

THE IMPACT OF ELECTRONIC FEEDBACK ON STUDENTS' WRITING QUALITY

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to investigate the effectiveness of electronic feedback on second year English college students' writing quality. LMS as the educational technologies are growing creates a broad spectrum of ways in which technology can be integrated into classroom instruction. Electronic feedback is defined as feedback in digital (described as information, image, audio, video, and etc) that is recorded or broadcast using computer technology. This study adopted quasi experimental methods to investigate the impact of electronic feedback on students' writing quality. The researcher conducted a experimental design with second years students at one of the private university in Jombang regarding their usage and perceptions of E-Feedback in Schoology. The result of this study indicate that the ineffectiveness of e-learning caused by the differences of students' learning style and the first thing to do before the implementation of e-feedback is to provide good facilities and infrastructure.

Keywords: Electronic Feedback, Schoology, EFL Students, Writing Quality

Introduction

English has become increasingly important to be taught in universities. This is because university graduates need to have certain level of English proficiency. Murray (2011) defined language proficiency to consist of proficiency, academic literacy and professional communication skills. Thus, English is included in university curriculum. The proficiency is 'a general communicative competence in language that enables its users to express and understand meaning accurately, fluently and appropriately according to context, and which comprises a set of generic skills and abilities' (Murray 2011, p. 305). Compared to three other skills in English (i.e. listening, reading, and speaking) writing is considered to be more complex since as Brown () stated it has to be learnt and taught.

Despite, in the fact that writing is very complex due to its process which requires recursiveness and multiple draftings (Amelia, 2016: 1), the previous studies have shown that interest in the area pertaining to writing composition can bring a change in which students become efficient at generating and organizing creative ideas (Nasir, Naqvi & Bhamani, 2013: 27). Furthermore, they explained if the teachers would be aware of the writing process, this would help in applying appropriate strategies in teaching and that would also improve the writing abilities of students in education environment. Subconsequently, learning to write is important for the students as it enables students to express their thoughts, knowledge and feelings efficiently.

Therefore, the present study concerns the following research question: Do students who are given electronic feedback have better writing quality than those who are not given electronic feedback? The assumption in this study is "There is a different impact on writing quality between students given electronic feedback and those who are not given electronic feedback". Then, the provisional answer of the research question in this study, called as research hypothesis is "Students who are given electronic feedback have better writing quality than those who are not given electronic feedback".

Literature Review

E-Feedback: Definition and its' impacts

Feedback is viewed as crucial for both encouraging and consolidating learning and this significance has also been recognised in the area of foreign language writing. Amelia (2016: 3) deemed feedback as a way of responding to the students' writing. Indeed, feedback is a key component of second language writing programs around the world, by employing product, process and genre approaches a central part of their instructional repertoires (Hyland & Hyland, 2006: 15). It makes the students see others' responses to their writing and learn from the responses, then get the messages in order to revise their writing to be better at gaining a high quality writing.

The rapid pace at which educational technologies are growing creates a broad spectrum of ways in which technology can be integrated into classroom instruction . Electronic feedback (e-feedback) has drawn researchers' attention and interest (Prins, Slujismans, Kirschner & Strijbos, 2005; Tuzi, 2004; Chen, 1997; Snyder, 1996) for more than two decades. Electronic feedback is defined as feedback in digital—(described as information, image, audio, video, and etc. that is recorded or broadcast using computer technology)—written

form and transmitted via offline or online—transfers the concepts of oral response into the electronic arena (Tuzi, 2004: 217); automatic computer-generated feedback (Chen (1997) & Snyder (1996), in Allah, 2008: 2) , and electronic assessment of writing (Prins, Slujismans, Kirschner & Strijbos, 2005 in Allah, 2008: 2), the results investigation showed that e-feedback had a greater impact on revision than oral feedback, in other words, e-feedback might be more useful. In addition, it is claimed that e-feedback helps L2 writers focus on larger writing. Thus, the L2 writer may use e-feedback to create macro revisions.. The focus of this study, however, is the way in which electronic feedback can help not only overcome traditional feedback problems but also, more importantly, improve students' writing quality as well, as the ultimate goal of the writing classroom. In addition, it also investigates the different modes of feedback: teacher/peer feedback and electronic feedback. The rationale behind the sequence of explanation is the movement from non-electronic feedback to electronic feedback. Therefore, the present study concerns the following research question: Do students who are given electronic feedback have better writing quality than those who are not given electronic feedback? The following paper begins by explaining the research methodology, and the reports on the result followed by a conclusion of the research.

