Google classroom : An online platform for teaching English

Tommy Hastomo[1], Febriyantina Istiara[2], and Eva Nurchurifiani[3]

STKIP PGRI Bandar Lampung

Correpondence: tommy.hastomo@stkippgribl.ac.id

Abstract

In the development of the internet era, classroom learning changes from traditional teaching to online learning. The purpose of this research is to report action research that was carried out to investigate the effectiveness of google classroom on students' learning performance in STKIP PGRI Bandar Lampung. The participants were 25 students studying English. The researchers conducted some exercises, discussions, quizzes, and activities on Google Classroom based on three lesson plans that were applied to teach the students in the writing course. Analysis of students' second writing shows a significant improvement in students' writing. The students have positive perceptions towards using Google Classroom in language learning based on a post-treatment questionnaire result.

Keywords: Google classroom, Writing, Action research

Introduction

With the development of web technology and having an essential role in the world of education, many teachers are trying to use this technology in the process of improving their students' English skills. The teachers use social networking sites as one of the expected learning media used in teaching English. The teachers use web tools in teaching English to develop students' writing skills, such as Google Classroom, Edmodo, Moodle, Wiki, Schoology, and others. Google Classroom is one of the online tools available, and it will be explored in this study. Google Classroom is an educational platform that aims to facilitate simplify teaching, discussion, and assessment of assignments. It allows the teacher to teach students, share material, have discussions, and provide feedback. It is different from other Educational Platforms because it integrates with other Google services such as Google Docs, Google Meet, YouTube, Google Forms, Gmail, and others.

The goal of this research is to verify whether the use of Google Classroom can influence students' writing skills. Another purpose is to find out the students' views of using Google Classroom and what barriers and obstacles in the teaching-learning process. Google Classes was launched in 2014, but there are still very few

studies on teaching English. Shaharanee, Jamil, & Rodzi (2016) explore the active learning activities of Google classrooms.

They apply the Technology Acceptance Model to find out the efficiency of discussions published on google classroom. The results of this paper indicate Google Classroom performs significantly improved practicability, collaboration, communication, perceived usefulness, and students' contentment. Therefore, Espinosa, Estira, & Ventayen (2017) researched to determine the effectiveness of Google classrooms as an online learning medium. This report shows that low expense is the primary motive for using this tool. This tool is seen to increase student participation as collaborative learning.

Liu & Chuang (2016) researched the use of Google Classroom for teaching and learning activities by integrating peer tutors for the students. This tool generates positive perceptions of students. This study achieved the learning objectives. Martínez-Monés et al. (2017) signalled against integrating learning analytics with Google Classroom because they believe that this is the main limitation of the emerging tools.

The use of google classroom in teaching process writing

The process of writing is differentiated from the results, which explain that the teachers guide students to pursue particular procedures, that help improve their writing products. Consequently, Seow (2002) states student focus can be directed to increase awareness about the recursive written process steps. White and Arndt (1991) propose a model that has various interrelated stages and includes composing, structuring, reviewing, focusing, and generating ideas and evaluating (as cited in Harmer, 2007: 258).

Hedge (2003) describes two critical problems faced by teachers when teaching writing, namely limited time and real participants for students' writing. The teachers complain about the time, which is restricted for teaching students through all stages of the writing process. Employing an educational platform like Google Classroom accelerates communication between teachers and students, which can facilitate teachers to describe the lesson online and able to offer a real-world audience to their students with extra time.

The pre-writing process consists of planning and organizing ideas. Seow (2002) states planning can be started by motivating for students to exchange concepts, to group applicable words to writing topics, and other strategies. Utilizing Google Classroom offers many options to facilitate students to start their work at this stage.

The teachers can ask brainstorming questions to think about or post a video writing topic for students in Google Classroom. It can be used as a useful tool for interaction, comprehensive features, and a platform for the target

language among learners (Azhar & Nayab, 2018). The teacher can guide the students by posting the links about model writings for organizing the idea. The students can find some examples and collect their concepts based on the instructions given.

In the second stage, students compose and revise their assignments utilizing the previous vocabulary and writing structure. The students have difficulty arranging the ideas they produce with their limited knowledge of the language. The use of technology affects students' writing quality by supporting students through mechanisms that allocate them to progress from focusing on the sentence level to focus on the paragraph or essay level (Hedge, 2003). The cut, paste, and auto-correct features can support students concentrate on significant writing difficulties rather than minor mistakes. Kongchan (2015) explains students can write and edit their writings using Google Docs in Google Classroom. Besides, teachers can ask them to write words and utilize punctuation correctly in the discussion. Thus, they have a habit of spelling out whole words like formal writing. Moreover, students can accelerate their progress in writing accurate structures through Google Classroom.

