

Peer Feedback of L2 Writing Class in Blended Learning Context

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Abstract

This paper reports the finding of a study scrutinizing to what extent peer feedback in blended learning context improves students' writing ability as well as how EFL learner perceive an online peer feedback on writing in blended learning context. The study utilized a descriptive qualitative method with instrument of observation, document analysis and questionnaires. The results show that the students writing ability have improved after the students received feedback from peers and incorporated those feedbacks to their final draft. The online peer feedback fostered students' writing skills in terms of mechanic, content, organization and structures. Students' perception of online peer feedback using Edmodo were also positive in terms of usefulness, easiness, and interest. The students also responded that this activity was very timesaving since the blended learning model facilitates the students to maximize the amount of time to engage in the writing process.

Keywords : *peer feedback, blended learning, Edmodo*

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Introduction

Writing process involves several stages, namely planning, drafting, editing and the final version (Harmer, 2007). He further explains that this process is done in recursive way in which the writer can go backwards or go forwards to re-edit or re-drafting in any stages. Thus, to achieve the final version, editing, revising or feedback needs to be conducted in all the process.

In the social approach, feedback considered an important aspect in L2 writing. The previous study related to the use of feedback as a collaborative activity in blended learning showed that feedback was not merely about error correction, it also provided social interaction and community formation in the classroom environment (Yoon, 2011; Yoon & Lee, 2010).

Feedback is "information provided by an agent (e.g., teacher, peer, book, parent, self, experience) regarding aspects of one's performance or understanding" (Hattie & Timperley, 2007, p.81). In writing class, feedback is the crucial aspects of writing assessment since it allows students to find the strength and shortcoming of their writing (Lee, 2020). Feedback is not merely derived from teacher. Students can also play a significant role in giving feedback to their peers or what so called peer feedback. Both first (L1) and second language (L2) writing classrooms, peer feedback is usually conducted. Peer feedback refers to "feedback given by learners to their peers during the process of writing, whereby they read, review and comment on their peers 'writing in oral, written and/or online mode" (Liu & Hansen, 2002).

Peer feedback is considered an important and useful instructional process in writing classes (Saeed, Ghazali, Sahuri & Abdulrab, 2018; Moradi, 2012; Lundstrom & Baker, 2009). It can be used to enhance learners' writing skills and engage students in writing process (Saeed, Ghazali, Sahuri & Abdulrab, 2018; Vadia & Ciptaningrum, 2019). Students can also practice their skills in the development of language and writing ability such as meaningful interaction with peers, a greater exposure to ideas, and new perspectives on the writing process (Hansen & Liu, 2005; Lundstrom & Baker, 2009).

Additionally, according to Lundstrom & Baker (2009), peer feedback is useful because it can helps students to get more feedback of their writing and also give them another important skills such as meaningful interaction with peers, a greater exposure to ideas, and new perspectives on the writing process. Hansen & Liu (2005) also states, "When properly implemented, peer response can generate a rich source of information for content and rhetorical issues, enhance intercultural communication, and give students a sense of group cohesion". Compared with teacher feedback, a meaningful revisions can be gained better in terms of vocabulary, organization and contents (Hedgcock & Lefkowitz 1992; Paulus 1999 as cited in Liu & Hanasen 2005).

Since writing takes several stages, it requires much time. Students needs to think, analyze and reflect on their work (Chuaphalakit, Inpin, & Coffin, 2019). Additionally, teachers are unlikely would have enough time to engage students in the writing process, specifically in revising process (Chuaphalakit, Inpin, & Coffin, 2019, Al-Badwawi, 2011: 168, Wahyudin, 2018). Thus, to compensate this limitation, online peer feedback activities are considered useful to maximize the amount of time for the students to engage in the writing process.

In this current study, specifically, post pandemic of covid-19, blended learning system was carried out at STBA Technocrat. In the blended system, students learn through a face to- face interaction in the classroom and the use of technology media both in class and out-of-class as distance learning (Zainuddin & keumal, 2018). In supporting the teaching and learning process, the use of technology gives a great contribution (Sari, 2019). Additionally, Asfar and Zainuddin (2016) as cited in Zainuddin & Keumala (2018) states that in order to make students learn independently, collaboratively, creatively and critically in solving problems, it is important to utilize the media technology in teaching and learning process.

