



Students' Perception of *Google Classroom* for English as a Foreign Language Writing Courses

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Abstract

The study aimed to expose the students' perception of *Google Classroom* for EFL writing courses at high school levels. The study applied descriptive qualitative design applying phenomenology. The subjects in this study were 60 students of three vocational schools in Yogyakarta, Indonesia. The data were gained from two instruments, questionnaire and interview. The data were analyzed using thematic analysis. The analysis results showed the students' perceptions how they viewed *Google Classroom* as learning management system used in the writing courses. In terms of students' perception, the study concluded that the students reported some benefits and challenges regarding *Google Classroom* based on their experience.

Keywords: *Google Classroom* (GC); students' perception; writing

Introduction

The rapid development of technology has greatly influenced the development of the era. Inventions of new technology by discoverers are inevitable. Tamimi (2017) defines technology as a concept that refers to the advancement of technological systems that are used by millions of people around the world for interaction, collaboration, networking, and entertainment. Technology has affected industries in various ways, one of which is in education.

Technology that has been integrated for years into the education system aims to facilitate curriculum design, improve pedagogical materials, and improve teaching and learning that occurred between teachers and students (Khalil, 2018). The development of technology in education helps teaching and learning during the phenomenon of pandemic.

Several digital technologies used today, one of which is its use in the teaching and learning process. (Martono, 2017) stated one of the benefits of digital technology is to support education. It implies that the existence of digital technology is indeed used to support students' learning activities. Meanwhile, in developing countries with uncertain economic levels, educational institutions are still struggling to accept technology with full acceptance (Salam, 2020). It steadily provides an impact on the development of educational technology. Digital technology is available to their users in various forms such as web applications, social networking sites, video sharing, *wiki* engines, online blogs, and others. They support students to learn easily and practically. These applications can be downloaded and accessed via smartphone or portable computer. It makes the application accessible anywhere and anytime.

Google Classroom (GC), as a web-based application, assists students in learning process. GC is one of various applications provided by Google Incorporated. It allows teachers to create and to set up classes, distribute assignments, post announcements, send feedback material for students to view, etc. In line with this, Salam (2020) supported that GC provides wider opportunities for students to gather with peers and continue their homework through online learning. In other words, GC offers aids in teaching and online learning process due to its features. Activities such as distributing and receiving assignments, posting and reading announcements, giving and getting feedback, and other teacher-student activities are possible in the form of online class.

In EFL courses, four skills starting from listening, speaking, reading, writing are developed. When students are dealing with language productions, students must use their knowledge to produce language to achieve communication in spoken or written language (Brown, 2003). Writing is considered a productive skill along with speaking but writing requires more extensive knowledge (Harmer, 2007). Writing covers the process to describe something or a phenomenon or someone using words. In writing courses, students are expected to present their ideas and feelings in written form (Harmer, 2001) and (Brown, 2001) supported that writing is a thinking process. In other words, writing is an educated activity to express ideas and feelings because it is a result of thinking process. (Brown, 2001) also said that writing can be a form of description of a thing producing thought, arrangement, and revision procedure that requires different skills from an

individual. It means that writing is a pure work of a person's mind expressed in words, then its activity generates sentences or compositions.

Literature Review

Perception

Perception serves as a mental cognitive process that makes people interpret and understand their environment. (Kreitner, 2019) and (Borger, 1966) pointed out that perception refers to the process of selecting, organizing, and interpreting sensory data into useful mental representations of the world. Meanwhile, Vygotsky (1978) said that perception covers a behaviour system that keeps changing. These concludes that perception is a dynamic behavioural system including selecting, organizing, and interpreting in one's mind.

Perception refers to selecting, organizing, and interpreting sensory data that a person who possessed perception expresses it, and this is called a perception process. The first process of perception is the selecting, and the second is observing something to know or understand objects and events. In other words, in the process of perception, persons select, organize, and interpret things until they interpret the data.

