

IMPACTS OF PROVIDING ONLINE TEACHER AND PEER FEEDBACK ON STUDENTS' WRITING PERFORMANCE

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ABSTRACT

This study aimed to identify the effectiveness of online teacher with peer feedback provided on students' writing performance. Some experts state that both teacher and students feel that teacher feedback on the students' writing is essential, and it is believed to be the most effective feedback. On the other hand, the practice of peer feedback is supported by the theory of Vigotsky's Zone of Proximal Development which holds that the cognitive development of individuals result from social interaction where individuals can learn from each other. Furthermore, with the development of technology, it is more interesting to integrate information and communication technology ICT in EFL writing classes. Hence, this study investigated the combination of these three aspects - teacher feedback, peer feedback, and Edmodo - and looked at the impact on the students' writing performance. This study was a quasi-experimental, which involved 55 English Department students in a state university in Indonesia. These students were grouped into the experimental group and the control group. The result of this study revealed that the students having the online teacher and peer feedback provided through Edmodo did not perform better in writing than those who experienced teacher feedback in the conventional method

Keywords: Teacher feedback, Peer Feedback, Students' Writing Performance

INTRODUCTION

English in Indonesia is still considered a foreign language; therefore, some students still have difficulties in mastering English. One of the skills in English that is often claimed to be difficult is writing. It has been postulated by Flower and Hayes (1980) that writing is a complex skill that needs to consider, the topic,

the function of the text, and the prospective readers. Besides, as Brown (2004) argued, writing is a skill that needs to be learnt and taught to the students, especially those who learn English as a foreign language. Moreover, writing needs a very long process starting from drafting to publishing. These facts make writing even more difficult, and within Indonesian context, writing is a subject that most students are reluctant to have. Therefore, there should be an innovation, so that the teaching of writing would be more interesting and challenging.

One of the activities that can be done is feedback provision, and this is always considered as something important in teaching writing. It cannot be denied that there are a number of advantages of feedback provision; one of which is it can encourage the development of students' writing performance (Guenette, 2007; Montgomery & Baker, 2007; Lee, 2008; Bitchener & Knoch, 2010). Related to feedback in writing, there are a number of classifications in terms of the way it is given (direct feedback and indirect feedback), the mode (written feedback and oral feedback), and the one who provides the feedback (teacher feedback and peer feedback).

It has been a consensus that teacher feedback is believed to be more powerful compared to peer feedback (Kamberi, 2013). Nonetheless, some previous researchers also provided evidence that peer feedback is also substantial (Hansen & Liu, 2005; Lundstorm & Baker, 2009; Berggren, 2013, 2015). Moreover, in this digitization era, it is considered significant to integrate the ICT in EFL writing classes. As a result, this study investigates the impact of online teacher and peer feedback provided through Edmodo on the students' writing performance.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Teacher Feedback and Peer Feedback

Teacher feedback and peer feedback are kinds of feedback that have been studied by a number of experts for decades. It cannot be denied that these kinds of feedback offer some benefits to the students' writing performance. Ferris and Hedgcock (1998) depict that although approaches to teaching writing have transformed dramatically, there is one element that remains constant; both teacher and students feel that teacher feedback on the students' writing is essential and it is believed to be the most effective feedback. On the other hand, the practice of peer feedback is supported by Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development which holds that the cognitive development of individual results from social interaction where individuals can learn from each other, especially from the more expert ones. The theory of collaborative learning also strengthens that learning - in this case feedback - is a socially constructed activity taking place through communicating with peers which can facilitate their own learning.

It has become a consensus that obtaining feedback from the teacher is more important than that from the peers. Hyland (2003) suggests that many teachers feel that they are unfair in grading the students' writing until they put their fruitful comments on it. Similarly, most students also think that teacher's feedback is crucial to their writing performance. A number of studies on the teacher feedback have been conducted. Ismail et al. (2008), for example, have investigated the impact of teacher feedback on ESL students' writing performance, and the finding revealed that even a minimal feedback given to students was helpful and provided a platform for the students to do self-revision. Another study was conducted by Muncie (2000) who recommended teachers provide substantial comment as it was useful to promote learner autonomy and help improve long-term writing ability. In addition, Ferris (1997) also conducted a study to see the effect of teachers' commentary on the students' revision. She has examined over 1,600 comments written on 110 first drafts of papers by 47 advanced ESL students, focusing on both pragmatic and linguistic features of each comment. Having examined the students' revised drafts, she came into conclusion that teacher's feedback improved the students' papers. Additionally, her study also revealed that longer comments and those which were text specific were associated with major changes compared to those which were shorter, and more general comments.

