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STUDENTS' VIEWS ON THE USE OF PEER-ASSESSMENT THROUGH FACEBOOK TO IMPROVE WRITING SKILL

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Abstract:

The implementation of peer assessment in teaching and learning is very beneficial for students. Many experts argue that peer assessment can motivate and improve students' skills especially in writing. This research was conducted to find out how the implementation of peer assessment is able to motivate students to write better and help students improve their writing skills. By using a qualitative research method with the subjects of first semester students of a private university in Yogyakarta Indonesia, the data were collected through interviews which were then analyzed following the theories on peer assessment. As a result, it was revealed that almost all participants gave positive response toward peer assessment. After the implementation, students were aware that this method could assist them in assessing their writing abilities, increasing their motivation to write, and triggering their critical thinking. These results indicate that the implementation of peer assessment is beneficial for teaching and learning process of writing skill.

Keywords: Students' view, peer assessment, writing skill

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INTRODUCTION

Assessment plays a very important role in learning activities as it is an integral part of educational process. Assessment is the process of pursuing and interpreting indication for being used by learners and their teachers to decide the proficiency of the students (Hume & Coll, 2009). Writing skill is needed in all levels of education. At the university level, writing is not only about a standard of written communication but also an instrument of learning. Moreover, writing is a language skill that is very difficult to be mastered by students. There are many components that must be considered in English writing: not only ideas in writing and how to organize the ideas but also the grammar, punctuation and other mechanisms in writing. Therefore, in assessing written work there are many aspects that should be considered by the teacher. Alderson and Bachman (2002) propose five aspects as follow: 1) what is going to be tested? 2) Who is going to be tested? 3) Why do we want to test? 4) What will we do with the information that we get from the test? 5) and Who will score the test? All of this information can be used as a basis in determining assessment. This information is not only important for the teachers when conducting assessment, but also for the students, especially when they are assigned for peer-assessment.

Peer-assessment is an assessment that involves students in evaluating each other. In this method, students are expected to be able to offer response and collective assessment to influence the evaluation. In this case, students must concentrate on seeing what weaknesses and strengths owned by other students. According to Izgar and Akturk (2014), peer assessment is a method that allows pupils to evaluate the level, value or quality of a creation or to determine enactments of other learners. Qu & Yang (2010) stated that the benefit of peer assessment is that it can involve students in correcting and giving opinions to the results of other students' writing. This helps students becoming more independent, and be able to recognize their strengths and weaknesses in writing; allows assessment activities to be a method of learning to improve students' ability as well their involvement in peer-assessment. In the implementation, the steps of applying peer assessment are carried out by forming relationships, then preparing for the work to be assessed, introducing criteria for the rubric of assessment and, starting related questions (Pengiran Omar et al., 2019)). The aspect that

supports the implementation of peer assessment is the active participation of the students in improving their abilities and interest in learning. Topping (2017) stated that there are some concerns that must be considered in the implementation of peer-assessment such as the environment of the students. Then, Wride (2017) argued that peers in this method are participants who are in the same situation with each other who have their respective rights and obligations that define them in the same situation and do not have control over each other.

Variety of advantages can be taken from the implementation of peer-assessment. For example, peer review can promote collective learning by exchanging information on what constitutes good work. It can also be part of the learning process for students where they can comprehend how to obtain and respond in this evaluation. The involvement of students in commenting other people's work can thus improve their own ability to judge and make intelligent choices. This will potentially boost their capacity for self-assessment. Besides, students nowadays are very familiar with the use of social media. Salikin & Tahir (2017) found that the use of social media can affect students' English skill, writing in particular. Unfortunately, there are several difficulties that must be considered in the implementation of peer-assessment. The existence of a prejudice that is not good can be a problem in the application of this technique. In addition, scholars most likely do not correct the mistakes made by their colleagues and do not want to be honest in their judgment because it will disturb the harmony of their relationship. Students may also distrust their friends because they think that they are better. There is also another obstacle where the students tend to work together to get good grades. To anticipate these problems, Wride (2017) recommends some steps that must be followed by teachers in peer assessment, such as discussing on good or appropriate assessment method with students, explaining the benefits of peer-assessment, conducting an assessment exercise, and then controlling the assessment conducted by students.

Using a digital tool to teach writing can bring more advantages to the students. The learners can eliminate unnecessary errors such as untidy and messed up papers. Anna (2016), on her study shows a significant differences between students who still use pen and paper seem to be more time-consuming than students who already use digital methods with editing software

that resulted in students' fluency and efficient in doing their work.

