

MICROSOFT WORD APP: AS ELECTRONIC FEEDBACK IN IMPROVING STUDENTS' WRITING SKILLS

Amrizal¹⁾, Dwi Rukmini²⁾, Rudi Hartono³⁾, Yan Mujiyanto⁴⁾

Universitas Negeri Semarang

Email : ammrizal@students.unnes.ac.id

Abstract

The importance of writing in the context of scientific development cannot be overstated, and there is a clear need to enhance students' writing abilities. Employing the Microsoft Word app as a tool for electronic feedback has the potential to make a positive impact on students' learning outcomes. This study focuses on enhancing students' English writing skills at Raden Intan Lampung University. The research methodology employed in this study is quasi-experimental and quantitative. The study was conducted during the fifth semester at Universitas Islam Negeri Raden Intan Lampung in the 2022/2023 academic year, involving a cohort of 30 students. Data collection involved a pre-test and post-test. The findings revealed that students' average writing scores did not meet the required standard before using electronic feedback through the Microsoft Word app. However, after being introduced to writing with electronic feedback using the Microsoft Word app, students significantly improved their scores, surpassing the average threshold. This demonstrates that using the Microsoft Word app as electronic feedback significantly benefits students' writing skills.

Keywords: *Microsoft Word App, Students' Writing Skills*

Introduction

The teaching of English in universities has become increasingly crucial due to the growing necessity for university graduates to possess a certain level of English proficiency. This proficiency is essential for global communication, job opportunities, and academic pursuits. According to Murray in Wardani & Adan's study (2018) provided a comprehensive definition of language proficiency, outlining three key components: proficiency, academic literacy, and professional communication skills, all of which are integral parts of the university curriculum. Proficiency, as described by Murray, encompasses a general communicative competence in language, enabling users to accurately, fluently, and contextually appropriately express and comprehend meaning. This proficiency comprises a range of generic skills and abilities, forming the foundation for effective language utilization. When juxtaposed with the three other language

competencies in English, namely listening, reading, and speaking, writing is unequivocally the most intricate. As noted by Brown, it necessitates comprehensive learning and effective teaching methods to acquire proficiency.

Despite the intricate and multifaceted nature of writing, which demands recursive thinking and the creation of multiple drafts (Wardani and Adnan, 2018), it remains a fundamental and valuable skill in various personal, academic, and professional contexts. The recursive aspect of the writing process entails continually revisiting and reworking ideas, allowing for the refinement of thoughts and the enhancement of the overall coherence and effectiveness of the written work.

Furthermore, the necessity for multiple drafts underscores the significance of persistent revision and the iterative nature of crafting polished and impactful written materials. According to Nasir et al (2013), previous studies have

demonstrated that cultivating an interest in writing composition can result in a notable enhancement in students' ability to generate and organize creative ideas. This finding suggests that nurturing students' interest in writing can lead to improved creative thinking and expression. To enhance students' writing skills, it is important to integrate media into the learning process. By integrating a diverse range of multimedia elements, such as instructional videos, engaging podcasts, and interactive online resources, students can enhance their comprehension of writing concepts and techniques. This multifaceted approach provides a rich and immersive learning experience, catering to different learning styles and facilitating a deeper grasp of the subject matter. Media can provide visual and auditory examples, real-world applications, and interactive exercises, making a learning process more engaging and effective. In a research study conducted by Susilawati & Chairunnisa (2019) found that the use of Canva had a positive impact on students' writing skills. Specifically, students in the experimental group exhibited a significantly lower number of writing errors compared to those in the control group. This suggests that Canva effectively contributes to improving student's writing proficiency. In addition to Canva being an essential tool for teaching writing, other media platforms also play a significant role in facilitating learning in writing classes. Microsoft Word, for example, offers a wide range of menus and features that can be effectively utilized for giving constructive feedback in writing classes.