However, utilizing technology in education also give limitations, for examples, the interaction between students physically and the assessment from the lecturers' toward students' body language (Kanuka & Anderson, 2007). Simultaneously, face to face social interaction among students and between students and lecturers in the classroom is important. Thus, blended learning is considered as an important alternative way since it combines the conventional class-based learning with technology-based learning environments to moderate the limitation and get the benefits from both modes of learning. In this study, the blended learning context is built by getting students learn in the classroom and they also get online peer feedback by using Edmodo as a digital platform.

Several studies on online peer feedback have been conducted (Chuaphalakit, Inpin, & Coffin, 2019; Saeed, Ghazali, Sahuri & Abdulrab, 2018; Vadia & Ciptaningrum, 2019). However, there has been little research on peer feedback in blended learning context especially in EFL context. While the potential development of a blended learning model in Indonesian higher education institutions has been conducted by Zainuddin & keumal (2018). Their study suggest that blended learning is relevant to be implemented in Indonesian higher education to support students to learn independently outside the classroom. This current study tries to fill the gap on conducting peer feedback in blended learning context. Therefore, this study aims to investigate the following questions: 1) To what extent does peer feedback in blended learning context improve students' writing ability? 2) How do the EFL learners perceive online peer feedback on writing using Edmodo?

Method

Ten students of English Literature Department taking the course of 'Composition II' participated as the subjects of this study. They are divided into three groups but only one group was chosen purposively. This group represents low, low intermediate, intermediate levels of proficiency.

Qualitative methods are used in this study to identify the phenomenon being studied (Fraenkel, Wallen & Hyun, 2011) namely to determine the extent to which peer feedback in the context of blended learning can improve students' writing skills. Additionally, the focus of qualitative research is on the perceptions and experiences of participants and takes place in natural settings where participants are directly involved in the research (Fraenkel, et al., 2011; Creswell, 2003). This method is also considered to be able to answer the second research question, namely what is the perception of students on peer feedback in the context of blended learning. This research is also categorized as a case study because this research was conducted to examine a certain educational phenomenon (Fraenkel, et al., 2011; Nunan, 1992), namely the implementation of peer feedback.

The instruments used in this study were observation, document analysis, and questionnaires. First, observation (Creswell, 2003) was used to see how peer feedback was implemented in teaching writing where the researcher acted as teacher-researcher (Stake, 1995). In online sessions, asynchronous mode was used. Edmodo was used as asynchronous mode since the learners can submit and give feedback later or when they have been offline. It is an advantage because the learner will experience less stress of making immediate response. A learner will have enough time to think critically (Hartono, 2014). The feedback was automatically saved on the system. Another rationale for selecting Edmodo is that it facilitates collaboration, communication, sharing of knowledge, homework, and discussion between student and teachers (Siahaan, 2020).

Second, the analysis of documents (Creswell, 2003) taken from student writings were analyzed using the writing rubric of Yoon & Lee (2010). The participants' writing drafts were examined in order to assess the impact of peer feedback in blended learning context on the participants' writing ability. In this study, the participants wrote 2 kinds of essays among others in the syllabus namely chronological/process essays and comparison/contrast essays. In each essay, the participants produced 3 drafts consisted of first draft, peer feedback draft and final draft. Finally, questionnaire (Heigham & Croker, 2009) was used to find out students' opinions about the use of peer feedback in the context of blended learning.

The procedure of peer feedback was carried out in 7 meetings. Each meeting was held two credit hours. The weak blended learning (WBL) system was carried out in which "online and offline elements are used to supplement each other, and the presence or the absence of one element is not essential nor detrimental to the class" (Yoon, 2011). Thus, the seven meetings for offline class were used to explain the peer feedback concept, discuss how to do peer feedback activity, explain kinds of essays and their characteristics. While, the peer feedback activities were carried out asynchronously by using Edmodo, so that students will have plenty of time to write first draft, conduct peer feedback activity, and write the final draft.