Facebook as one of the social media applications can be utilizing as teaching writing medium where students can get many advantages of it (Schneider et al., 2015). Facebook can facilitate the implementation of peer-assessment because it has features that are appropriate to be used during peer assessments, such as group and comments section. It can help students in conducting peer assessment online anywhere and anytime. Furthermore, many researches have conducted the study on peer assessment. Studies that have been carried out are varied, for example a study investigating the ability to speak as conducted by van Ginkel et al. (2017) or the one assessing the ability to write as done by (Ghahari & Farokhnia, 2017). Apart from that, there are many studies that have been carried out with various results. Putri, Pratolo & Setiani (2019) investigated the alternative assessment of EFL students' oral competence. In their study they figured out how the alternative assessment was implemented and the constraints the teachers found. Wen & Tsai, (2006) involved 280 students at 2 universities in Taiwan, found that half of the participants gave positive opinions about the application of peer assessment, then Pandu (2016) in his study analyzing 25 Indonesian students' opinions about the implementation of peer assessment, found positive results. Almost all students think that there are many benefits that they get from their peers after participating in peer assessment for example they are becoming more motivated in their studies. Meanwhile, Zou et al., (2018) who conducted a study of the perceptions of students about online peer assessment in post-graduate studies at six universities in the United States obtained different results. It was found that peer assessment seemed unfair and peers were not qualified for evaluating student work.

Different from those studies, this present study investigates students' view on the use of peer-assessment through Facebook in teaching writing. The researcher adopted and adapted the methods of the study conducted by (Awaludin, 2015), Meletiadou (2012), and Shih (2013). For that reason, this study focuses on analyzing students' opinions about the implementation of peer assessment conducted via Facebook in motivating and improving students writing skill.

METHOD

This study employed qualitative research design. All process in collecting, analyzing, interpreting and reporting the data followed what Creswell (2013) suggested. This design is very appropriate to analyze a social phenomenon that often encounter in daily life. Nowadays so many people around the globe use Facebook as one of the social media to connect each other and stay connected to the world. In an education sector, Facebook is then used to help students learn. Therefore in this study Facebook is used as a media for peer assessment, especially to assess the students' writing skill. The subjects of this study were the students of a private university in Yogyakarta, Indonesia who had experience in doing peer-assessment through Facebook. The number of students involved in this study was one group consisting of 5 females and 3 males who met the criteria. Then, in data collection, the interview technique was applied to see how students think about the implementation of Facebook as the media used for peer-assessment. The interview was conducted via telephone with the focus on how they felt about the implementation of peer assessment using Facebook. In analyzing the data, the researcher started out with arranging comments from the interview transcription. The transcription helps the researcher to analyze the information being accrued. In creating a descriptive comment, there are a few underlying keynotes together with description, factors, and emotional responses (Cooper et al., 2012).

FINDINGS

The finding was formulated from the analysis of the answer given in interview. The discussion is summarized in three headings: the usage, motivation, and feedback and efficiency after the implementation of peer-assessment through

Facebook. For ethical reasons, the names of participants are initialized as SPR, SKD, SKT and so on.

Motivating students to write.

The participants explained that they get benefit toward the implementation of peer-assessment. They believe that this technique can motivate them to write better. Peer assessments trigger their feelings to show their best, and it makes them prepare before writing and pay attention to important things in their writing to look perfect and to get good comments from their peers.

"After being corrected by a friend, we are ashamed if you arrive in writing and still get it wrong then. So, with the peer assessment, it motivates me to write better so that the next one is corrected with friends, not too many mistakes." (SKD)

Motivated students will immediately react to the comments given by their friends. They will immediately make changes to their work if it is considered as lacking. This is seen as competition by students because they will be judged by their peers and will correct the work of their peers. This activity provides students to find out their mistakes in writing and know the mistakes that other students did that can also be a reflection for them. High motivation can increase student interest in learning. In this case, students will look for sources that can help them to improve their understanding in writing, such as reading material about writing, looking for examples of good writing or also asking the lecturer about how to write good and right while students who have no motivation will be inclined to do nothing and remain silent.

Feeling more comfortable.

The results of this study can also be seen, precisely from the 6 participants that felt a positive impact after the implementation of this technique. Meanwhile, there are 2 participants who disagree with this technical implementation because they have done it and they are not satisfied with the results they got. This finding is reinforced by the answer to the second question in which some students feel comfortable with the evaluation conducted by their peers. They do not feel pressured like they usually experience with lecturers.

"Online peer assessment through Facebook feels more comfortable to be evaluated by my friend" (SPR)

"Doing online peer assessment, I think it was helpful" (SKL)

The statement above implies that students have a positive response toward the implementation of peer assessment. Most students are satisfied with the grades and comments given by their peers. Therefore they feel comfortable and do not hesitate to show the results of their work to their friends to be assessed. It is different when their work must be assessed by lecturers, they tend to be afraid. The implementation of online peer assessment is also very enjoyable for students because it can be done anywhere and anytime without the hassle of bringing their work and arranging time to meet.