Research methodology

Research design

In order to answer the research questions mentioned, the present study used a quasi-experimental design, particularly posttest only. This design deals with comparing groups through random selection. The other consideration why this present study used quasi-experimental design is due to the sample selection. The two groups, both experimental and control groups, because it was possible to select the sample randomly (Charles, 1995 in Latief, 2012: 95). Consequently, the researcher selected two groups out of all the existing classes that had equivalent competence, particularly in English writing. One group which utilized electronic feedback (X1), is the experiment group and another group, which utilized written feedback (X2), is the control group (Latief, 2012: 96). The feedback is the independent variable (X), while the EFL Students' writing quality are the dependent variable (Y). Each group will be measured at the same time with equivalent materials during the treatment. Next, the first control group (A) while used teacher written feedback based on the teacher comment on their essays. The experimental group (B) used teacher electronic feedback on the schoology platform based on the teacher comment on their essays. To collect the data, the post-test will be conducted after the treatment to reveal whether the independent variables really have impact on the dependent variable, the students' writing performance. It will be measured by means of the writing test.

The researcher considered taking only the students of the second year of English Department who has passed English writing course 1 and writing course 2. During the implementation of the research, the research subjects were in the middle of finishing writing course 3. The writing course 3 was divided into two classes: Class A with 47 students as the control group and Class B with 34 students as the experimental group, altogether were 81 students second year English majors, all the students' language proficiency ranged from GPA beyond 2,75 based on the end of the third semester and, which means the GPA were obtained, while the students were finishing Writing course 2.

Data Collection

There were two groups of participants for this experimental study. The first group, the control group, was given teacher written feedback on their writing drafts while the second group, the experimental group, was given electronic feedback on their writing drafts. The data collection procedure consisted of two types of writing tasks and each participant was asked to write argumentative essays within approximately one hour. This study used two research instruments namely, writing test (WT) and questionnaire. Writing test is use to analyze the impact of electronic feedback based on students writing score. The writing test must be completed in 90 minutes and the text produced should be approximately 250-300 words in length. The researcher asked for advice to the writing lecture who is experts in writing to validate it used scoring rubric. The scoring rubric consists of fifth components namely: content 30%, organization 20%, vocabulary 20% and language 20%, and mechanics 10%.

Data Analysis

In order to score the students' composition, the analytic scoring rubric was selected, used as the classroom learning evaluation. Moreover, the analytic scoring rubric can provide a higher reliability and more construct validity (Latief, 1991: 102; Weigle, 2002: 121). In other words, the holistic rubric is appropriate for the aspect of L2 writing and can provide detailed diagnostic information. Furthermore, the analytic rubric used the central elements of written argument into: content, organization, vocabulary, language and mechanic (Sulistyo,

2015: 168-172). Based on the goal of writing 3 courses, writing tests were made to measure students' ability in writing argumentative texts. Students were asked to complete the essay in two writing made: using Schoology with electronic feedback response and; using paper with written feedback. The students in this particular course are familiar with having in-class writing assignments of a similar variety so none of them request to write for an hour in class. The essay structures are; introduction paragraph, opinion that consists of reason and examples, then conclusion. The procedure of data analysis of the this study were undertaken the following order: Scoring, Tabulation, Descriptive Statistical Analysis, Fulfillment Statistical Assumptions, Statistical Hypothesis and Its Testing, Criteria of Acceptance, of The Statistical Hypothesis and Procedures of Testing The Hypothesis.

Findings

The present study tried to investigate whether there was a difference impact on writing quality between students given electronic feedback and students given written feedback. It was aimed to answer the research question: “Do students who are given electronic feedback have better writing quality than those who are not given electronic feedback?”. To answer and investigate the different impact on students’ writing quality, the comparison of the mean scores of experimental group and control group and the Independent Sample t-test are presented further below.

All students listed in the attendance list in the experimental (n=32), the control (n=38), groups were involved to join the posttest in this study. The result of scoring all the students’ essay can be seen in Appendix 5b for the control group and Appendix 5c for the experiment group. To give more vivid picture of the result of the post-test, the scores are illustrated in the form of the histogram on Figure 3.1.

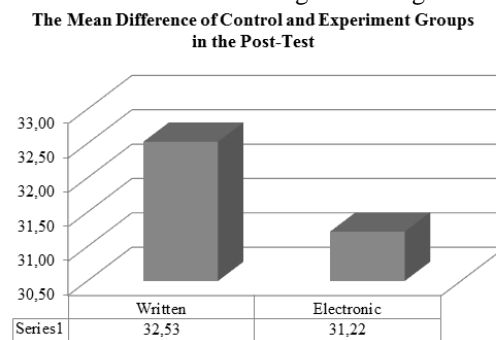


Figure 3.1 The Mean Difference of Control and Experiment Groups in the Post-Test

The descriptive statistical analysis results of both the written feedback group and the electronic feedback group are displayed in this sub-chapter in one section in order to see the different results from both groups. Besides, it is also important to see the results before coming to the hypothesis in this study. Table 3.2 on the next page displays the summary of the posttest results.