The traditional way collects students' writing, checks each assignment, and writes feedbacks too long, so the students forget their lessons. Instant online feedback via Google Classroom allows students to edit drafts as soon as possible (Liu & Chuang, 2016). Also, teachers can save time by providing feedback for each student's draft. Therefore, Google Classroom accelerates interaction among students and teachers, facilitate peer feedback features, and includes teacher response at the same time.

Moreover, students can rearrange their writing using Google Classroom that students can compose one or two drafts at the maximum before submitting their final draft for each post. Additionally, teachers can use certain features for providing feedback to students, such as using different colors in mentioning and underlining text. Azhar & Iqbal (2018) define the students who obtained response through Google Classroom developed more responsible for their writing mistakes and improved their writing ability.

Therefore, Google Classroom is an active platform where teachers can improve students' written skills in utilizing technology. On the other hand, students have many options to manage them through all the writing stages process. During the process of writing, the students get different types of feedback, which are anticipated to improve their writing skills.

Students' perceptions of using Google Classroom

The students who use technology as a beneficial instrument get more than they do not use it. Students' perceptions can be influenced by several variables, such as the integration of web-based tools in EFL classrooms. The most useful

variables for using Google Classroom are its practicality and simplicity (MacArthur, 2009). Another study explains students' perceptions of Google Classroom as a learning tool with their competence in using technology. For example, Machado & Chung (2015) discovered that students who were engaged in their study shared the same preference for web-based learning, and they assumed it stems from their competence in using smartphones. Espinosa, Estira, & Ventayen (2017) revealed that participants showed positive and negative attitudes when they use Google Classroom. The researchers explained the differences in students' attitudes because they had different proficiency in operating Google Classroom.

Barriers to using Google Classroom as a learning platform

Since the use of Google Classroom as a free web service for educators and students has different steps, several studies examine the challenges. Although the implementation of Google Classroom offers many essential features for teachers and students, it presents some potential challenges that hamper the teaching and learning process. If students do not have internet access on their smartphones or computers, Google Classroom is not a suitable platform for active learning. Another obstacle is Google Classroom has not integrated with Google Calendar, so it does not organize assignments effectively. According to Azhar & Iqbal (2018), the findings of their study revealed that students often divert from analyses if they utilize smartphones in the classroom. As a result, teachers must certify the internet accessibility, smartphones, or notebooks to guarantee the success of Google Classroom for the learning process.

Methods

This research consists of 25 students at STKIP PGRI Bandar Lampung. This research is action research that combines two different activities, which are action and research. Wang (2016) states the action is involved in the process of utilizing step by establishing treatment and interventions into the social perspective, and the latter involves methodical observation as well as data collection and analysis. Milles (2011) describes the action research stages provide for identifying focus areas, collecting data, compiling action plans, and analyzing and interpreting data. He stated that these steps are influential in starting the process of gathering data that help to identify problems (as cited in Creswell, 2016). This paper utilizes action research because the teacher identified issues, action plans were designed, data was collected from the class, and finally, the teacher reflected on the whole process after data analysis in the classroom.

Action play

Students downloaded Google Classroom on their gadgets, and the lecture created a class in Google Classroom to join the class. The lecture introduced the features of Google Classroom and how to use them, such as explaining how to submit an assignment, discuss on stream, access the grades, and upload a file. First, the lecture asked the students to write a short paragraph about their classroom on Google Classroom. The writing activity was conducted in the class, with the guidance of the lecture. Students' work was graded by the lecture based on the scoring rubric provided. The students did not understand the writing process in doing the assignment from the first task. Students did not have an outline for their work, and they did not edit before submitting the project. It makes them poorly written assignments. After identifying the problems, the teacher designed three lesson plans and taught the students using Google Classroom. Students composed the writing paragraph based on the writing process explained in the classroom. This activity was conducted in the class with the presence of the teacher. For 45 minutes, students planned, wrote, edited, and submitted their work. The lecture marked the students' writing and analyzed them using SPSS. The researcher employed a paired sampled t-test to compare the means of both papers.

Lesson plan

The lecture developed three lesson plans for helping the students comprehend the process of writing and compose paragraphs well. Each lesson included a blend of activities, and it was serializing following the procedures of the process of writing. The activities were marked to match students' degree of proficiency. The first lesson plan enabled students to classify the paragraph structure and expose them by stressing topic sentences and supporting details, picking out a topic sentence for the paragraph, developing topic sentences into sections. The use of Google Classroom consists of a follow-up activity where the students attempted to a quiz on Google Classroom. For example, the students must find a topic sentence based on the paragraph given. After that, they must match the topic sentence into supporting sentences.

The second lesson plan aimed to introduce the students about the process of writing, in general, using the features of Google Slide describing the process of writing. They were intended to familiarize the process of writing, the significance of the pre-writing step, and preparation of planning and brainstorming. This goal aimed to come up with ideas for topics for students. The students brainstormed ideas using Google Classroom. They came up with ideas for a given topic, downloaded pictures related to the issue, and uploaded them to Google Classroom in which they could get feedback from their friends and teacher.

