asked them to post their work in the group in her facebook named Literary Appreciation about the Legend of Kemaro Island.*

*This paper elaborates the use of face book as a medium for the learners to present and comment on their opinion or piece of writing as a way of making use the social network in cyber and the implementation of ICT in teaching English literacy.*

### Introduction

Internet has become a part of daily lives that addresses for abundant websites. The internet helps people search everything entailed. It can also be a powerful teaching tool, provide access to information and allow links to other learners. Technology is valuable in the globalization era; It is not new in language teaching anymore, as insisted by Dudeney and Hockly (2007:7) that for decades technology has been around in the language teaching. Therefore, Information Community Technology (ICT) now becomes a valuable and comfortable media for the learners to express their opinion through reading and writing. The use of media and technology is expected to encourage learners to establish their literacy. Teacher provides them with a special website or a blog that they can use to give comment on each other. Ultimately, their writing and comment can be responded by other visitors.

According to Harmer (2007:192) internet provides many websites for learners to practice language. Some of the websites are free for people, but some of them are based around a school or an organization that entail the used to register for the site. In line with that, facebook is one of the top social networking sites, quickly gaining on My-space in terms of total users and traffic that presents a unique marketing opportunity for businesses through the creation of Facebook Business Pages. As

more people explore social media, social networking sites have become some of the key online sources they use to learn more about products, organizations, artists and world events. Marketing on Facebook has a vital effect – information spreads through networks exponentially.

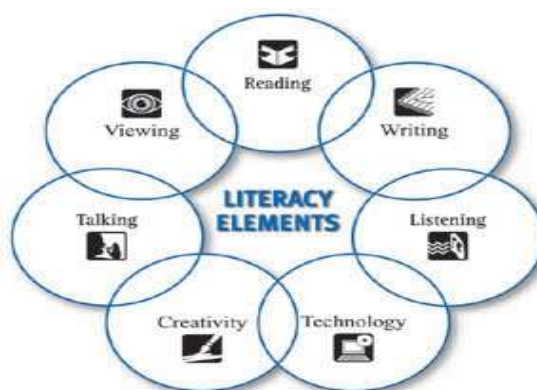
The phenomenon of using facebook widespread in Indonesia especially for learners. Almost every day everywhere, every learner has a facebook that he/she will visit. They use it actively to comment, make friend, search friends or families, and chat. Based on the result of questionnaire distributed to the forth semester students of English study program of Sriwijaya University, it was found that 97% insisted that facebook is important for two reasons that it can be useful for making communication and developing writing ability. The insistence motivates the writer to accommodate the students' activity and happy hours of being on line in the internet by making use of facebook to be their medium of expressing ideas and commenting on their friends' opinion. Moreover, few of schools or universities have hot spot area so they can access it easily. Or sometimes they can be accessed in by their mobile. This fact shows that the use of internet especially facebook and related information technologies will foster an alternative teaching and learning environment. Besides, peers are practically a good source of feedback, the helpfulness of their comments on peer writing can be very limited. In addition, they tend to be inexperienced in writing and generating constructive comments. Therefore, it is critical for the successful use of peer reviewing that learners come to generate helpful reviews for their peer writers in the absence of strong expert input. Because of that, facebook can be a medium to make learners not just having fun in facebook, but they can use it in positive one. So with the proliferation of computer software and hardware, especially by using the facebook, the teachers and the students can do the interaction each other and have teaching and learning process. This fact shows that the use of internet especially facebook and related information technologies will foster an alternative teaching and learning environment, especially in building their literacy.

Furthermore, literacy is believed as the involvement of complex relationships between spoken and written language, conventions of print, fluency, knowledge of letters, sounds, and words, comprehension, and so on (Flood, et al., 2003). Many perspectives are highlighted to define the term. Traditionally, literacy is defined as the ability to read and write. A literate person has both abilities that can mediate his world by orchestrating meaning from one linguistic knowledge base and apply or connect it to another knowledge base as proposed by Dubin (2009). Ideologically, the concept of literacy is a set of cultural practices, ways of using written language that may vary across cultures and settings. Autonomously, literacy is conceptualized as a technology, a set of cognitive skills that are relatively stable and autonomous. Finally, Wikipedia (2009) defines literacy is considered to be the ability to use language to read, write, listen, and speak and according to UNESCO literacy is the ability to identify, understand, interpret, create, communicate, compute and use printed and written materials associated with varying contexts. It is also stated that a continuum of learning in enabling individuals to achieve their goals is involved to develop their knowledge and potential, and to participate fully in their community and wider society. From those perspectives, literacy refers the ability to make and communicate meaning from and by the use of a variety of socially contextual symbols. Within various levels of developmental ability, a literate person can derive and convey meaning, and use their knowledge to achieve a desired purpose or goal that requires the use of language skills, be they spoken or written.