Google Classroom (GC)

Currently, GC has become one of the most popular teaching platforms used by teachers and lecturers. GC is a web-based course management system application. GC provides a specific room to store instructional and student learning processes that students and teachers can communicate, interact, and discuss within the application (Shaharane, Jamil, & Rodzi, 2016). According to Salam (2020), GC managed more than 30 million assignments from teacher to student or vice versa. In other words, GC can be used as a medium in the teaching and learning activities to develop education.

As a learning management system (LMS), GC helps universities or schools and bring together students and teachers in an easier way (Heggart & Yoo, 2018). GC is an accessible application for its users, both teachers and students. Students open the application and join a lesson group using the code provided by the teacher Ermawati, Nurchalis, & Sardi (2021). After joining the group, they immediately follow the existing learning. Students can also discuss, exchange opinions, get materials in the form of files, and receive feedbacks given by the teacher. GC also creates a new environment for the learning process for students (Shaharane, Jamil, & Rodzi, 2016). Students study individually when students cannot meet in person. Students are possible to discuss the learning subjects or assignments with their classmates from the teacher through GC.

Writing

Out of language skills, writing is considered as the most challenging one. Writing activities have many things to express someone's thoughts in written form. According to (Brown, 2001), writing covers a description about a thing, person, or phenomenon. In line with Barras (2005) that writing helps to remember, think, and communicate in written form. Writing sharpens the brain to organize ideas better and it needs a strategy to make better writing. According to Ibrahim (2016), a writing strategy was a tool to plan activities that develop students to achieve the writing goals. The writing strategy is to plan, organize, compile, and revise the writing. Thus, the resulting writing can convey the message contained in the works. In EFL studies, good writing is assessed from the quality of the writing, such as the grammar, content, use of language, messaging, and others (Brown, 2001). Then Brown (2003) added that there are two levels of writing, namely micro and macro skills writing. Micro and macro skills become the criteria of writing assessment. Micro skills are for imitating and extensive tasks, but macro skills are essential for responsive writing tasks. According to Brown (2003), the micro-skills are as follows: producing graphemes and orthographic patterns of English, writing at an efficient speed according to the purpose, producing acceptable word cores, using appropriate word order patterns, and applying appropriate language. It can be accepted in grammatical systems (e.g., tense, agreement, pluralization) and expresses meaning in different grammatical forms using cohesive devices in writing discourse. Meanwhile, the macro skills of writing are using the rhetorical form and conventions of writing discourse, accomplishing the communicative function of written texts according to form and purpose appropriately, conveying links and connections between events, communicating relations such as main idea, supporting idea, new information, given information, generalization, and exemplification, distinguishing between literal and implied meanings when writing, conveying culturally specific references in the context of the written text correctly, developing a battery of writing strategies such as accurately assessing the audience's interpretation, using pre-writing devices, writing with fluency in the first drafts, using paraphrases and synonyms, soliciting peer and instructor feedback, and using feedback for revising and editing. It is concluded that writing can be assessed by providing a rating scale for text organization, logical idea development, grammar, punctuation, spelling, mechanics, style, and quality of expression

Method

This study used descriptive qualitative design applying phenomenology. Descriptive research activity carried out with the prevailing opinion, knowledge,

practice, and conditions (Best, 1970). The study applied phenomenology as an approach to understand social reality based on people's experience, exploring the perception of students in teaching writing through Google Classroom. The subjects in this study were 60 students of the twelfth grade of three vocational schools in Yogyakarta, Indonesia. The research data were obtained from questionnaire and semi-guided interview to describe the students' perception of the application in learning English skill especially writing.

The researcher needed to know students' perceptions of used GC in teaching writing during the pandemic. Data were collected through online closed-ended questionnaires and interviews for two weeks, with 60 students filling out the questionnaire and recording interviews. After the data were collected, identifying and analyzing students' answers to the questions. Data were analyzed using descriptive qualitative. In addition, data from interviews were added to complement the research focus theme. After finishing analyzing the data, the researcher concludes the research that has been done.

Results

To find out the students' perception of the use of GC application in learning English writing, the researcher used questionnaires and interviews with the students in *Google* form. The data were analyzed using the students' perception from the questionnaire of sixty students and interview through *Google* form of twenty students. There were seven closed-ended questionnaires and five-question interviews.