Teacher-student conferences can also be categorized as teacher feedback. The most obvious advantage of having a conference is that conferencing provides excellent opportunities to ask the students key questions about their writing processes, so that the students will typically receive more focused and usable comments

(O'Malley & Pierce, 1996). The second prospect is that conferencing challenges the students to be active participants by asking questions, clarifying meaning, and discussing their papers so that they are able to identify their strengths and weaknesses (Hyland, 2003; Richard-Amato, 2003).

Similarly, the idea of students obtaining feedback on their writing from their peers has become an important alternative to teacher-based response in the ESL context. Though some still have the belief that it should be the teacher who gives the feedback on the students' writings (Ferris et al., 1997; Hyland, 2003; Rollinson, 2005), there have been a number of studies showing that peer feedback is a worthy tool to improve the students' writing performance. First, Hansen and Liu (2005) suggest that students can provide information for each other in such roles as is normally taken by the teacher making the students can take active roles in their own learning and reconceptualize their ideas in light of peers' reaction. In addition, Ferris and Hedgcock (1998) state that responding to peer's writing can build the critical skills that are needed to analyze and revise one's own writing, so that the students can gain confidence and reduce apprehension by seeing peers' strengths and weaknesses in writing. The important thing from peer feedback is that it can build communication skills as well as reducing the teachers' workload.

There have been a number of studies revealing that peer feedback has been done for years. To begin with, a number of studies on the students' perception on peer feedback illustrated students preferred peer feedback as an alternative to teacher feedback (Jacobs et al., 1998; Miao et al., 2006; Kamberi, 2013). Some other studies focus on how peer feedback should be done. Take for example, Berg (1999) conducted a study on the effects of trained peer response on ESL students' revision types and writing quality, and the result provided evidence that those who were trained positively affected their writing revision types as well as their writing quality. Lundstrom and Baker (2009), for instance, arrived at the conclusion that giving is better than receiving as the students providing feedback performed better and overtook those who only received the feedback. Moreover, some other experts (Hu, 2005; Cho & Cho, 2011; Cho & MacArthur, 2011) have studied the power of peer's comment on the students' writing. They were in agreement that reviewing comments obtained from the peers could assist the students to make a revision on the individual's writing. Berggren (2013, 2015), furthermore, also argued that by acting as peer reviewers, the students' awareness of audience and genre improved.

The results of previous studies indicate that both teacher feedback and peer feedback benefit students in terms of improving their writing performance, regardless of this fact, these two kinds of feedback also offer a number of limitations (Berg, 1999; Hansen & Liu, 2005). Teacher feedback is considered not practical as it might not cover all students within the class period, while peer feedback might not be valid as the peers may not check which one the peer feedback result is correct. Though some may think that teacher feedback still becomes the one that might provide fruitful comments for the students (Jacobs, et al., 1998; Miao, et al., 2006), peer feedback is considered as an important writing activity as the students may learn from their peers' writing (Lundstrom & Baker, 2009; Hu, 2005; Cho & Cho, 2011; Cho & MacArthur, 2011; Berggren, 2012, 2015).

The Integration of Ict in Feedback Provision

The power of technology in the process of teaching writing has been proved to be effective (Dudeney & Hockly, 2007). Today, more and more teachers are aware of the power of technology for the teaching and learning process (Richards, 2015), which is different from the findings a few years ago stating that not all teachers agree that technology is effective to improve the student' learning. ICT can also be employed in writing classes as a media for giving feedback. Take for example, Pariyanto (2012) who discussed the potentials of web-based feedback on EFL students' writing quality. His study revealed that web-based feedback was important to improve the quality of the students' composition since the students could have lots of exposure on how a good composition was.