This paper elaborates the elements of literacy and ICT, the use of facebook as a medium for the learner to present and comment on their opinion or piece of writing as a way of making use the social network in cyber, and the implementation of ICT in teaching English literacy.

## The Elements of Literacy and ICT

In most societies today, literacy is part and parcel of everyday life for children and adults, and life is full of different sorts of written texts: in the home, on the street, on television, and on computer. Literacy skills are then, not just an additional set skill learnt in schools, but an integral part of people's lives. Hill (2006:3) states, "literacy is reading, writing, speaking and listening and involves the knowledge and skill required to engage in activities required for effective functioning in the community." Benham (2009) states that language, reading and writing skills develop at the same time and are intimately linked. The following figure is the elements of literacy that become the key points of literacy and is one of the program offered in one website in the internet.



Reading is a complex, dynamic activity that involves actively constructing meaning from texts. The area of greatest importance in teaching reading is motivation. Modifying existing texts, or creating new texts to suit the interests and needs of the learner ensure that all learners have the best opportunities to construct meaning from text. Then, the learners need to be supported as they develop control over the processes of composing and shaping texts. They need to write in different genres, for example poems, recounts, instructions, short stories, explanations, articles for a newsletter, and letters and contexts for writing should be varied and involve meaningful tasks. Consequently, learners need real audiences for the publication of their writing so they can begin to understand relationships between reading and writing. Next, by talking, learners use language to communicate effectively. Every literacy activity should begin with talking that is an integral component of all reading and writing activities, for example, brainstorming, talking about ideas, talking about experiences, and talking about the task.

Furthermore, learners will encounter computers in their everyday environment - home/libraries/workplace. Computers are not only for elite group anymore, they can provide opportunities for diverse users. Using computers to word process writing, to search the web, and to send and receive e-mails are regular activities that the learners can face in their life.

Literacy activities draw on learners' creativity and imagination allowing them to express ideas, and their relationships with their communities, in genres that are not restricted by more formal text types of reading and writing. Visual literacy is developed through activities such as viewing and discussing pictures, illustrations, photos, TV programs and movies. These activities also provide a bridge from talking to reading and writing tasks as the verbal analysis of concrete objects such as photos both aids memory and provides a focus for such tasks.

Similar to this, Duax and Phoenix (2011) in their paper, "Literacy, Fluency and Video Storytelling: A Strategy for Teaching English Language Learners," (<http://imet.csus.edu/imet7/phoenix/imet.portfolio/Showcase/rol/rol.pdf>) propose the use of digital media to help students to create their own stories can be an effective way to teach, since digital is the media of this generation. They also

insist that students are involved in creating digital storytelling in their own learning process and are learning to work with groups by manipulating the technology that will shape their future. In addition, Howel and Howel (2003) indicate how cognitive and affective aspects of the learners can be stimulated and balanced through reading and digital story telling creation by stating the following.

- The making of digital stories encourages and promotes higher level thinking skills and involves students in problem-based learning. Digital storytelling takes all of the effective teaching methods for reading fluency to the next level, application. Reading and fluency are constructed within the cognitive domain of storytelling, which makes them a part of long-term memory. The affective domain is also accessed through the relation of personal narrative. In this way, digital storytelling can be an integral part of an effective, balanced reading instruction program.

This century, people live in technological society. Everything is now connected to technology. One last decade, computer became a sophisticated device that all people are familiarized with. According to Kauchak, Eggen, and Charter (2002:389) individual computers allow the teacher to use different kind of software to conduct learning process. The computers are interconnected in the internet so that people can communicate and share information worldwide. The internet has literally become a part of our daily lives. It helps people search everything entailed. It can also be a powerful teaching tool, providing access to information and allowing links to other learners.

Similarly, Richard's and Renandya (2002:362) list some experts in making use of internet teaching method. Warchauer and Whittaken examine the use of the internet as an alternative teaching method and present a set of guidelines for teachers who plan to integrate computer technology in the classroom. Meanwhile, Li and Hart look specifically at the World Wide Web (www) and explore its potential for language learning. The web has a number of features that can be used appropriately to learn a language. The features include the following: 1) It offers an excellent tool for interactive learning, 2) it provides a rich data base of authentic material, 3) materials stored in the web can reach a wide audience at a relatively low cost. Finally, Li and Hart describe their web magazine, which provides a forum for their ESL learners to interact and share ideas with other learners, and at the same time, develop their writing skills.