Table 3.1 The Descriptive Statistical Analysis of the Posttest in the Control and the Experimental Groups

Descriptive Statistics					
Feedback	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Written	38	29	37	32,53	2,544
Electronic	32	28	37	31,22	2,296
Valid N (listwise)	32				

Table 3.1 shows that the means between written groups and electronic groups are statistically different. The findings show that the mean score for written groups is 32,53, which is higher than, the mean score of electronic group which is only 31,22.

The next step after doing all the test was the hypothesis testing. It was used to verify whether or not the null hypothesis was rejected. Referring to the mean of written feedback and electronic feedback, it could be revealed that the mean of written feedback is higher than that of electronic feedback. Then according to the basis of decision making in the Independent Sample t-test, Ho is rejected. See Table 3.8 to know the summary of the Independent Samples T-Test of the Written Feedback Group and the Electronic Feedback Group.

Table 3.8 Comparison of Writing Quality of the Written Feedback Group and the Electronic Feedback Group

		Independent Samples Test			
		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means	
		F	Sig.	t	df
Nilai	Equal variances assumed	2,690	,106	2,239	68
	Equal variances not assumed			2,259	67,649

		Independent Samples Test		
		t-test for Equality of Means		
		Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference
Nilai	Equal variances assumed	,028	1,308	,584
	Equal variances not assumed	,027	1,308	,579

Based on the output, of the independent sample t-test, the results can be drawn as follows: (1) The probability (the value of Sig. (2-tailed)) that the difference is due to chance is .028 and .027, (2) Since the probability that the difference is due to chance is higher than 0.05, there is no significant difference between written feedback and electronic feedback, (3) The difference between written feedback and electronic feedback is not significant. The result of the analysis of using t-test revealed that the obtained probability was 0.028 and 0.027. It was higher than significance level $p = 0.05$, it meant that statistically there is no significant difference in writing quality of students getting electronic feedback and those getting conventional feedback or teacher written feedback.

Discussion

The focus of this study was investigating the impact of electronic feedback and written feedback on students' writing quality. Therefore, there were two groups involved in this study, they were electronic feedback group which functioned as the experimental group and the written feedback group which functioned as the control group. Chapter III showed the statistical analysis which by using t-test. The results of the statistical analysis, then, become the empirical evidence related to this study.

Referring to the results of multiple comparisons (ANOVA) of writing aspect in both teacher written feedback and electronic feedback in Chapter III, this study revealed that the result was all of the three writing aspect have significant differences, but the dominant writing aspect in influencing the students' score was content aspect. In relation to the content components of the writing, the students' writing ability is scored based on their competency of the topic development. In other words, students need to show their ability to critically provide adequate information for developing the topic of their writing task. Unfortunately, the students could not be able to develop the content of their writing critically. It is advised that students need to work hard to generate ideas from various sources in order to make their writing clear and free of slang. The quality of writing can be defined as the well-organized writing containing well-developed ideas and clear detail (Needels & Knapp, 1994). Writing quality was considered as the main important output of writing and learning (Bangert-Drowns, 1993; Goldberg et al., 2003; Graham, 2006; Graham & Harris, 2003; Hillocks, 1986). In other words, writing quality and the accuracy of the writing content need to be measured as it can be resulted in writing performance

Writing ability needs to be clearly developed by avoiding ambiguous ideas and eliminating unnecessary words in order to make a reader easy to follow. It means that a writer needs to follow the process of writing namely planning, evaluating, and revising. So, the writing develops a good productive draft by considering its unity and coherence. At the last stage, writing product acts as tool for transferring one's own ideas, experience and knowledge (Bereiter, 1980). Having become more advanced writers, students change their writing performance gradually from "knowledge-telling" to "knowledge-transformation" (Bereiter & Scardamalia, 1987, pp. 5-6).