The first draft of students produced writings were uploaded on Edmodo in each group. Students had formed groups of three prior to the first meeting of class. Peer feedback took place within their respective groups and teacher decided who will conduct the feedback for each partner. The teacher monitored the peer feedback and gave feedback on errors and mistakes that were not addressed sufficiently in peer feedback. The draft that has been revised by the peer was sent to Edmodo. Then, based on the peer feedback, students made revisions to their first draft and uploaded the final draft on Edmodo.

The data analysis was conducted by adapting Creswell’s theory (2003). It began with organizing and preparing data, followed by reading them to get general senses. The next step was coding data, generating description of the whole data, and representing the description and themes. The last step to do was interpreting data before the data were finally presented. The data gathered were analyzed as follows. The qualitative data from Edmodo including students’ essays from first draft, peer feedback draft and final draft and also data from questionnaires were collected, translated, and presented descriptively. The students’ feedback on each essay were analyzed into four writing components based on the writing rubric from Yoon & Lee (2010) covering mechanics, content, organization, and grammar to see students’ improvement in their writing skills from the first draft until the final draft they have made

Results & Discussion

The improvement of students’ writing ability

The present study aims at finding out to what extent peer feedback in blended learning context improve students’ writing ability. Prior to the first meeting, students were asked to make narrative essay about ‘friendship’ in order to know their prior skills in writing. Based on the pre writing activity, three students (S1, S2 and S3) were selected based on proficiency levels. The subjects were selected to represent low (S2), low intermediate (S3), and intermediate levels (S1).

An example of how the students’ writings improved within weak blended learning (WBL) cycle is provided below, starting with the first draft as included in second draft (peer feedback draft), and final draft. The figures below are the sample of S2’s writing improvement on chronological essays.

Figure 1. Peer Feedback Draft-Chronological/process (S2)