Furthermore, in making use of media, Sujoko, Safitri, and Anindita (2007:5) discover in their inquiry that there was equilibrium between the left and right hemisphere of the brain due to the use of multimedia in learning process. It is obvious that teachers and lecturers are claimed to implement Student Center Approach (SLA) in this globalization era. It is important that they must be able to motivate learners to think mentally and psychologically. Besides, the learners are supported to solve problems, to interact with each others, and to learn perpetually as well as consistently (also see Mardiwiyoto, 2007:23.)

### **The Importance of Peer Comment in Facebook**

Peers are practically a good source of feedback, the helpfulness of their comments on peer writing can be very limited. In addition, they tend to be inexperienced in writing and generating constructive comments. Therefore, it is critical for the successful use of peer reviewing that students come to generate helpful reviews for their peer writers in the absence of strong expert input. Also, reciprocal peer reviewing of writing is hard for instructor to monitor. As the class size increases, the amount of peer comments increases in an exponential way.

When students peer-review another writer's work, they evaluate it, criticize it, suggest improvements, and then communicate all of that to the writer. As a first-time peer-reviewer, they might be a bit uneasy about criticizing someone else's work. For example, how does a learner tell anybody his essay is boring? When he or she peer-reviewed other friend's writing, he or she should consider all aspects of that writing, not just—in fact, least of all—the grammar, spelling, and punctuation.



Traditionally, it happens in the classroom. Using red pens, learners do collaborative writing by criticizing and commenting on their friends' piece of writing. Therefore, by making use of the sophisticated media, the learners will be more interesting in writing since it is obvious that almost 60% of a day, most learners spend the time in front of the computer.

If it is new for learners to comment on their peers, they may forget to review the writing draft for certain aspects: (1) Make sure that the review is comprehensive. Consider all aspects of the draft the learner is reviewing, not just the grammar, punctuation, and spelling. (2) Read the draft several times, looking for a complete range of potential problem areas: interest level, adaptation to audience, persuasiveness, purpose, content, organization, clarity of discussion, coherence, use transition, title, introduction, and conclusion, sentence style and clarity, and handling of graphics. (3) Be careful about making comments or criticisms that are based on the learners' own personal style. Base the criticisms and suggestions for improvements on generally accepted guidelines, concepts, and rules. If they do comment that is really their own preference, they have to explain it. (4) Explain the problems the learner find fully. Don't just say a paper "seems disorganized." Explain what is disorganized about it. Use specific details from the draft to demonstrate the case. (5) Whenever a peer criticizes something in the writer's draft, try to suggest some way to correct the problem. It's not enough to tell the writer that her paper seems disorganized, for example. Explain how that problem could be solved. (6) Base the comments and criticisms on accepted guidelines, concepts, principles, and rules. It's not enough to tell a writer that two paragraphs ought to be switched, for example. State the reason why: more general, introductory information should come first, for example. (7) Avoid rewriting the draft that is reviewing. In the efforts to suggest improvements and corrections, don't go overboard and rewrite the draft. Doing so steals from the original writer the opportunity to learn and improve as a writer ([http://www.broward.k12fl.us/k12programs/ciss/8\\_step/dwnld/38.pdf](http://www.broward.k12fl.us/k12programs/ciss/8_step/dwnld/38.pdf)).

Those aspects being reviewed are similar to those proposed by Oshima and Hogue (1996:120) that peer editing is nicer than self-editing since it is an interactive process or reading and commenting on peers' writing and the peer comment includes: (1) essay organization which focuses on whether the introductory paragraph (introduction) have both general sentences and a clear thesis statement, whether the method of organization (chronological order, comparison, etc) appropriate for the topic, and if there is a concluding sentence that is either a paraphrase of the thesis or the summary of the main points and if there is a final comment; (2). paragraph organization that covers if each paragraph has a topic sentence or if each topic sentence has a controlling idea, if the supporting sentences flow smoothly, if there are sufficient concrete details to support each point, if transition signals are used effectively both within and between paragraphs, if each paragraph has unity, and if concluding sentences are used; (3) sentence structure that includes any unclear sentences and suggestion a way to improve them; and (4) grammar mechanics covers some errors in grammar and mechanics. This peer comment is used by learners if they review an essay. Oshima and Hogue also provide with a peer editing for single paragraph writing as follows.

