

The use of google classroom in teaching writing skills

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Abstract - Writing is one of the skills that English learners must master. However, in Indonesia, where English is taught as a foreign language (EFL), it has become the most challenging skill to learn. One of the factors is the difference in the usage of subject and verb in the sentence. This paper aims to see the impact of Google Classroom usage on the learning process of writing simple sentences, specifically the accuracy of writing the Subject Verb (S-V) agreement and students' perception of using this online tool in writing activities. A mixed-method approach is used in this study where one group pre-test-post-test of writing accuracy is done for 77 Electrical Engineering students at Jakarta State Polytechnic. For qualitative data analysis, focus group discussions (FGDs) are conducted. The result shows an increase in the accuracy of students' writing, specifically in the writing of S-V agreements. Furthermore, students believe that Google Classroom in the writing class is beneficial due to its lesson hand-out distribution and assignment submission efficiency.

Keywords: google classroom, S-V agreement, writing skills

1. Introduction

Writing skills are one of the skills that must be taught in foreign language learning. Teaching writing skills is done to provide opportunities for students to practice vocabulary skills and target language structure with accuracy in second language use. It is needed in the world of work, as well as the need to face language exams that include four skills, namely: reading, listening, speaking, and writing. Furthermore, language teachers can also clearly see the development and accuracy of language use in students through writing activities.

Writing in English is considered to be the most difficult skill to master. This is one of the four skills in communication that are taught as EFL (English as a Foreign Language) writing. Iman (2020) finds out Indonesian grammar affects learners' English writing accuracy in noun phrase constituents, number marking, and verb tenses. Similarly, syntax inaccuracies are also found in Indonesian university students' writing (Napitulu, 2017). This issue is also experienced in non-English-speaking countries such as Iran, where English is used as a foreign language (Janfeshan, 2018). This is because the creative process of writing is not only limited to conveying ideas but also understanding and applying grammar and spelling skills in writing that is different from the learners' first language. Writing must also follow the rules of grammar or grammar based on the rules of certain tenses.

One of the components that must be learned in order to correctly compose English sentences is the form of the subject and the verb in the sentence. Both the subject and its verb must be in the singular or plural form. This means a singular subject takes a singular verb, and a plural subject must be paired with a plural verb. They are commonly called subject-verb agreements (S-V agreements). This pattern is one of the criteria for basic writing skills. Nevertheless, this pattern does not exist in the structure of the Indonesian language. Many studies have found that S-V agreement errors are often found in the English writing of Indonesian learners, both at lower and higher education levels. Kurniawan and Seprizanna (2016) identify Indonesian junior high school students' inability to write a subject and verb correctly in their English sentences. Likewise, Napitulu (2017) demonstrates that S-V agreement becomes the second dominant problem found in the writing of undergraduate students at the department of English literature at Methodist University. S-V agreement errors are also found in the writing of English paragraphs by Indonesian students (Mbau et al., 2014). Nurjanah (2017) argues that the errors of English learners as EFL in writing S-V agreement sentences are also caused by a lack of understanding and awareness of the adjustment between subjects and verbs in English sentences. Moreover, many studies have shown that these writing obstacles are faced by English learners in EFL contexts such as Jordanian, Malaysian, Saudi Arabian, Filipino, Swedish, Spanish, and Chinese (Al-Dubib, 2013). Therefore, appropriate teaching techniques and tools are needed to overcome this.

There are studies on the use of digital classroom instruments in facilitating the language learning process. Janfeshan (2018) argues that due to the popularity of through social networking sites among learners, teachers will be able to develop learners' learning autonomy, attitude, and motivation. This platform can improve learners' performance and strengthen their motivation for learning. It is also an easy way to interact with other people, share thoughts and ideas, and collect feedback. Google Classroom is one of the online applications that are freely available for teachers and students (both in schools and colleges) to interact in the virtual world. Google Classroom is designed to help teachers and students communicate and collaborate. Students can do assignments with less paper usage, and teaching and learning activities can be managed in a more structured manner by Bell (2015). Additionally, Sholah (2020) states that learning English within Google Classroom can be delivered efficiently in the pedagogical process and stimulate language learners. Google Classroom has This study examines the impact of using Google Classroom in teaching writing, focusing on writing the S-V Agreement.

This application also facilitates interaction between the two outside the classroom, such as students can submit assignments without having to meet face-to-face with teachers, teachers can provide additional teaching materials or independent assignments, and check-in person without having to meet directly with students. Discussion activities can also be carried out directly between teachers and students as well as with fellow students without being tied to limited class time. Kumar et al. (2020) describe how Google Classroom can assign tasks, offer

various testing, and evaluate accumulated assignments. Prasetya (2021) affirms that this online tool helps learners get up-to-date topics learned, understand the subjects better, and have immediate access to both audio-visual materials to improve their e-Learning experience in the language.

Below are some features found in Google Classroom as a web-based learning tool.

- Class stream

This feature is designed to facilitate students' discussions based on topics given by the teacher. Q&A (Question and Ask) - where students can ask and answer questions about topics that have been given in class.

