

EFL teachers' perception on the use of online platforms in collaborative writing activities among high school students

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Abstract: The use of online platforms in EFL teaching and learning have been intensified in the last couple of years due to the regulation of online learning and blended learning. This study is focusing on EFL teachers' perspectives on the implementation of varied types of online word processors and synchronous digital white-board such as Google Docs, Microsoft Word Online, Google Jamboard, Miro, and other similar platforms. This is a survey study which apply close-ended questionnaire to obtain the data from 32 EFL teachers from different senior high schools in Lampung, Bengkulu and Central Java. There are 17 likert-scaled questionnaire items which are designed to identify EFL teachers' perceptions on the use of online platforms to aid collaborative writing activities among senior high school students. The findings show that the EFL teachers' have common belief regarding the advantages of word processors-based and digital white board-based online platforms as supporting media for collaborative writing activities. 75% of the teachers also believe that they should adapt and be ready if more effective platforms emerge in the future.

Keywords: Collaborative writing, digital whiteboard, EFL teachers ,online platforms, word-processors

INTRODUCTION

In the last couple of years, the implementation of online platforms has been customary in various field of education, including in English teaching and learning. Among several types of online platforms, online word processors and digital white boards are two of the most regularly used platforms in EFL teaching and learning, especially in writing activities. The implemetation of both online word processors and digital whiteboard in EFL writing activities is usually intended to assist students developing ideas in a group, doing peer checking, and finally to allow collaborative writing among students. In line with the primary aims of using such media for students, there is an urgent demand that teachers must be aware of these functions, and the importance of applying both online word processors and digital whiteboards in their online or blended learning classrooms, especially in several activities that require collaboration among students.

Therefore, analyzing different perspective from the side of EFL teachers is considered essential since EFL teachers, as the one who manage and provide the classes, should be able to develop deep understanding about the media being used during teaching and learning process. Noviska, Aisyah, Yuniarti, and Ihsan (2021) conducted a literature-based study and found that most teachers percieved that Google Docs, as an online word processor, is very user-friendly and advantegous to aid teaching and learning process.

Khalil (2018) found that Google Docs and Google Classroom collaboration could help collaborative learning environment among students and teachers since it allows mutual interactions especially in giving feedback. Therefore, the synchronous and asynchornous feature which is available in Google Docs has been proven to be essential in collaborative learning.

Mahmud. Rawshon and Rahman (2011) investigated the implementation of mind-map in writing classes. They found that using mind-mapping technique in writing class has increased the learning capacity in the terms of number of generated ideas, and more focused writing objectives.

Karim, Abu and Khaja (2016) investigated the implementation of digital mind-mapping in writing class. They found that the use of digital mind-mapping can simplify the process of generating ideas during writing activities, allowing the students to enjoy writing even more.

Riyantika, Nisa, and Kadaryanto (2021) analyzed students' perceptions regarding online learning management system (LMS) and its features which include mind-mapping feature. The finding shows positive attitudes of the students on the use of the LMS and the mind-mapping feature for different purposes. They also found several challenges such as the need of detailed preparation and application of other softwares to support some online media.

Bataineh (2014) revealed in his study that the use of online media among students gives positive impact in the writing skill development. In line with that, Ayu, Raja, and Sholihah (2021) conducted research on online writing class using an internet-based media. During the treatment, the students were given chance to do peer review and collaborative content checking. The findings show some improvement in writing quality of the senior high school students.

Sukirman (2016) implemented collaborative technique in writing class and investigated several advantages and disadvantages of the technique. Some advantages include the time efficiency, content richness, and also grammatical accuracy. Meanwhile, conflicts and different perspectives might be an issue according the finding of the study by Sukirman.

Hidayat (2020) pointed out that Google Docs can effectively help students in writing activity, yet it possesses several challenges such as auto-correct features and also some formatting features which are different to offline word processors.

This study is focusing on identifying and analyzing EFL teachers' perception regarding the implementation of online platforms, specifically the word processors and digital whiteboards types, in collaborative writing activities among students of senior high schools. Therefore, the study is aimed to identify the answer of the following research question.

METHOD

This study is a survey-based quantitative study which investigate teachers perception towards the use of online platform in collaborative writing activities among high school students. Kothari (2014) stated that using questionnaire may decrease the potential of obtaining bias data. Therefore, the researchers chose to apply questionnaire to obtain the data. The participants of this study are 32 teachers who have experience in EFL teaching at senior high school.

The researchers designed a set of close-ended likert-scaled questionnaire before starting the process of data collection. The questionnaire consists of 17 items with the scale of 1 to 5, marked with strongly disagree to strongly agree.