In addition to the weblog, Edmodo is another platform that is frequently used as the media for giving feedback. Adin (2017) integrated Edmodo in the teaching of writing. He found that by using Edmodo, both teacher and students could have a more effective and sustainable teaching and learning process. Purnawarman et al. (2016), furthermore, conducted a case study concerning the use of Edmodo within a writing class employing the genre-based approach. Their research finding showed that Edmodo did facilitate

students' engagement during the classroom sessions. Hastomo (2016) was also in agreement that the use of Edmodo lead to effective teaching of writing since it allowed students to exchange collective and individual feedback and responses.

To sum up, with the recent rapid development of ICT, it is important for the teacher to integrate it into the teaching and learning activities. Edmodo is one of ICT platforms that have been proven to be effective in fostering the students' performance, to be more specific in writing as stated in previous studies mentioned earlier. The question is generated to see the effect of teacher and peer feedback provided through Edmodo on the students' writing performance. Thus, the research question is stated as follows: Do the students who get teacher and peer feedback provided through Edmodo perform better in writing an argumentative essay than those who get conventional teacher feedback?

METHODOLOGY

This study adopted a quasi-experimental research since the researcher did not choose the sample randomly and it was impossible to reorganize the classes to accommodate the present study (Ary et al., 2006; Creswell, 2008). As the study was experimental in nature, pretest and posttest were administered to see the students' performance before and after the treatment was conducted. This was needed as these were the indicators as to whether there were any differences on the students' writing performance with different types of feedback (Ary et al., 2006; Creswell, 2008). In this case, the types of feedback were considered as the independent variable, while the students' writing performance in an argumentative essay was considered as the dependent variable. Furthermore, homogeneity and normality testings were also needed to administer. This study, therefore, tested the homogeneity of the groups by using Levene test and the normality of the data by using Kolmogorov-Smirnov test. After analyzing the scores by using Levene test and Kolmogorov-Smirnov test, it was known that the groups were homogeneous and the data were normally distributed (p value $>.05$).

Research Instruments

As mentioned previously, this study intends to investigate the effect of teacher and peer feedback provided through Edmodo on the students' writing performance. Thus, deciding the most appropriate research instrument to collect the data is very important (Latief, 2012), and as stated by Djiwandono (2007), the most appropriate instrument to measure the students' writing ability is by asking them to write. Hence, there were three research instruments that were employed in the present study. The first instrument was a writing test to see whether there was any significance difference on the students' writing performance, and the second instrument was the scoring rubric that was used to assess the students' writing. The final instrument was the questionnaire which was intended to know the students' responses towards the implementation of teacher and peer feedback. Table 1. depicts the function of each instrument.

Table 1. Research Instruments and Variables to Measure

No	Instruments	Variables to Measure	Function
1.	Writing test	Students' writing performance after the treatment	As a prompt for the students to write
2.	Scoring rubric	Students' writing performance after the treatment	As a guide for the raters to assess the students' writing
3.	Questionnaire	Students' responses on the treatment	As additional data to know the students' perception on the experiment

Participants

In line with this, the present study was conducted at a state university in Malang, East Java Province, Indonesia. There were 55 English Department students participating as the subjects of the study, and they were divided into two groups: the experimental group (with 28 students) experienced having both teacher and peer feedback provided through Edmodo, while the control group (with 27 students) had teacher

feedback only as the conventional way of delivering feedback (i.e., teacher feedback). These students were the fourth-semester students who took the Argumentative Writing course. These two groups were, then, compared to each other to see whether the treatment given affected the students' writing performance.