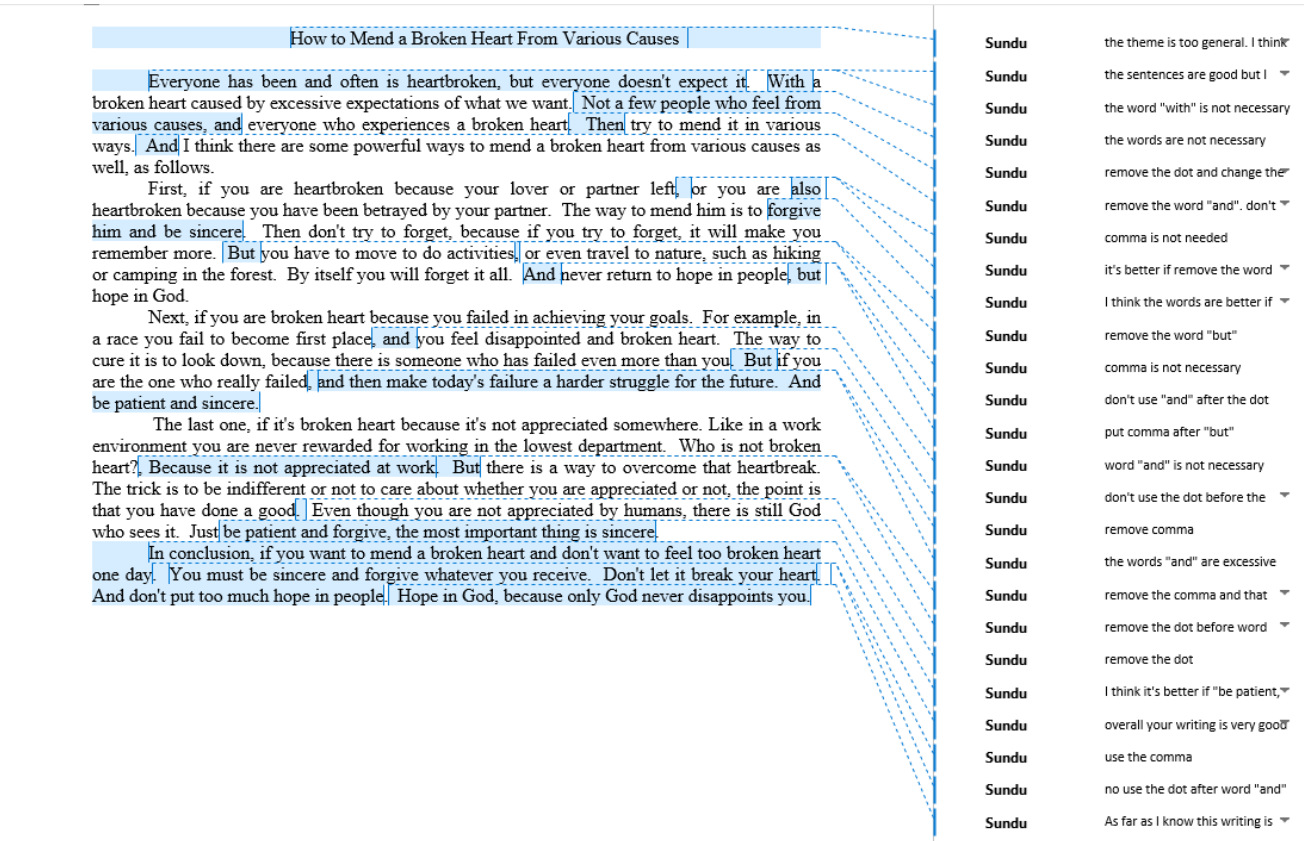


Table 3 above is an example of S2's second draft of chronological/process essays which was submitted in Edmodo. The second draft means that it is the first draft which has been revised or edited by his peer. S1 conducted peer feedback activity to make some improvement of S2' first draft. It can be seen that SU made some comments in terms of four components of writing skills. The excerpts below represent each of those components.

1. Content

Based on Saeed et.al (2018), content refers to any comment focusing on clear expression, sufficiency, or relevance of ideas and supporting details to the theme of the essay. In line with Saeed et. Al, Yoon & Lee (2010, p. 186) mention that the paragraphs categorize as a good content if they fit the assigned topic; they are interesting and easily understandable; the content is carefully thought out and is related to the topic.

Excerpt 1

S2 : How to Mend a Broken Heart From Various Causes
S1 : the theme is too general. I think how to mend a broken heart is enough.

Excerpt 2

S2 : With a broken heart caused by excessive expectations of what we want.
S1 : the word "with" is not necessary

As seen in excerpt 1, S1 considered the title is too general so that she recommended to delete 'from various causes'. Thus, the title may seem interesting and easily understandable. Then, in excerpt 2, S1 suggested the word 'with' is eliminated. It is due to the word 'with' is not relevant to the idea in that sentence

2. Mechanics

Mechanics in an essay get a high score if period, commas, and other punctuations are used correctly; spelling is accurate; title is centered and capital letters are used correctly; the first line is indented and font and size are appropriate (Yoon & Lee, 2010, p. 186)

Excerpt 3

S2 : you have to move to do activities, or even travel to nature, such as hiking or camping in the forest.
S1 : comma is not necessary.

Excerpt 4

S2 : *but hope in God.*
S1 : *put comma after "but"*

Excerpt 5

S2 : *the point is that you have done a good. Even though you are not appreciated by humans*
S1 : *remove the dot*

Excerpts 3-5 showed some examples of mechanics problems that were found by S1 in the essays. Most of the mechanics problems are related to commas and period which are used incorrectly in the paragraphs. Thus, S1 suggested to either delete or add some commas/periods in the paragraphs.

3. Organizations

Organizations in an essay related to parts of paragraphs (topic, supporting, and concluding sentence); unity and coherence of a paragraphs; how the paragraphs organized; and also, the transition words used in the paragraphs (Yoon & Lee, 2010, p. 186)

Excerpt 6

- S2 : Then don't try to forget, because if you try to forget, it will make you remember more. **But** you have to move to do activities, or even travel to nature, such as hiking or camping in the forest.
- S1 : remove the word "but"

Coordinator 'but' is used to add an opposite idea. However, in that paragraph, the coordinator 'but' does not show the opposite idea. Thus, S1 suggested to remove the coordinator 'but'.