Questionnaires Result

As explained in the methodology, this study used closed-ended questionnaires in collecting the data. The questionnaire results were displayed in a graph that describes the students' perceptions of writing classroom with Google. Closed-ended questionnaires used had been provided with answers which the respondent can choose.

Based on the graph, it showed that GC received positive responses as learning management system. In other words, Google Classroom, as technology support, helped students in learning English. According to (Kumar, 2019), GC is one of the online tools in language learning course. It can be seen from the result of the first questionnaire in figure 1.

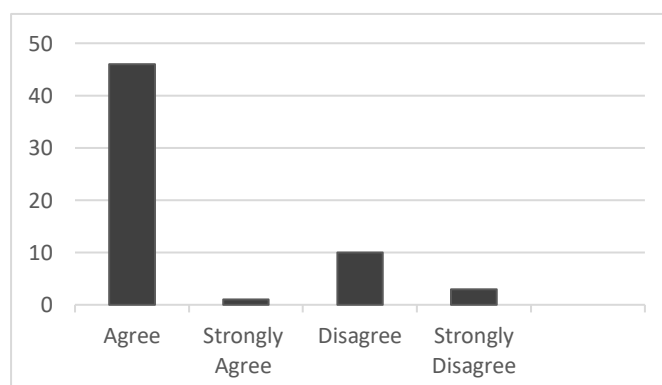


Figure1. The use of GC in EFL courses

Several students agreed with the statement that GC can be used in learning English. Based on Figure 1, 46 students agree, and 10 students disagree. It means that students feel more interested when learning through GC. According to Salam (2020), using GC can help teachers and students to get many benefits, including accessible, user-friendly, and affordable. This application supports learning English.

The second statement is regarding the use of GC. GC is widely used by teachers and students as a learning tools today. Shown in Figure 2, students are enthusiastic that GC's assistance in learning to write with more than 50 students agree and strongly agree.

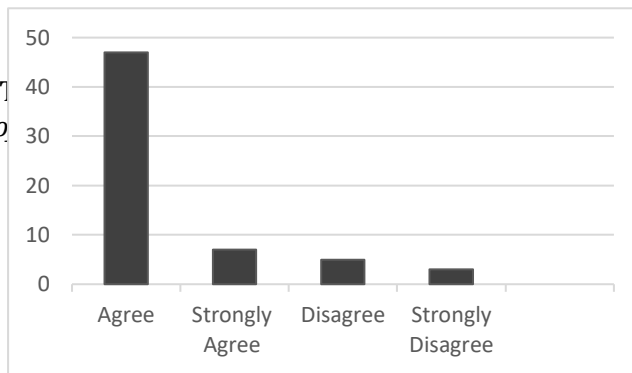


Figure 2. The use of GC in learning writing is helpful

Then, students gave positive responses in the question about their understanding of the material after using GC. From the results obtained, students were actively engaged in the learning using GC. Within the GC, students and teachers can have conversations about the assignments and teachers can track the student's progress (Okmawati, 2020). GC provides to facilitate the interaction of teachers with students in the virtual environment (Liu & Chuang, 2016). It can be seen in Figure 3, almost 40 students agreed that GC helped them understand the material even though some other students disagreed with the statement.

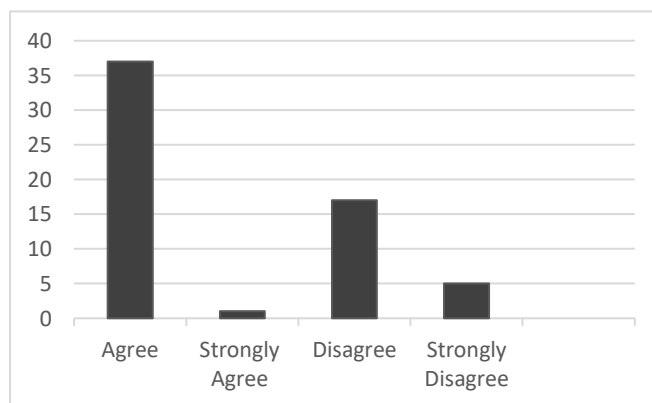


Figure 3. Understanding material using GC

Powered by Google as online learning educational platform, GC aimed to assist students in understanding the material and learning with an online system. (Amadin et al., 2018) stated that *Google Classroom* enabled students to achieve better schoolwork and increases learning productivity. GC empowered students and teachers further to carry out learning process according to the predetermined curriculum even in online circumstances.