Table 1. Questionnaire items

No	Questionnaire Items
1	Saya familiar dengan ragam jenis online platforms seperti Google Docs, Google Jam Board, Miro, Canva, Microsoft Word Online, Pages, Zoho Writer, dan Dropbox Paper.
2	Penggunaan online platforms perlu disesuaikan dengan fase kegiatan menulis yang direncanakan oleh guru. (Contoh: Platform berbasis papan tulis digital seperti Miro dan Jamboard sebaiknya digunakan dalam proses brainstorming dan pengumpulan ide, sementara Google Docs digunakan dalam kegiatan inti menulis teks/esai/cerita.)
3	Fitur-fitur dalam platform online berbasis papan tulis digital kolaboratif seperti Google Jamboard dan Miro memungkinkan guru untuk memantau dan mengarahkan siswa/i dalam menciptakan ide-ide tulisan yang kreatif.
4	Penggunaan platform berbasis papan tulis digital memungkinkan para siswa/i untuk saling bertukar pikiran dengan cara yang menyenangkan dan efektif.

No	Questionnaire Items
5	Penggunaan platform berbasis papan tulis digital perlu diawasi dengan saksama oleh guru dikarenakan adanya potensi siswa/i terdistraksi dan memanfaatkan platform tersebut sebagai wahana intermezo secara berlebihan (contoh: menggambar di tengah-tengah proses diskusi, membuat doodle, dan mencoret-coret di luar konteks diskusi).
6	Terlepas dari potensi distraksi yang ditimbulkan platform berbasis papan tulis digital, coretan, sketsa dan doodle yang dibuat oleh siswa/i selama proses diskusi adalah bukti bahwa platform tersebut dapat memicu pemikiran kreatif dari siswa/i.
7	Dalam proses lanjutan setelah brainstorming dan pengumpulan ide, kegiatan menulis sebaiknya diteruskan di platform online berbasis word processors seperti Google Docs, Microsoft Word Online, atau Pages for iCloud.
8	Penggunaan platform berbasis word processors seperti Google Docs, Microsoft Word Online, dan sebagainya, sebaiknya dilakukan dalam kelompok kecil beranggotakan 3-5 orang.
9	Dalam penggunaan platform berbasis word processors seperti Google Docs, Microsoft Word Online, dan sebagainya, guru sebaiknya bertindak sebagai supervisor yang bersiap sedia jika murid mengalami kesulitan dalam menuangkan ide tulisan, atau terganggu kendala teknis.
10	Guru sebaiknya tidak langsung memperbaiki error atau kesalahan penulisan yang bersifat struktural dalam proses penulisan kolaboratif menggunakan platform berbasis word processor. Sebagai gantinya, guru dapat memberi tanda dan komentar pada bagian yang masih kurang tepat/ salah.
11	Guru tetap perlu menentukan batasan-batasan dalam penggunaan platform online berbasis word processors mau pun papan tulis digital.
12	Fitur grammar check dalam platform digital berbasis word processors sangat membantu dalam proses menulis kolaboratif.
13	Sebagai guru, saya hanya mengandalkan satu platform dari masing-masing jenis (contoh: Google Docs dan Google Jamboard saja, atau Microsoft Word Online dan Miro Mind-Map saja)
14	Saya tidak tertarik mencoba platform baru karena sudah terbiasa dengan platform digital yang biasa saya gunakan.
15	Saya lebih sering menggunakan salah satu dari dua jenis platform saja (hanya Online Word Processors atau hanya Online Digital White Board) dalam proses mengajar writing secara kolaboratif.
16	Terlepas dari ragam fitur dan kemudahan yang ditawarkan platform online di atas, tetap perlu dilakukan proses konvensional seperti berdiskusi secara tatap muka melalui platform konferensi video, mau pun secara luring di dalam kelas.
17	Beberapa perangkat lunak tambahan seperti plagiarism checker, kamus digital, dan juga perangkat editing elemen visual seperti Canva dan Photoshop tetap perlu digunakan dalam penggunaan platform online berbasis word processors mau pun papan tulis digital.

After the instrument was ready, the researcher distributed it to identify the reliability using Cronbach's Alpha formula. Given below is the result of reliability checking.

Table 2. Reliability of The Instrument

<i>Reliability Statistics</i>	
<i>Cronbach's Alpha</i>	<i>N of Items</i>
.779	17

The table shows that the instrument's internal consistency of 0.779 which is considered reliable. After the questionnaire had been proven to be reliable, the responses from the teachers were calculated to see the central tendency of the data. The obtained data was then analyzed and described to see whether the teachers respond positively or negatively towards the use of online platform in collaborative writing activities among senior high school students.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The responses from the teachers show that there are varied perspective on different aspects of using online word processors and digital mind-mapping platform. The obtained data which consist of statistical values calculated from teachers' responses towards the questionnaire items are given below.