Data Collection

This study was conducted in 9 meetings in which there were 2 meetings a week on Tuesdays and Thursdays for approximately 5 weeks. During this period, the students were assigned to write two different argumentative essays and obtained feedback. The students in the experimental group obtained feedback from the teacher and their peers provided through Edmodo; meanwhile, those in the control group obtained feedback from the teacher. In addition, the students were also assigned to compose two other essays as the pretest and posttest. These 9 meetings were divided into a number of sections. The first one was used to obtain the first writing score of the students' argumentative essay. This score, additionally, was considered as the entrance behavior of the students before the treatment was conducted. The following meeting was the introduction to argumentative essay; which was the type of essay the students would learn. The following three meetings were considered as a set where the experiment was implemented consisting of prewriting, drafting, editing, and publishing; in this set of experiment, the students needed to compose a new argumentative essay and have feedback provision activities. This experiment was conducted in two sets as the more the students experienced having feedback, the better it would be since writing itself was a recursive activity. All students in the two classes experienced the same atmosphere, except the way feedback provision was delivered. As the final part, the students were assigned to complete a posttest to see whether the treatment given influenced their writing performance.

Data Analysis

It has been discussed earlier that in addition to two different argumentative essays, the students had to compose two other pieces of writings which were considered as pretest and posttest. Therefore, there were two sets of scores that were compared (110 students' writings in total); one set (55 students' writing) was obtained from the results of pretest done in Meeting 1, while the other 55 was from the results of posttest done in Meeting 9. In order to minimize the subjectivity and to increase the reliability, the students' essays were assessed by two raters who have been trained beforehand; otherwise, the results will be biased (Bachman & Palmer, 1996, Brown, 1996). These two raters have experience teaching writing for about a decade, and they have been familiar with the scoring rubric that was used to assess the students' writing in the present study. In line with this, the students' argumentative essays were assessed by adapting the scoring rubric for IELTS writing task 2 with the weighing considering the proportion as stated in Brown (2004). The scoring rubric covers four aspects, namely: task response (30%), coherence and cohesion (30%), lexical resource (20%), and grammatical range and accuracy (20%).

There are a number of procedures that need to be undertaken in analyzing the data, namely: scoring, descriptive statistics analysis, and statistical hypothesis testing. Once the essays have been rated, the researchers conducted descriptive statistics analysis which was aimed at summarizing a set of score from the result of analyzing data under investigated variables (Carol & Morris, 1987). Then, the steps were followed by statistical hypothesis testing in which, the pretest scores were analyzed by using t-test for independent sample to see whether the difference was significant. If the value was significant, the next analysis would be done by using ANCOVA. Conversely, when the value was not significant, t-test for independent sample was used.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

It has been clearly explicated in the previous chapter that the aim of the present study was to investigate whether the students who got teacher and peer feedback provided through Edmodo performed better than those who got conventional teacher feedback. It has been revealed that those who were in the experimental group did not perform better than those who were in the control group since the significant difference was in favor of the control group which experienced having only conventional feedback, as indicated by

higher mean in the control group. This shows that the use of technology in EFL writing classes does not necessarily increase the students' performances. This finding is, then, in line with Wihastyanang's (2018) study mentioning that the students who got online feedback did not outweigh those who got conventional teacher feedback in writing classroom.

It has been mentioned earlier that the result of statistical analysis depicted that the students in the experimental group did not perform better than those in the control group; nonetheless, the comparison of the scores in writing aspects revealed that the students who got online teacher and peer feedback provided through Edmodo overtook the students' performance in the control group in two different aspects, i.e., lexical resource and grammatical range and accuracy. Table 2. presents the comparison of means of the writing aspects for the experimental and the control groups.

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics Analysis of the Posttest of the Experimental Group and the Control Group

Group	N	Mean	Standard Deviation
Experimental	28	75.82	8.04
Control	27	77.15	10.75

Related to the posttest scores, the result showed that the mean score of the experimental group was 75.82 with the standard deviation 8.04. Meanwhile, the mean score of the control group was 77.15 with the standard deviation 10.75. However, to know whether the improvement is significant or not, t-test was used to analyze the pretest scores. Since the result of statistical analysis on the pretest was significantly different, the posttest scores were compared by using ANCOVA. Similarly, the result indicated that there was significant difference (p value < .05).

Reflecting upon the result of research which showed that there was a significant difference on the posttests scores, the results of questionnaire needed to be analyzed to find out whether the ineffectiveness of teacher and peer feedback provided through Edmodo was due to reasons indicated based on the students' responses to the questionnaire items. In order to investigate the students' perception towards teacher and peer feedback provided through Edmodo, the students were assigned an open-ended questionnaire to allow the students to have various responses on the treatment they have experienced. All in all, the result of questionnaire indicated that most students had positive responses on the teacher and peer feedback provided through Edmodo.