The use of applications as a tool in the learning process was sometimes quite worrying due to something being considered not safe. However, it was different from using GC. It was exclusively designed for education and protective from ads and personal information leaks (Mercer & Dörnyei, 2020). The students can share materials or those related to learning to teachers and/or other students

through GC in which files were maintained and stored neatly.

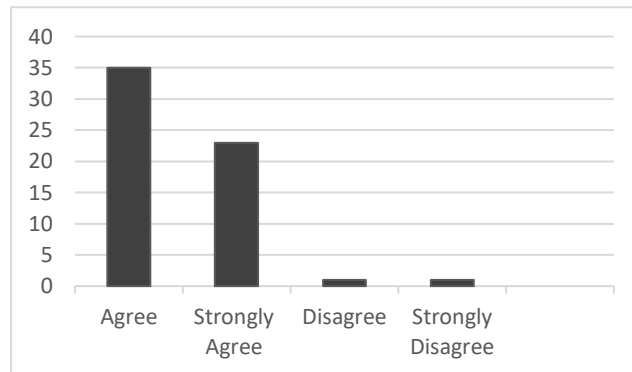


Figure 4. GC is a safe learning medium (ads free and privacy guaranteed)

Based on figure 4, GC is a well-maintained application that protected its users from ads and kept users' data in private. It can be seen from the students' perspectives, more than 35 students agreed, and 23 students strongly agreed

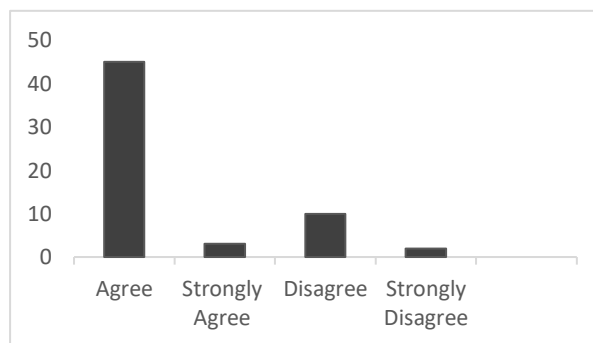


Figure 5. GC is a learning application that can improve students' writing creativity

The next statement is about students' writing improvement especially related to their creativity during the courses using GC. Figure 5 showed that GC supported students' creativity in writing. More than three-quarter of the total students responded positively that GC developed their creativity. Satar (2018) claimed that learning to write English using management platform like *Google Classroom* promotes more participation, collaboration, and confidence in the courses. GC helps students to learn to write, provide understanding, bind creativity and be practical (Salam, 2020). In short, it offers students to have more space and time to work at an asynchronous pace.

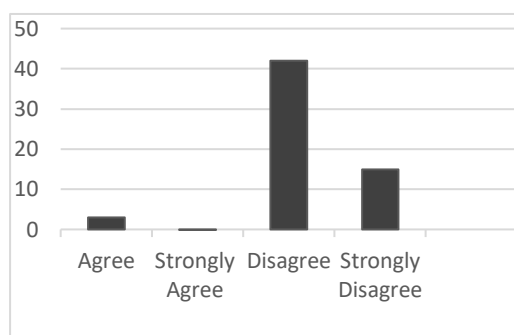


Figure 6. GC provides obstacles in writing courses.

This statement focused on the constraints on this platform. It is widely-known that not all learning platforms run smoothly. There are certain obstacles or requirements for supporting devices. From the statement, students did not find serious issues when learning using GC. Based on Figure 6, more than 40 students disagreed with the statement, and 15 students strongly disagreed. Students with mix experiences and feelings both being motivated and optimistic with smooth access (Sulissusiawan& Salam, 2017). It is concluded that obstacles are minimum to nonewhenlearning writing using GC.