Knowledge telling means the writing ability of the students is still low although they include the content of their writing. In contrast, knowledge transformation means the students are at more advanced level writers whose ability is used to develop more complex ideas, reasoning, knowledge, philosophical awareness and personal ideas. Referring to the results of the statistical analysis, this study revealed that written feedback is more effective than electronic feedback. This results obtained from the mean score of both groups, experimental and control group. The mean score of control group was 32,, which is higher than, the mean score of experimental group which was only 31,. In other words, the theoretical hypothesis is rejected, then, the statistical hypothesis of this study (H0) is rejected. It also signified that the students who were given written feedback had better writing quality than the students who were given electronic feedback.

These results were actually a bit surprising since they were different from the results of the pilot study. However, it is rational since most students who were given electronic feedback did plagiarism by copying other

source in the internet in their writing. It was one of the disadvantages of applying electronic feedback to the finding in this study. In short, the core factor influenced the bad results of students' writing quality was plagiarism. The copy-paste culture seems to be a common secret among students. Through the easy access to information, it is not a difficult thing to get the material or reference to complete academic tasks. If this continues then it will further enhance the culture of plagiarism. In fact, not a few academics are caught in plagiarism cases. This is one of the negative impacts of technological sophistication because it is not used in accordance with the appropriate manners. Sommers and Sattel (2005 as cited by Strom: 2007; in Hartanto, 2012: 5) suggested that cheating occurs because of behavioral erosion, where students are more concerned with helping their friends in the work and exams. It can also make students accustomed to lying because they are more likely to help a friend in the exam.

Seliem & Ahmed (2009) stated that electronic feedback is proved to be essential in the teaching and learning of essay writing, however, it also produces some disadvantages which gives impact to students' writing results. In addition Allah (2008) also explained that the use of computer and internet in writing class produces a problem like students who are not familiar with electronic feedback are more likely to find the practice difficult and time consuming. Those two reasons above may become the core influence on why the students in the experimental group was not better than the control group in this study.

Furthermore, Hyland & Hyland (2006), contended that written feedback from lecturers still plays a central role in most ESL and EFL writing classes. Another issue raised in the written feedback literature is the extent to which students can understand and use written feedback provided by their lecturers. Leki (1992) emphasized that the written feedback is processed by supporting the author through several concepts of proposed revisions during the writing process rather than the final process. This has a significant effect on finding ideas against revision practices from written feedback. Important for this view is the belief that teacher feedback is most effective when delivered at the intermediate stage of the writing process when students have the opportunity to incorporate the idea of written feedback results into their text. Ellis (2009) mentioned that this is a teacher's strategy to improve their students' surface level errors. Some empirical studies of written feedback produce a term called 'optional typology to correct linguistic errors'. This typology is done by the lecturer by providing direct, indirect or metalinguistic corrective feedback. In theory, written feedback involves teachers identifying linguistic errors and giving students the right idea. In other words it only requires an indication that there is a mistake, from the written feedback the focus of student attention can be drawn to the error by finding errors and revising the writing.

Some facts mentioned that many lecturers are not satisfied unless they have written substantial feedback about their students' papers. In addition, the results of a survey conducted by Leki, 1991, Saito, 1994, suggested that feedback written by lecturers is also highly appreciated by students (Hyland, F, 1998) and became popular. In this study, it was found out that written feedback in the form of comments from lecturers is very effective in improving the quality of students' writing. In the findings of this study, it was found out that the lecturers' tendency to use comments are not understood by the students. The ability of lecturers and students' ability in responding to comments in electronic feedback becomes a factor that is very influential in the quality of revision results of students' argumentative writing. Correspondingly, Cohen & Cavalcanti (1990), for example, found out that the nature of comment differs by proficiency. For example, the case of low-level learners who received some comments about vocabulary or content. The lecturer chose instead to concentrate his comments on grammar and mechanics.

Conclusion

Based on the research problems and the results of data analysis, a number of conclusions are drawn. The first conclusion is that there is no significant difference between students given electronic feedback and those who are not given electronic feedback. It meant that the results of the study may be assumed that the students' writing quality was improved when the lecturer provides feedback by using written feedback with a clear comment to improve the quality of the revised draft.

Due to the non-significant difference, some reason are put forward. First, dealing with quality, it concludes that schoology as e-feedback has an average good quality, depending on the infrastructure and the Internet access. Second, dealing with disadvantages, it meant that Schoology as e-feedback is good if the facilities and infrastructure were adequate and always connected to the internet. Third, dealing with students' negative response of the e-feedback implementation, there are some advantages about accessibility and timeliness and disadvantages of facilities and infrastructure. It can be concluded that the most influential factors of e-feedback implementation are due to lack of facilities and infrastructure. Some students argue that the ineffectiveness of e-learning might be caused by the differences of students' learning style and the first thing to do before the implementation of e-feedback is to provide good facilities and infrastructure.

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