There are a number of studies showing that the integration of technology did not overtook the practice of conventional writing classes. A study conducted by Choi (2014), for instance, arrived at the conclusion that a considerable amount of online feedback was still useless and did not lead to successful revisions in most cases. This is because the investigation results showed that a large amount of online comment was about general evaluations, such as praises, while others were social remarks and irrelevant comments, and this was strongly influenced by the teacher' and the students' competence in feedback provision.

Moreover, Huang (2016) who investigated the use of blogs as the media for feedback provision also stated that blogs may not be the most suitable tool for all types of writing tasks and the most appropriate medium for all components of feedback. The reason was that pointing out language errors on blogs took more time than marking errors on paper. Dippold (2009, as cited in Huang, 2016) also stated that from the viewpoints of both technology and teaching pedagogy, using blogs to highlight the linguistic or structural errors in detail must be reconsidered. This also becomes the limitation of the present study as it was found that the same errors were repeated frequently although the feedback on such errors has been given, and it is true that marking errors on paper is much easier than providing the feedback through Edmodo.

The finding of this study, furthermore, also breaks the assumption that the more feedback the students got at the same time, the better their performance will be. Caulk (1994) has argued that the existence of peer feedback was considered as complimentary to teacher feedback in which it was expected that the students would perform better. However, this quantitative study showed that this assumption is not guaranteed.

In order to reveal the impact of online teacher and peer feedback provided through Edmodo on the students' writing performance, the students' pretests were initially compared by using descriptive statistics analysis.

The result of statistical computation depicted that the mean score of the experimental group was 62.82 with the standard deviation 6.50. Meanwhile, the mean score of the control group was 58.33 with the standard deviation 7.66. The result of t-test for independent samples indicated that there was significant difference (p value $< .05$). In a nutshell, the finding of this study confirms that teacher feedback as the conventional method in feedback provision offers a huge number of benefits for the students in terms of improving their writing performance. It means that even though the students in the experimental group were exposed to more feedback (teacher feedback and peer feedback provided through Edmodo), the result cannot beat the power of conventional teacher feedback. In other words, the use of ICT in the present study did not necessarily lead to the students' better performance in writing. However, as it was only the teacher who gave feedback on the students' essays, sometimes the teacher could not cover the whole members of the class to have personal feedback as the follow up for the written feedback at the same day. This, then, becomes the limitation of the conventional teacher feedback.

There might be some reasons that contribute to the ineffectiveness of the treatment in the experimental group. The following data reveal some factors that might hinder the effectiveness of the treatment in the present study. First, the use of Edmodo as the media for feedback provision requires the students to be patient in getting the feedback. It has been postulated that Edmodo has characteristics that can support the teaching and learning writing. One of the characteristics of Edmodo is it offers a timeless interaction (Adin, 2017) which means that the interaction between the teacher and the students, as well as the students with their peers went on although the class ended. This is a positive thing as the teacher and the students could still give comments without any time borders. However, "being timeless" is sometimes not good to some extent. This is because the students had to wait for her turn to get feedback from both the teachers and the peers. In practice, some students would prefer to have the conventional one in which they could ask feedback directly without waiting for a long time.

Second, some students feel difficulties in looking for the essays that became their responsibility to comment on. While it is true that Edmodo helps the teacher and the students actively participate in the teaching and learning process (Purnawarman, et al. 2016), some students were reluctant to give comments through Edmodo as most students agreed that it was quite tiring activity since they had to find the essays from bulks of essays that have been posted previously in the platform.