Interview Result

Interviews were conducted to get responses from students of the use of GC in theirEFL writing courses. Five questions deployed in the interview received different results. Some students argued that GC is useful and effective in learning writing but it needs other supports from other applications. It can be seen from the responses to the first question.

S.16: The use of google classroom in learning to write is good. However, if the teacher still wants to use Google Classroom, it means that the teacher must also add another platform to support the learning being carried out, such as Google Meet. Students can receive material provided by the teacher and can also submit assignments through Google Classroom.

From one of the student's opinion, GC has benefits for the writing courses. According to Md. Sadequle Islam (2019), GC, an online learning and teaching tool, helps to simplify the learning process that itis applicable for teaching and learning process.GC, as a learning tool, is expected to support students in learning. The response also reflected how students grasp the content of the material provided through GC. According to (Wannapiroon, 2012), GChelped students share ideas, exchange material, discuss learning topics, and develop knowledge. Then, this

technology-based learning application contributed to teaching and learning (Simanjuntak, 2020). It can also be inferred from one of the students' answer below.

S. 9: Learning using Google Classroom is quite helpful to improve my capability although sometimes some materials are difficult to understand due to online learning.

From the students' opinion, not all materials can be well received through GC. However, GC remains an applicable tool in the online learning process. This happens due to GC's features assisting the students in the course. In writing, students need to develop their skills in the aspects of organization of the text, ideas, grammar, punctuation, spelling, and others. The students' mastery in those aspects are further to be assessed for certain purposes such as measurement, placement or reflection. Brown (2003) confirmed that writing assessment are categorized based on text organization, logical development of ideas, grammar, punctuation, spelling, mechanics, style, and quality of expression.

One feature in GC enables students to post comment and discuss with classmates or teachers during the learning process. Students can write comments, discussion topics, and discussion results. This feature also helps students with their creativity improvement in writing. One student perceived that it is a positive value for stimulating, generating, and promoting new ideas in their writing.

S. 2: Sometimes, learning from Google Classroom is boring because you have to comment on friends or teachers. However, commenting can help us understand and think to write a good sentence. The assignments from teachers can also increase creativity because they ask students to write answers in the Google Classroom comments column.

Then, in this interview question, students' opinions about the benefits and challenges of learning using GC were gathered. The question received various responses from the students as follows:

S.20: Using Google Classroom is easy because Google Classroom is simple. Students can submit assignments in the form of discussions that are different from other applications.

S.7: There are several advantages of using Google Classroom but what I don't like is being able to see feedback from the teacher immediately after I submit assignments.

This revealed that GC is reliable for online learning courses. Optimizing the features of GC, students easily follow lessons, discuss certain topics with classmates, submit tasks, and gain feedback without having face-to-face with the teacher. (Heggart & Yoo, 2018).

The interview also discovered the challenges of learning GC. Most students replied that their issue was the internet. The limitations of each student in using

the internet hindered learning to use GC.

S. 11: The weakness that I feel when learning to use Google Classroom is the excessive use of the internet, especially if the assignment or material is in the form of videos.

Students found it expensive to use GC because it draws internet credits more than its necessity. GC can only be accessed using the internet connection. When the internet gets disconnected, the courses cannot be carried out optimally. Simanjuntak (2020) supported that application technologies require internet network as a tool to access the features. This concludes that GC can be used as a learning medium or management system, but it has drawbacks in internet consumptions.

Conclusion

After discussing the results obtained through questionnaires and interviews, it is concluded that students positively perceived GC as a learning management system in writing courses. Learning with an online management system enables students and teachers to conduct meeting virtually. Furthermore, students viewed the media used in the teaching and learning process helpful and beneficial. GC offered practical and flexible usage. It can be used as discussion forums to share ideas or understanding of the material. The exchanges of opinions generate students' creativity in writing. In the courses, the students get interested, more enthusiastic in learning English, and easier to understand the material while engaging themselves to the activities for writing improvement

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