- Classwork

This feature is designed to facilitate teachers in providing teaching materials and assignments both in groups and individually. There are five menus in this section where the teacher can give assignments, quizzes, and questions (1. Assignment, 2. Quiz Assignment, 3. Questions), provide teaching materials (4. Materials) so that students can still know the subject even though they are not present in class, and (5. Reuse Post), where the teacher can reuse the same exercises or teaching materials in different classes.

- Integration with Google Docs, Google Slides, and Google Forms

Google Doc and Google Slides are Google features that are carried out online and their use is similar to that of Microsoft Word and Microsoft PowerPoint, while Google Form is a medium to provide exercises in the form of quizzes or questionnaires to test students' understanding of certain topics.

- Integration with Google Calendar

Teachers can assign assignments at specific times and add the schedule to students' Google Calendars so they can know when they need to be completed.

However, good internet access is required to carry out these activities. Teaching and learning activities can be more efficient if teachers can distribute assignments and teaching materials and students can work on and collect them without being bound by space and time constraints (Rozak & Albatani, 2018). Atmojo and Nugroho (2020) describe how vast geographical areas in Indonesia can hinder technology implementation equally.

Previous studies demonstrate the benefits of Google Classroom in the teaching and learning process. This study aims to examine Google Classroom's effectiveness as a medium used for teaching and learning S-V agreement. It also identifies students' perceptions of the use of this online tool in writing activities. This study referred to the research question as (1) Does the use of Google Classroom increase students' writing accuracy, specifically in S-V agreement? (2) What are students' perceptions of the use of Google Classroom in writing class?

2. Method

The research method used is a mixed approach. For quantitative data, a pre-experimental design with a one-group pre-test and a paired sample t-test was conducted to determine whether the two paired samples had different mean values. From these results, it can be concluded whether there is a significant difference between student learning outcomes before and after learning. In this study, the samples tested were the results of the pre-test and post-test of students. The numerical data was taken through three stages: (1) pre-test, (2) drilling carried out during treatment using Google features that were integrated into Google Classroom, such as Google Forms and Google Slides, and (3) post-test. The list of sentences related to the S-V Agreement in the pre-test and post-test used comes from the TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language).

Furthermore, in order to see the respondent's perception of the impact of using Google Classroom in learning English in the writing class, the methods used were quantitative analysis surveys. Questionnaires in this study were used to obtain quantitative data on respondents' perceptions. The questions that will be given consist of 2 parts: the first part deals with the participants' experiences of using Google Classroom, and the second part deals with their perceptions of the effectiveness of using this application in learning. Questionnaires will be given to respondents. The questionnaire used is a Likert Scale technique where the questions are in the form of statements of agreeing and disagreeing or being satisfied and dissatisfied to

measure the opinions, behaviors, or attitudes of respondents. Boone & Deborah (2021) The list of questions on the questionnaire was adapted from Leis & Takemori's research (Leis & Takemori, 2020).

Nevertheless, for qualitative data, Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) were conducted to get a thorough understanding of students' opinions about the use of Google Classroom. The following questions were asked during the FGDs: (1) What obstacles arose during the Google Classroom sessions? What were the solutions made? (2) What things do you like in the writing class using Google Classroom? Please elaborate on your answer. (3) Do you think Google Classroom should still be used even after face-to-face classes are run? Please elaborate on your answer.

Some seventy-seven participants were involved in this study. They were State Polytechnic of Jakarta electrical engineering students who were in the fifth semester. They came from four classes where English writing was conducted fully online. Basic English was taught in the previous semester, so their English proficiency was considered to be at the intermediate level. All participants became the respondents for quantitative data analysis, but only selected participants joined the FGDs whose data was used for qualitative data analysis. Both males and females were selected from each class to be respondents in the FGDs.

3. Results and Discussion

To identify whether there is an impact or not in the use of Google Classroom on students' writing accuracy, pre-test and post-test scores were compared. As described in Table 1, it shows the learning outcomes between the pre-test and post-test. There are 39 positive data points, which means that there are 39 students who experienced an increase in their test scores from pre-test to post-test scores. The mean rank, or average increase, is 33.40, while the number of positive rankings, or sum of ranks, is 1302.50. While the negative ranks or the difference (negative) between the learning outcomes for the pre-test and post-test are different, there are 25 negative data points. This means that there are 25 students experiencing a decrease in their test scores from pre-test to post-test scores. The mean rank, or average increase, is 31.10, while the number of negative rankings, or sum of ranks, is 777.50. Ties are the similarity between pre-test and post-test scores. The table of test results shows the value of ties is 13, so it can be stated that there are 13 students who had no score change between pre-test and post-test. In percentage terms, it can be concluded that 51% of respondents experienced an increase in the accuracy of writing the S-V Agreement, 33% experienced a decrease, and 18% did not change.