4. Structure

Organizations in an essay related to grammar usage, sentence structure, kinds of sentence (simple, compound, complex, and compound-complex), common sentence problems (fragments, run-ons, and comma splices) (Yoon & Lee, 2010, p. 186).

Excerpt 7

- S2 : Everyone has been and often is heartbroken, but everyone doesn't expect it.
- S1 : the sentences are good but I think is better if "everyone has experienced heartbroken even if they didn't expect it.

In that sentence, S1 commented the grammar usage and sentence structure. In the original sentence, S2 used perfect & present tense inappropriately. S1 suggested to repair the grammar usage and sentence structure. Thus, it becomes *"everyone has experienced heartbroken even if they didn't expect it.* The use of coordinator 'but' is also eliminated.

Based on the feedback given as in Table 1, S2 made revisions and his final draft is provided in Figure 2 below. It can be seen that almost all the feedback addressed had been changed. This was due to S2 was sure enough to revise the errors pointed out.

Figure 2. Final Draft-Chronological/process (S2)

How to Mend a Broken Heart

Everyone has experienced broken heart even if they didn't expect it. A broken heart caused by excessive expectations of what we want. Everyone who experiences a broken heart, and try to mend it in various ways. I think there are some powerful ways to mend a broken heart from various causes as well, as follows.

First, if you are broken heart because your lover or partner left or you are broken heart because you have been betrayed by your partner. The way to mend him is to forgive him and be sincerely. Then don't try to forget, because if you try to forget, it will make you remember more. You have to move to do activities or even travel to nature, such as hiking or camping in the forest. By itself you will forget it all. Never return to hope in people but, hope in God.

Next, if you are broken heart because you failed in achieving your goals. For example, in a race you fail to become first place, you feel disappointed and broken heart. The way to cure it is to look down, because there is someone who has failed even more than you. If you are the one who really failed. Then make today's failure a harder struggle for the future. Be patient and sincere.

The last one, if it's broken heart because it's not appreciated somewhere. Like in a work environment you are never rewarded for working in the lowest department. Who is not broken heart? Because it is not appreciated at work, but there is a way to overcome that break heart. The trick is to be indifferent or not to care about whether you are appreciated or not, the point is that you have done a good. Even though you are not appreciated by humans, there is still God who sees it. be patient, forgive and the most important thing is sincere.

In conclusion, if you want to mend a broken heart and don't want to feel too broken heart one day, you must be sincere and forgive whatever you receive. Don't let it break your heart, and don't put too much hope in people. Hope in God, because only God never disappoints you

It can be observed that S2 made substantial changes in his final draft in comparison to the first draft. Among the four components, with the total 25 comments, mechanic is the foremost comment with a total number 10. It may happen due to they were relatively easy to correct. While, 7 comments on organization, 5 comments on content and 3 comments on structure. Structure gets least number of comments probably since those components related with grammar usage, sentence structure, or kinds of sentences which are considered difficult to correct. Thus, after S2 incorporated those feedback from peers, improvement in his writing can be seen in the final draft. Although, some errors still can be found after they submitted the final draft to Edmodo but students' awareness of writing features increase. As the consequence, the writing problems in the four components can be diminished.

How the EFL learners perceive online peer feedback on writing using Edmodo

The questionnaires were given to the students to know their perception toward online peer feedback in L2 writing class. To get this data, six items in terms of usefulness, easiness, interest, motivation, time saving, and improvement were questioned (Table 1). Each item was ranked 1-5 in which 1 indicate highest rank and 5 indicates the lowest rank/score. Students' satisfaction with the components of blended learning are also identified in table 2 to support the data. Their respond can be seen in the following tables.