Thus, Wardani and Adnan (2018) express that feedback is an integral part of the learning process as it serves to encourage and reinforce knowledge acquisition. Its importance has been duly acknowledged, particularly in the context of foreign language writing. Amelia in their study also emphasized the significance of feedback in the realm of student writing. She highlighted that

feedback serves as a mechanism for students to receive responses to their written work. Moreover, feedback plays a pivotal role in second language writing programs globally. These programs incorporate product, process, and genre approaches as fundamental elements of their instructional repertoires (Hyland & Hyland, 2006). By integrating these approaches, students are not only able to gain insights into others' reactions to their writing but also to acquire valuable lessons from these responses. This process enables them to effectively revise their writing to enhance its quality and achieve high-quality outcomes.

The ever-expanding landscape of educational technologies presents a multitude of avenues to incorporate technology into classroom teaching. Electronic feedback, commonly referred to as e-feedback, has garnered significant attention from researchers for over two decades. Notable works by Prins et al., (2005), Tuzi, (2004), Snyder (1996) have contributed to the extensive exploration and discussion of e-feedback in educational contexts. In digital communication, electronic feedback encompasses a wide array of content types. This includes text, images, audio, and video, all transmitted through computer technology. These forms of communication can occur both online, such as through email or social media platforms, and offline, such as through digital documents or multimedia presentations. Findings from Tuzi's 2004 study suggest that electronic feedback has a more pronounced impact on the revision process compared to oral feedback, indicating its potential effectiveness. Furthermore, proponents argue that electronic feedback can assist second language (L2) writers in addressing larger aspects of their writing, thereby facilitating substantial revisions at the macro level (Tuzi, 2004).

The primary focus of this research is to explore the effectiveness of using

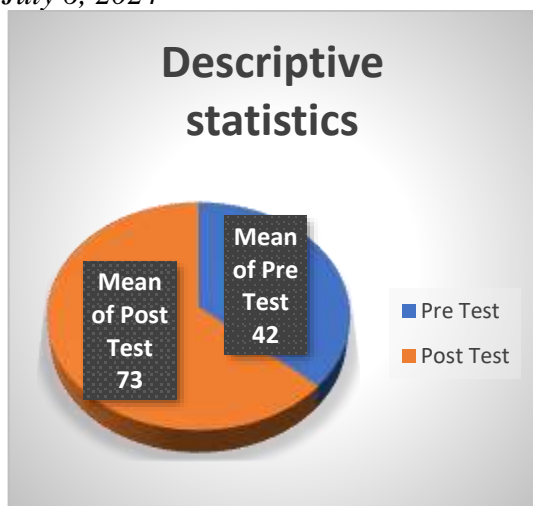
Microsoft Word as a medium for providing electronic feedback to students. The study aims to address the traditional challenges associated with feedback and emphasize the potential of electronic feedback in enhancing students' writing skills. Ultimately, the goal is to improve the overall quality of the writing classroom through the integration of technology and targeted feedback.

Methodology

The study employed a quasi-experimental design, specifically utilizing pretest and posttest only. The decision to opt for this design was influenced by the method used for one class. In this study, Microsoft Word was the independent variable (X), while the writing skills of EFL students served as the dependent variable (Y). The experimental group received teacher electronic feedback on the science platform, which was based on the teacher's comments on their essays. This feedback was intended to assess the impact of electronic feedback on the writing skills of EFL students within a scientific context. After the treatment, a follow-up test will be conducted to gather data and determine the impact of the independent variables on the student's writing performance. Their writing proficiency will be assessed through a comprehensive writing test. The study will focus exclusively on students in the fifth semester of the English Department who have completed the Essay Writing course, with a sample size consisting of 30 students. For the evaluation of students' compositions, the writers used an analytic scoring rubric, which offers higher reliability and construct validity compared to other methods (Latief, 2012). Specifically, for L2 writing, a holistic rubric is suitable and can provide detailed diagnostic information. The analytic rubric assesses the central elements of written argument, including content, organization, vocabulary, language, and mechanics (Sulistyo, 2015).