Table 1 The result of rank test on pre-test and post-test

		N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks
Pre-test and Post-test	Negative Ranks	25	31.10	777.50
	Positive Ranks	39	33.40	1302.50
	Ties	13		

source: Output SPSS 22

In order to explore the learners' attitudes toward the application of Google Classroom in the English Writing subject, a questionnaire with a 5-point Likert scale was used in asking about the effectiveness of Google Classroom and was distributed to the students using a Google form at the end of the experiment. These survey questions are essential in measuring the respondents' opinions towards the topic given. There were 5 points on an agreement scale to measure learners' agreement with various questions. A set of options includes strongly agree (5 points), agree (4 points), no opinion or neutral (3 points), disagree (2 points), and strongly disagree (1 point). After gathering the required data, the percentages for each question were analyzed. Regarding student perception on the use of Google Classroom in learning English in the writing class, it includes data on students' views on the use of Google Classroom, understanding of teaching materials, as well as Google Classroom features in learning English courses. The questionnaire list was given to all active students of Electrical Engineering who attended the time when the distribution was conducted. Table 2 shows the percentage of learners' answers. According to the findings in Table 2, learners in general had positive attitudes toward the use

of Google Classroom, with more than half of the participants agreeing that using Google Classroom in the writing class is beneficial to them.

Table 2 Students' perceptions of the use of Google Classroom in English Writing class

	strongly agree	agree	no opinion / neutral	disagree	strongly disagree
The use of Google classroom in English Writing class is helpful	63.5%	19%	15.9%	1.6%	0%

Table 3 shows that students believe the most beneficial feature in Google Classroom is teaching aid distribution in various forms, such as audio, videos, or documents. Consequently, students can access lectures at their convenient time and place. In terms of assignment submissions, all of the respondents agree that they can send the tasks directly through this online platform, and the assignments can be submitted in different formats. Furthermore, although 10% of students didn't give their opinion, the rest of them think that they can access the teaching syllabus. Similarly, there are 33.3% of students who didn't respond to the communication with lecturers through this online tool, but 70% of them agree that they can contact the lecturers. However, in terms of discussion activity, there are 34.2% of students who think they can't have good discussions. This finding is further discussed during the FGD. It is found that other social media platforms, such as WhatsApp or Line, are more effective when they have to do a discussion.

Table 3 Students' perceptions of Google Classroom usage in English Writing class

In Google classroom:	strongly agree	agree	no opinion/ neutral	disagree	strongly disagree
lecturers are able to send teaching materials in the form of video, audio, Power Point (PPT)	93.7%	2.7%	0%	0%	0%
students are able to access teaching materials anytime and anywhere	90.5%	9.5%	0%	0%	0%
students are able to send assignments virtually	76.2%	23.8%	0%	0%	0%
students are able to submit assignments in the form of video, audio, or documents	69%	31%	0%	0%	0%
students are able to access teaching syllabus	41.3%	48.7%	10%	0%	0%
students are able to communicate with the lecturers	33.3%	33.4%	33.3%	0%	0%
students are able to discuss with their peers	27%	23.8%	15%	34.2%	0%

For the qualitative data analysis, appointed interviewers held a series of focus group discussions with selected participants from each class. The discussion was designed to gather information from the students with regard to the following outcomes: 1) to understand thoroughly the benefits of Google Classroom usage in an English Writing class. 2) to examine the challenges found during the implementation. 3) to identify students' points of view on the use of Google Classroom in offline learning. In investigating those results, there were three questions asked during the FGDs: 1) What obstacles arose during the Google Classroom session? What did you do to solve them? 2) What things do you like in the writing class using Google Classroom? Please elaborate on your answer. 3) Do you

think Google Classroom should still be used even after face-to-face classes are run? Please elaborate on your answer. Findings from the FGD are described as follows:

The first problem they faced during online learning was the instability of internet connections. The solution to this problem is by asking their peers who have better internet connections to join the discussion after the online class. Some participants also faced difficulties in submitting their tasks when the internet was down, and they would ask the lecturers to prolong the deadline. Another difficulty is keeping motivated during the class since the online interaction is not as smooth as offline. Therefore, they used WhatsApp or Line as an alternative communication tool.

Students prefer using Google Classroom because the hand-outs can be accessed anytime, anywhere, easily and re-accessed if there is something that they still do not understand. This is also beneficial for students who are absent during online classes. Some of them feel safe since they don't have to come to campus during the COVID-19 period. Moreover, they also prefer to have an online platform for submitting the assignments due to a deadline notification for task submission. Additionally, it is more economical because they can save money on paper and printing. Lastly, students think Google Classroom should keep being used during offline classes for lecture sharing and assignment collection.

4. Conclusion

Based on the results of the study, there is an impact on Google Classroom use in improving students' writing skills. The use of Google Classroom in learning English in the writing class facilitates the teaching and learning process because students and teachers can access material virtually anytime and anywhere, making it an effective medium during the COVID-19 period. However, the use of the discussion feature in Google Classroom is considered ineffective because chat applications such as WhatsApp or Line are more practical and convenient than the class comment feature in Google Classroom.

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