

Chapter 3

Giving Feedback Online on EFL/ESL Student Writing Through Talk and Comment: A Review

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ABSTRACT

Teaching writing requires English as a foreign language (EFL)/English as a second language (ESL) students to use their knowledge of English to produce a piece of language through which they can communicate their ideas, feelings, and beliefs. Giving feedback on EFL/ESL students' writing plays a critical role in teaching writing because feedback enables students to see their strengths and weaknesses and improve their writing by working on their weaknesses. Such feedback can be given face-to-face or online. Different programs such as Word and Google Docs can be used in giving online feedback. One of these methods is Talk and Comment. This study aimed to review this technology and indicate how it can be used to provide feedback on EFL/ESL students' writing. Therefore, this technology was reviewed in two stages: First, its features were described. Second, it was evaluated critically. Thus, its use to give feedback on EFL/ESL students' writing was explained step by step in this study.

INTRODUCTION

Writing is one of the productive skills which require English as a foreign language (EFL)/English as a second language (ESL) students to use their knowledge of English, including grammar, vocabulary, spelling, and pronunciation to produce a piece of language through which they can express themselves, communicate their feelings, ideas, and beliefs, and convey their messages. As a result, teaching writing plays an essential role in English language teaching.

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Considering its significance in English language teaching, teaching writing successfully necessitates careful planning in which writing is presented to EFL/ESL students in different stages, including brainstorming, outlining, first draft, proofreading, editing, final draft, and publication. In each stage, EFL students are supposed to do several interrelated writing activities to produce a piece of writing. For example, after writing their first draft, they try to improve their writing in the proofreading and editing stages by concentrating on different aspects of writing, including their use of language (e.g., grammar, spelling, punctuation), their choice of vocabulary, and the organisation of their ideas. In the proofreading and editing stages, they may not be proficient enough to find out their strengths and weaknesses, so they may not be able to enhance their writing by working on their weaknesses. Therefore, they need other people who are more proficient such as teachers and peers, to give them feedback on their writing, which makes feedback significant to know.

Feedback

Feedback can affect what students learn and achieve academically due to the information that focuses on students' performance and understanding (Hattie & Timperley, 2007). The effectiveness of feedback depends on how well it is done (Brookhart, 2017). If it shows students their current level of learning, what they should do to improve their learning, and why they should do so, and if it is understandable for them, it can be considered good feedback (Brookhart, 2017), which makes it effective in students' learning. Depending on this information, it can be defined as the information given to students about their academic work, shows their strengths and weaknesses, enables them to work on their weaknesses, and helps them enhance their learning.

The general information about feedback above is also valid for the feedback given on EFL/ESL students' writing because if it shows EFL/ESL students their strengths and weaknesses in their writing and provides them with the information necessary to work on and overcome their weaknesses, and if EFL/ESL students can comprehend it, it can enhance their writing. Such feedback can be given face-to-face or online.

Giving Online Feedback on EFL/ESL Students' Writing

Online feedback is a type of feedback students receive on their academic work through different technologies such as email and Moodle. It can be given on EFL/ESL students' writing, and this (i.e., online feedback on EFL/ESL students' writing) has been researched in the literature in terms of three aspects separately or together: online teacher feedback (Saiful, Sulisty, Mukminatien, 2019; Vadia & Ciptaningrum, 2020; Widyaningsih, 2018; Wihastyanang, Kusumaningrum, Latief, & Cahyono, 2020), online peer feedback (Abri, 2021; Chuaphalakit, Inpin, & Coffin, 2019; Ebadi & Alizadeh, 2021; Daweli, 2018; Gao, Samuel, & Asmawi, 2016; Ma, 2019; Saiful et al., 2019; Shang, 2017, 2019; Vadia & Ciptaningrum, 2020; Wihastyanang et al., 2020; Yang & Meng, 2013; Yuk, 2021), and automated corrective feedback (Shang, 2017, 2019).

Although two of these studies (Saiful et al., 2019; Wihastyanang et al., 2020) found out that online teacher and peer feedback did not increase students' academic performance in writing, the other studies indicate that online feedback can contribute to students' writing positively (Lv, Ren, & Xie, 2021; Vadia & Ciptaningrum, 2020; Yang & Meng, 2013; Yoke et al., 2013). Online peer feedback can improve students' writing (Chuaphalakit et al., 2019; Daweli, 2018; Ma, 2019; Yang & Meng, 2013) and writing

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