Finding and discussion

In the odd semester of the 2022 academic year, the English Language Education Program at UIN Raden Intan Lampung has incorporated the use of Microsoft Word to enhance the teaching of academic writing. To assess the students' initial understanding, a pretest comprising 25 multiple-choice questions was administered at the commencement of the course. After the initial assessment, the pretest results will be compared with the posttest scores. The posttest will be conducted after the students have received instructional feedback using Microsoft Word. Throughout the instructional process, students are encouraged to seek clarification and ask questions related to their academic writing using Microsoft Word as a platform for electronic feedback. The instructor will then deliver direct feedback on the student's writing, providing clear explanations for any errors made. The revised work will be returned to the students for further improvements. Towards the end of the lecture session, the instructor will conduct a review of the material by engaging the students with questions related to the lecture content, aiming to evaluate their comprehension. Following this, the students will undergo a post-test containing 25 multiple-choice questions. The pretest and posttest data will then undergo in-depth analysis using both descriptive and inferential statistical methods. Descriptive statistical analysis serves the purpose of summarizing and examining research data to provide a comprehensive understanding of the data. This involves identifying the amount of data available, determining the maximum and minimum values present, and calculating the average value. By doing so, researchers can gain valuable insights into the distribution, central tendency, and variability of the data, which can inform further analytical and decision-making processes.



The provided descriptive statistics in the chart reveal that the pretest results have a calculated average value of 42, indicating the central tendency of the data set. On the other hand, the posttest results display an average value of 73, suggesting a substantial increase in performance. This signifies a significant positive shift between the pretest and posttest results, reflecting potentially impactful changes in the testing periods.

In the study of Ahmed (2009) emphasized the significance of electronic feedback in the context of teaching and learning essay writing. He underscored its potential to enhance the learning process. However, the researchers also noted that electronic feedback presents certain disadvantages that can negatively impact students' writing performance (Soheir Seliem Abdelhamid Ahmed, 2009). Furthermore, another study expounded on the challenges associated with the use of computers and the Internet in writing classes. Allah highlighted that students who lack familiarity with electronic feedback may struggle with the practice, finding it both laborious and time-consuming. It is plausible that these factors may have contributed to the observed lack of improvement in the student's performance in the experimental group as compared to the control group in the study (Lilian, 2008). Thus, K. Hyland & Hyland, (2006) assert that written feedback from instructors continues to

hold a pivotal role in the context of most ESL and EFL writing classes. Leki (1992) emphasized that when it comes to written feedback, providing support to the author involves suggesting revisions throughout the writing process rather than solely at the final stage. This approach has a significant impact on the author's ability to identify and implement ideas for revising their work based on the feedback received. An important aspect of this viewpoint is the understanding that offering constructive feedback to students is most impactful during the intermediate stage of the writing process. This stage offers students the opportunity to assimilate and integrate the feedback received into their written work, leading to more effective revisions and overall improvement in their writing skills.

The process of providing written feedback allows for the identification of errors, which enables the redirection of the student's focus to those specific errors, facilitating the process of finding and revising the writing. Some studies have noted that a significant number of lecturers feel that they haven't fulfilled their responsibilities unless they have thoroughly assessed and provided substantial feedback on their students' papers. Based on the findings of a survey conducted by Wardani and Adnan (2018), it was noted that students highly value feedback that is provided in written form by their lecturers, as indicated by Hyland (1998). This highlights the increasing popularity and importance of written feedback from educators in the academic context. Findings from this study indicated that when lecturers provide written feedback in the form of comments through Microsoft Word, it significantly enhances students' writing skills. The use of this medium was shown to have a strong positive impact on the improvement of student's ability to write effectively.

Conclusion

After analyzing the research findings and engaging in thorough discussion, the writers can confidently conclude that the utilization of the Microsoft Word Application has a noteworthy impact on the academic writing capabilities of students enrolled in the English Education program. This is evidenced by the notably higher average of post-test results compared to the overall average value of the pretest results. The findings strongly suggest that the use of this application positively influences the students' writing skills and performance. In the study conducted at the English Education Study Program at UIN Raden Intan Lampung, the use of the Microsoft Word Application as an electronic feedback tool has proven to be effective for facilitating learning activities. Despite facing challenges such as an unstable network during rainy conditions and instances where students had to leave the application midway due to data quota issues, the overall environment for learning remained relatively conducive. The use of electronic feedback through Microsoft Word has allowed for efficient communication and assessment, albeit with occasional technological hurdles.

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