Table 1. The percentage of Students' Perception of Online Peer Feedback

Item	<i>Very high</i>	<i>Quite high</i>	<i>Moderate</i>	<i>Quite low</i>	<i>low</i>
Usefulness	40	10	30		
Easiness	30	40	30		
Interest	30	50	20		
Motivation	50	30	20		
Timesaving	60	20	20		
Improvement	30	60	10		

Students' perception on online feedback in blended learning in L2 writing classes by using Edmodo were very positive in all items. According to Table 5, 40% of the students found that online peer feedback was very useful, 10 % quite useful and 30% fairly useful. The idea is supported by Lundstrom & Baker (2009) who state that peer feedback is useful because it can help students to get more feedback of their writing. In term of easiness, 30% students felt that peer feedback was very easy, 40% quite easy and 30% fairly easy. It appears that this method is user-friendly and easy to use for L2 students who were enrolled in writing class. Then, 30% of students found that online peer feedback is interesting, 50% quite interesting and 20% is fairly interesting. No one said that this activity is boring since they were actively engaged in the learning. In term of motivation, 50% of students are very motivated to use online peer feedback.

The students also responded that this activity was very timesaving (60%), 20% quite timesaving and 20% fairly timesaving. It is in line with Zainuddin (2017) who states that in the Blended learning model, teachers can have sufficient time to give feedback outside the classroom so that it also facilitates them to give motivation for students as well. Students considered online peer feedback activities are useful to maximize the amount of time to engage in the writing process (Chuaphalakit, Inpin, & Coffin, 2019). Moreover, they think that this activity is very helpful (30%), quite helpful (60%) and fairly helpful for improvement (10%). Peer feedback can give students another important skill such as meaningful interaction with peers, a greater exposure to ideas, and new perspectives on the writing process (Lundstrom & Baker, 2009).

Table 2. The Percentage students' satisfaction

Item	Very satisfied	Fairly satisfied	Not satisfied	Not very satisfied
Blended learning	80	20		
Using Edmodo	40	60		
Peer feedback	40	60		
	50	50		

In order to support the findings related to their perception towards online peer feedback on writing using Edmodo, the students were also required to give their view related to their satisfaction with the components of blended learning, Edmodo and peer feedback both in learning and teaching activity. It can be seen in Table 6, that 80% of students were very satisfied and 20% fairly satisfied to the use blended learning.

Using Edmodo as a learning tool for blended learning also shows high satisfaction (60% very satisfied, 40% and somewhat satisfied). This finding supports the previous study that learning writing with Edmodo was easy and simple as well as it motivated them (Purnawarman, Susilawati, & Sundayana, 2016). While the teaching method by using peer feedback also get high satisfaction (40% very satisfied and 60% fairly satisfied). The results indicate that the students were satisfied to do peer feedback for their L2 writing class as these findings have been also claimed by Parthasarathy (2014), So & Lee (2012), Yoon (2011), Wahyudin (2018).

Conclusion

The findings of this study underlie several conclusions. First, the implementation of peer feedback using Edmodo in blended learning context improve students' writing ability. It fosters students' writing skills in terms of mechanic, content, organization and structures. With reference to the findings, the use of online peer feedback appeared to address those four writing components. The students are able to provide some revisions in their peer's second draft so that the students are more aware of the shortcomings in their writing. Thus, they incorporated those revision into their final draft to improve their writing. Second, by conducting peer feedback activity using Edmodo as online platforms, students have sufficient time to engage in the writing process since the platform facilitate the students to do peer feedback asynchronously which means they have enough time to think critically. Third, students' perspective of online peer feedback using Edmodo were positive in terms of usefulness, easiness, and interest. The students also responded that this activity was very timesaving since the blended learning model facilitates the students to maximize the amount of time to engage in the writing process.

Regarding the findings of the study, a number of considerations are suggested. First, the training of peer feedback method especially using Edmodo as online platforms needs to be carried out prior to the implementation. Students are still not familiar with the blended learning in L2 writing. They need to be introduced to Edmodo or other online platforms constantly. Second, students appeared to have difficulty in comprehending the components of writing such as mechanics, organization, content and structure. Thus, they need sufficient time to incorporate the skills by practicing giving and receiving feedback in order to provide more comprehensive feedback into their peer's writing.

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