Table 3. Central tendencies of the questionnaire

Items	N	Descriptive Statistics			
		Min	Max	Mean	Std. Dev
Item1	32	2.00	5.00	4.0000	1.04727
Item2	32	3.00	5.00	4.4375	.71561
Item3	32	3.00	5.00	4.4688	.56707
Item4	32	3.00	5.00	4.3125	.73780
Item5	32	3.00	5.00	4.5937	.61484
Item6	32	3.00	5.00	4.3438	.70066
Item7	32	3.00	5.00	4.2500	.62217
Item8	32	1.00	5.00	3.9375	.98169
Item9	32	3.00	5.00	4.5938	.55992
Item10	32	2.00	5.00	4.2500	.76200
Item11	32	3.00	5.00	4.4688	.71772
Item12	32	3.00	5.00	4.3438	.60158
Item13	32	1.00	5.00	2.8750	1.18458
Item14	32	1.00	5.00	2.5000	1.13592
Item15	32	1.00	5.00	3.2188	.97499
Item16	32	3.00	5.00	4.6562	.54532
Item17	32	3.00	5.00	4.4688	.67127
Valid N (listwise)	32				

The statistical data shows teachers identical perceptions regarding the effectiveness of using both online word processors and digital mind-mapping platform. It can be seen from overall response that the teachers who handle English writing classes in senior high school level would use both platform to help them developing better writing activities, both to support generating ideas and also to assist the students in creating more structured writing. However, overall response to item number 6 (six) shows that the teachers also believe that strict supervision is still needed to avoid students losing their focus.

Responses to item number 9, 10 and 11 also indicate teachers' awareness regarding their role as supervisor and facilitator during the writing activity using both online word processors and digital mind-map platforms. More than 80% of the participants agree that they should supervise the students, give some limits on the use of the platforms, and also letting them explore without directly correcting errors that are made by student, yet keep giving encouragement for them to do some reflections in order to avoid repetitive error production in the writing process.

Most of the teachers also come to common perception regarding the combination of platforms they use. The teachers are generally using both online word processors and digital mind-map platform simultaneously. Moreover, more than 90% of the participants refuse to use only the most familiar platform and prefer to try new platform should there is any. It indicates their high awareness on the development of digital teaching media, and prove their open-minded attitude towards changes.

Apart from the convenience and also such helpful features offered by the platforms, the teachers believe that conventional method such as offline classroom discussion, question and answer, and lecturing session are still needed to support the implementation of both online word processors and also digital mind-mapping platforms. Almost all of the teachers strongly agree to the idea of blending offline activities and online activities. More than a half of the participants come to similar perception regarding additional softwares such as online dictionary and thesaurus, as well as visual editing software to enhance the experience in using online word processors and digital mind-mapping platforms.

The findings in this research are in line with the previous studies on the field of digital media implementation and writing in EFL teaching and learning. The positive attitudes of EFL teachers towards the use of online word processors and digital mind-mapping platforms proves the findings of Noviska et.al (2021), Khalil (2018), Mahmud et.al (2011), Karim et.al (2016), Riyantika et.al (2021), Bataineh (2014) and Sukirman (2016) to be valid as the

findings of those studies also pointed out the positive attitudes of teachers and also students regarding the implementation of online platform.

However, teachers' responses which indicate the need of other software and also the opportunity to apply online word processors and digital mind-mapping platforms in blended learning situation are in line with some drawbacks mentioned by Riyantika et.al (2021) about some challenges in applying online media which include the need of additional softwares and some detailed planning.

Other finding by Hidayat (2020) shows that online platform such as Google Docs still consists of some unfamiliar features that might be challenges for students.

CONCLUSIONS

The development of technology and the urgency of implementing online platform to support online and blended learning are inevitable. Thus, having high awareness of the use of different media is compulsory. Therefore, it is essential to identify teachers' attitude and perception towards the use of different media. This study has proven that some population of teachers in this era are aware of the importance of online media implementation especially in EFL writing classroom. In conclusion, it is very essential to keep the teachers developing such positive attitude in order to help more students to learn better. Finally, this study provides samples of results and instruments which are expected to be beneficial for further research. This study is also limited to the perceptions of teachers in the level of senior high school. Thus, further research is expected to identify other groups of EFL teachers.

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