1. What does the learner like best about the paragraph?
2. Is the format (title, indenting, double spacing, margin) correct?
3. Is there a clear topic sentence? Does it have controlling idea?
4. Is the main idea clear? Does the writer need to add more details to explain it?
5. Is there a concluding sentence? Does it begin with an appropriate end of paragraph signal?
6. Are there any unclear sentences? Can the learner suggest a way to improve them?
7. Are there any errors in grammar and mechanics (spelling, punctuation, and capitalization)?

By following the guideline, not only do the learners learn their friends' mistakes in writing but they can also improve and develop their writing.

## ICT Implementation in Teaching English Literacy

The use of technology in the classroom importantly increases and will become a part of English Language Teaching (ELT) practice in the coming years although the use of ICT by language teachers is still not widespread yet. Dudeney and Hockly (2007:7) list some argumentative reasons for the fact that ICT is necessitated nowadays:

1. Internet access-either in private homes, or at internet cafes- is becoming increasingly available to learners.
2. Younger learners are growing up with technology, and it is a natural and integrated part of their lives.
3. English, as an international language, is being used in technologically mediated contexts.
4. Technology, especially internet, present us with new opportunities for authentic tasks and material, as well as access to a wealth of ready-made ELT materials.
5. The internet offers excellent opportunities for collaboration and communication between learners who are geographically dispersed.
6. Technology is offered with published materials such as course books and resource books for teachers.
7. Learners increasingly expect language schools to integrate technology into teaching.
8. Technology offers new ways for practicing language and assessing performance.
9. Technology is becoming increasingly mobile.
10. Using a range of ICT tools can give learners exposure to and practice in all of the four language skills –speaking, listening, writing, and reading.

Those argumentations lead the writer to make use of internet in language learning to establish learners' literacy. In 2007, she brought Literary Appreciation course into a web and named it "web-based literature." Besides, she also presented a paper in a seminar concerning with the web-based literature, and Yulianti (2009) applied the term and found that students' appreciation toward English literary works was significantly increased by making use of weblog in internet.

During 2009-2010, the writer brought her lectures in the classroom into internet that is facebook. After lecturing for some meetings in Writing II course, she asked her students to send their works to a group composed by her in her facebook. The groups' names are A\_Layo Writers and Bukit\_Writers. In that groups, the students wrote their paragraphs toward a certain theme and they commented on each other. And it was her finding that most students really learnt how to write a good paragraph by reading and commenting on the peer writing. When a student wrote the following excerpt, R.A. Kartini is a well-known as a heroine. Kartini has two important roles in developed women rights in Indonesia. First of all, her struggles had carried a big changes for women life.... Another important...., other student commented: Your writing is good, but I think you have to make your controlling idea in one sentence ....

Another course was Literary Appreciation course. By following a set of questions established from reader response strategy posed by Beach and Marshall (1990), the fifth semester students responded some literary works and conventionally written in their workbooks. To discuss their appreciation, the

writer asked them to attach their work in the group in her facebook named Literary Appreciation about the Legend of Kemaro Island.

### The Legend of Kemaro Island

Kemaro Island, a small island with a Buddhist temple and the grave of a Palembang princess has the legend about the love story of Siti Fatimah and Chinese young man called Tan Bun Ann. They loved each other and got married but unfortunately, Tan Bun Ann's parents couldn't come to their wedding party and visited them to Palembang. In order to show their appreciation and how they loved Fatimah as their daughter-in-law, they then sent Fatimah and Tan Bun Ann nine big jars. Tan Bun Ann expected that all the jars contained gold and opened them one by one, but the first one only had Pekatsem, kind of Food in China. The second jar also contained Pekatsem. He was so disappointed and he thought that his parents insulted Fatimah's family. He was so angry to his parents. He then broke another six jars that unfortunately all of them contained Pekatsem. He was still curious to know the content of the last jar but he kicked it unconsciously. Tan Bun Ann jumped into the river as his back kicked the last jar and it plunged into the river, then he wanted to get the gold so he jumped into it. When Fatimah saw that happening, she also jumped into the river and drowned. Finally, the new island, Kemaro Island, appeared in the middle of Musi river.

The following is the discussion.