The third lesson plan intended to make students practice writing a short paragraph based on previous brainstorming activity, revise their work using feedback and make a final draft of their work. Based on the scoring rubric, the mistakes that the students made consists of grammar, punctuation, spelling, and organization. The students' understanding of elements that promote the right product of writing was gained. The "Description of Classroom" was the topic of writing activity based on group activity and edited them before final submissions. The last Google Classroom assignment was about a short paragraph whose issue is "My Campus" where the students brainstormed ideas based on a previous study.

Data collection tools

The researcher employed two tools to gather the data and utilized two writing assignments in this paper. The researcher conducted the writing assignments. The classroom teacher collaborates to validate the writing work. The first task was writing a short paragraph whose topic is "My Classroom" describing the classroom used at the first step of this study, that researcher identified the research problem. The second writing assignment, whose topic is "My Campus" was writing about their school environment. Both of them were written in Google Classroom.

The students answered the questionnaire to collect the data about students' perceptions and challenges on Google Classroom. The researcher distributed the questionnaire, which was modified from Al-Kathiri (2015). There are two parts in the questionnaire, which are students' perceptions and challenges to using Google Classroom. A lecture at STKIP PGRI Bandar Lampung validated this instrument. Before distributing the questionnaire, the researcher already conducted the reliability test.

Results and Discussion

A paired-samples t-test was conducted in response to the first question of this study to examine the influence of using Google Classroom on students' writing ability. Table 1 shows the means and standard deviations of the students' writing ability before and after the treatment. Results present that there was a significant improvement in students' writing ability after the treatment. Students faced fewer problems with paragraph structure in the second writing. It means that they could make an outline well, and their paragraph structure was constructed well for supporting details. The design of the sentence was better in the second assignment than the first assignment.

Table 1: Means and Standard Deviations of the Scores on the Writing Assignment before and after the Intervention

Time	n	M	SD
Before an intervention	25	68.60	5.92
After an intervention	25	85.76	3.63

Similar findings were found in some studies about the use of Google Classroom for improving writing ability (Azhar & Iqbal, 2018; Shaharanee, Jamil, & Rodzi, 2016; Liu & Chuang, 2016). The finding of this research is similar to the discovery of Shaharanee et al. because Google Classroom had a positive impact on students' writing ability. Students expressed positive perceptions towards using Google Classroom regarding students' perceptions. Table 2 defines the students' perception. The finding displays 84 % of students showed a positive attitude on Google Classroom, while 16% of students showed a moderate type of perception.

Table 2: Frequencies for Participants' Levels of Perception (N = 25)

Scale value		N	%
1.00 – 1.80	Very negative	0	0
1.81 – 2.61	Negative	0	0
2.62 – 3.40	Moderate	4	16
3.41– 4.21	Positive	6	24
4.22 – 5.02	Very positive	15	60

Reflection

The findings show that Google Classroom influences students' writing ability significantly. Students explored the process of writing well. The students did not brainstorm ideas for their work when they employed the first task. They did not intend to edit their short writing paragraph, and topic sentences were not mentioned clearly. As a result, their early work was shoddy than the second work. The students can improve their writing performance after they got the treatment. They had a good plan before making a short paragraph. They started to realize the importance of peer feedback for editing the section. Similarly, the quiz assignment in Google Classroom enabled the students to identify and locate the topic sentence in the paragraph. Students could recognize the mistakes, and they could resolve the issues using peer feedback that supported collaborative learning.

Google Classroom offered the students a safe and responsive learning platform in which they could interact with their friends, brainstorm ideas, comment on many posts. Google Classroom provided the students extra time to discuss and practice writing outside the class because they were running out of time. They also thought that Google Classroom was very helpful because the features are efficient and applicable interface.

Google Classroom provided the students with flexible access to the material, and it impacted positive students' perception. They could access the material without attending the face to face interaction. The students had a favorable opinion about doing the quiz and assignment because they got the feedback, and the teacher graded their writing work immediately. Students also could edit their tasks frequently before submitting their work on Google Classroom.

Conclusion

Based on the explanation above, Google Classroom played a significant role in improving students' writing ability. Google Classroom became a strong foundation for students to explore their writing ability and compose a well-structured sentence. The evaluation of the second task showed that students employed the importance of the writing sentence structure and paragraph organization .

There are several things to consider the limitations of this study. First, students were asked to employ quizzes and assignments as a part of their writing process, but they were not serious about taking the two writing tasks. The results showed that the feature auto-correction of spelling and capitalization on Google Classroom make their writing was better than expected.

There are some recommendations for further research. The next researcher can focus on the gender difference in using Google Classroom. This research is action research conducted with one group and a short period. Experimental design can be achieved, which employed two groups using Google Classroom and conventional teaching media for a similar study. Next, another further research perception can be conducted, such as the comparison of students' feedback and teachers' feedback using Google Classroom.

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