Third, the feedback posted in Edmodo is sometimes not clear and simply in the form of compliments. It is admitted and has been proven by Hastomo (2016) that the teacher and the students could exchange collective and individual feedback through Edmodo so that the students could learn from the feedback given to the other students within the same class. Besides, it was not only the teacher, but the peers could also be the source of information for each other (Hansen & Liu, 2005). This is another strength of this platform. Nevertheless, some students did not put adequate comment on their friend's essay. They even simply put the compliment without giving any clues so that their peers could improve their writing such as "Good Job!", "Nice presentation", and "Your essay is great!" Giving compliments is good as it can motivate the students to be better, but the students need more than the compliments. Moreover, some students also claimed that the feedback delivered through Edmodo was sometimes unclear, like when the teacher or the peers only wrote "You need to do minor revision on grammar" or "Check again your sentences"

Next, another limitation of online teacher and peer feedback provided through Edmodo deals with the internet connection. It has been a consensus that ICT needs the internet connection. Unfortunately, the internet connection in our surrounding was not that good, so once the students had the problem with the internet connection, they stopped working with their Edmodo and did something else. This is one thing that needs to be managed as internet connection is considered as one of the main critical success factors in the implementation of e-learning (Khan, 2005).

Finally and the most important reason that make online teacher and peer feedback provided through Edmodo ineffective is the absence of two-way interaction between the teacher and the students, and the students with the other students. In other words, most interaction in Edmodo was one-way interaction; the students simply read the comment given by the teacher and the peers without asking for further clarification. Some students may only simply wrote "Thank you", while some others just leave it blank. As a result, some students preferred to have conventional teacher feedback as it is considered as the central role in most writing

classes (Hyland & Hyland, 2006). This is so logical since in the conventional method of feedback provision, the students could ask for clarification and confirmation about the essays they have written. This is also the one that was missing in Wihastyanang's (2018) study; hence, there was no significant difference on the two groups he investigated.

In short, the use of online teacher and peer feedback provided through Edmodo does not necessarily lead to the betterment of the students' writing performance. It is true that there have been a number of studies supporting the power of ICT – in this case Edmodo – in the teaching and learning process, but the present study revealed that there are a number of downsides that make the online teacher and peer feedback provided through Edmodo not effective.

To summarize, there are two important findings revealed in the present study. First, the students who got teacher and peer feedback provided through Edmodo did not perform better than those who had conventional teacher feedback. Second, there were a number of reasons which may explain the results of the study. The first reason was the students had to wait for their turn to get feedback, and this was quite long. Next, the students sometimes felt difficult in looking for the essays that became their responsibility, and this forced them to scroll up and down frequently. Third, some comments posted in Edmodo were not clear; some of them were even in the form of compliments without any clues on how to improve the writing. Fourth was the problem with the internet connection which was poor. Finally, the absence of two-way interaction could also explain the reason that made the students in the experimental group did not perform better than those of in the control group.

CONCLUSION

In line with the research problem and the result of data analysis, the present study reveals that there was a significant difference on the students' writing performance in the experimental group and in the control group after the treatment. The evidence was the significant value was .029 which was less than .05. This indicated that the experimental group was significantly different from the control group; nonetheless, the significant value was in favor to the control group as the gain was higher than that of the experimental group (=18.82 for the control group and 13 for the experimental group). This confirms that the more feedback the students got as in the experimental group did not necessarily make it more powerful compared to the conventional method of feedback provision. There were five reasons revealed in the present study and these may hinder the effectiveness of this experimental treatment. The reasons were a longer time to get the feedback, difficulties in locating the essay - in the Edmodo platform - that became the students' responsibility, unclear comments, poor internet connection, and the absence of two-way interaction.

Consequently, a number of recommendations are addressed to the teacher and the future researchers. For the teacher, it is recommended for them to overcome the limitations of online teacher and peer feedback provided through Edmodo in the present study. It is also expected that the teacher may vary the strategy in giving feedback. For example, they may use these two strategies one after another; online teacher and peer feedback provided through Edmodo after the conventional method in feedback provision, i.e., teacher feedback. For the future researchers who would like to conduct a study on the same field, it is recommended for them to find out some other variations of feedback provision which can lead to the betterment of the students' writing performance. Besides, it is also recommended that the future researchers can involve students with different characteristics (such as: learning styles and proficiency levels) to see whether this strategy will work best on the students with certain characteristics. This is expected to enrich the body of knowledge, especially in the teaching and learning of writing.

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