(#1) **Rita Inderawati** Hi all!!!! you have performed a tableau in socio-gram. Let's discuss and appreciate the legend from Palembang that Doddy has tagged for us. What do you think of the main character. Do you like him? Why? (about an hour ago · Like · )

(#2) **Genta Anak Galoenk** actually I don't like the main character of this story, he is just too impatient and also he doesn't appreciate what his parents have given to him on the other hand, I like his wife very much because she is such a faithful woman. I wish I could be like her :) (about an hour ago · Like)

(#3) **Rita Inderawati** I wish.Gen, as if you were Tan Bun Ann, would you do such things? What's the reason? (about an hour ago · Like )

(#4) **Genta Anak Galoenk** if I were tan bun an, I wouldn't do that things, I will check all of the jars one by one and always keep thinking positive about my parents,because however my parents will always try to give the best for me and I believe in them. (about an hour ago · Like)

(#5)**Rita Inderawati** I agree with you since we know that our parents loves us, they will not give something bad. And keep thinking positively to everything. (48 minutes ago · Like )

(#6) **Dody Sugiarto** hi guys..waw a very nice conversation..guys..I just realize that i did make mistake in my summary...mam Rita is right that actually there were nine jars not six. I'm so sorry for that one n I've just revised it...hmm...mam, I also dislike the character of Tan Bun Ann so much because that kind of guy is arrogant I guess..he couldn't respect someone's giving..that's not good at all. friends, btw do you have the similar story with that story in your life???? (35 minutes ago · Like)

(#7) **Beni Wijaya** I have the same idea as Genta. The main character seems in a rush to know what the content of the jars is. If he were more patient to know about that, he would actually get what he desperately expected. From what he does, I don't think that I like it. Besides, it's such a fool that he can't appreciate the things his parents give to him. As we know that giving an expensive or luxurious thing is not the only one way to prove our love to anybody else. (35 minutes ago · Like)

(#8) **Doddy Sugiarto** Ben, it's absolutely right.I do agree with you brotha..btw, do you have the similar story in your life???? (33 minutes ago · Like)

(#9) **Beni Wijaya** I never find it yet so far... How about you? Do you have? (29 minutes ago · Like)

(#10) **Dutax Scottish** Oh ye?? I think that were only 6 jars. How can it change to be 9 jars? Then, what i think about Tan bun an is actualy i dont like his action too but by considering his condition at that time -very shy after knowing there was no gold at all- it forced ... (25 minutes ago via Facebook Mobile · Like)

(#11) **Dutax Scottish** him to do such stupid action (24 minutes ago via Facebook Mobile · Like)

(#12) **Rita Inderawati** Who R you Man? Yeah we have read different versions, I read the version that mention 9 jars. It's Ok (9 minutes ago · Like ·)

(#13) **Bunga Aditya** I do really agree with u all guys. if I were Tam Bun An, I wouldn't do that. I would see the content of the jars first to make sure whether it contained gold or not. (9 minutes ago · Like)

(#14) **Rita Inderawati** Hi Dodd, I think that you've missed some important events of the legend. There were actually 9 not 6 jars. Tan Bun Ann jumped into the river as his back kicked the last jar and it plunged into the river, then he wanted to get the gold so he jumped into it. Will you revise that? Tq (about an hour ago · Like ·)

(#15) **Dody Sugiarto** No mam, based on the story that my friends and I had ever read and the performance that we played, there were only six jars. Five of them contained Pekasem and the rest contained gold. Tan Bun Ann jumped into the river because of feeling disappointed n then Fatimah also jumped into the river to follow her husband. While running from the boat to jump into the river, Fatimah kicked the last jar unconsciously. the last jar indeed contained full of gold.

The writer also made two groups of Literary Appreciation course in her facebook and named them Appreciation to HEAL THE WORLD by MJ and Appreciation to ONE DAY IN YOUR LIFE by MJ. Indeed, the students and lecturer had discussed the songs in the classroom. They argued what the songs were about. Then, they typed and sent their appreciation toward Michael Jackson's songs into the lecturer's facebook.

It seems that those activities (from classroom into facebook) are relevant to what Dudeney and Hockly (2007:7) argued that internet can give opportunities for the students to collaborate and communicate each other and becomes the tool to exposure to and practice in all of the four language skills – speaking, listening, writing, and reading.

## Conclusion

Creativity is inseparable with innovation in terms of language learning. English language teaching nowadays necessitates ICT to establish learners' literacy in order that the learners will keep in touch with language learning. Educators must take into consideration that their learners easily encounter with technology; therefore, they may not close their eyes of such modern need. The learners are acquainted with internet to entertain, to find information, and to get knowledge. Thus, there is a significant correlation between the use of ICT with the development of learners' literacy. Besides, using internet by making use of facebook can be a medium for the learners to present and comment on their opinion toward their peer writing such as appreciation toward songs, short stories, and a piece of writing in terms of single paragraph and essay as a way of making use the social network in cyber. Therefore, teaching English literacy by the implementation of ICT will be more interesting due to their creativity in using sophisticated media and can encourage the learners to develop their ability in listening, speaking, reading, and writing.



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