Efficient Way of Assessment.

The participants stated that online peer-assessment is more efficient than offline peer-assessment because they can do it anytime and anywhere. In addition, they do not have to meet their friend for assessing.

"Using peer assessment through Facebook was made it easier for us in terms of time so it's more flexible and also it's practical"

This helps and facilitates students in completing their writing assignments efficiently and effectively. Students can directly contact their friends or post their assignments to their Facebook homepage so that their friends can give comment. Students no longer need to spend their time to meet their friends or come to their homes and give their writing results for commenting.

Providing Positive Feedback.

The application of peer assessment provides new knowledge for participants. They become more aware on how to correct

someone's writing properly and correctly. This has a positive impact on students in the future when they have to write. They become more mindful of anything that could be a problem in their writing. Besides, this technique also improves students' critical thinking skills because they have to be careful in finding problems that are found in their friends' work.

"Peer-assessment is rich in feedback, not only am I able to know what my mistakes in writing are, what are the advantages but I can also give my knowledge to others via online" (SKDL) 14

Students also think that they also need to be more critical of their own work before the work of their peers. This is done because they are aware of the importance of self-reflection before judging others.

13. DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study is to analyze the use of peer assessments at the University level, and see how the implementation of peer-assessment can motivate students and improve students' writing skill. It was found that students view peer assessment methods as positive. Based on the result, it can be concluded that the application of peer-assessment can motivate students to write better. This is due to the intrinsic influence of students to show their best results. Basically, students naturally consider this activity in competition. Therefore, before writing they make careful preparations in order to give perfect results. Students are also motivated because they feel comfortable with the assessment process carried out by their peers without feeling depressed. In addition, peer assessment improved students' ability to write because it provides students to gain new knowledge, especially in evaluating their own writing or others. Their critical thinking also increases because they must be careful in judging and being assessed so that mistakes do not occur that can be detrimental to one another.

High motivation becomes the main determinant of why peer assessment is right to be applied among students because the enthusiasm in learning can help students to find new things that are useful for themselves, especially in writing. If students have low motivation they will not have more effort to do their best in writing, they also will not care about the evaluation given by their friends even fatal they will give an inaccurate assessment of their friends and seem dishonest. High motivation is also due to a sense of comfort in learning that is due to closeness to one another or a feeling of calm without any fear to be scolded by their evaluators. This has a very positive impact on the teaching and learning process. Therefore, peer-assessment is very suitable to be applied in the learning process not just an evaluation part. In line with this, Meletiadou (2012) said that peer-assessment can ensure the active participation of students in adolescent EFL writing classes. In this present study the subjects were adult EFL learners. Jacobs and Newton (2014) argued that the application of peer assessment is more appropriate to be applied among the university students where at this level students are better able to provide opinions and comments. This statement proved that students can be more motivated to be active in the class implementing peer-assessment. Mubarak (2017) has discovered that the implementation peer-assessment can even neglect the anxiety of the students. Students become more enthusiastic because they feel it as a competition inside of the class so that they force themselves to do better (Yang, 2019).

The other factor that can motivate the students to write better is coming from their peer who assess them. When evaluating their friends, students do not only focus on the task but also try to tutor their partners by giving some tips to write better as what was explained by Zaharie and Osoian (2016) that a peer review is reciprocal rule community. These benefits are gained from the use of Facebook as the media which is able to facilitate the application of Peer-Assessment. The Facebook group feature and the comments column make this activity easier.

This study has successfully proved that peer-assessment function as an effective technique in the context of improving

writing skills. Nevertheless, there needs to be training and monitoring from the teachers in the implementation of peer-assessment (Mubarak, 2017). In this case, the teacher must take role in bringing the students into same perception so that they can understand how to assess their peers' writing. Moreover, peer-assessment is a part that is determined by the bond of relations, hostility, or different processes of power, recognition of people, awareness of blame as socially painful or possibly agreement to defer to normal scores, resulting in a lack of diversity. Each assessor and one will know-how early nervousness about peer assessment methods. Providing initial feedback can reduce anxiety and increase the reception of feedback in the future. In addition, students must be told that peer assessment involves students directly in learning, and can promote critical thinking, responsibility, and motivation. Lecturers can even illustrate that peer assessment can increase selection and interest, activity and interactivity, identification and bonding, trust, and feelings of others with others. Social factors do need attention in the application of this method. Students must be aware of openness in accepting other people's opinions, giving criticism politely so as not to harm social relations between them. This is where the role of the teacher is needed because there is a need for someone who is able to mature other people

CONCLUSION

This study provides information about students' opinions in the implementation of peer-assessment. This current study concentrates on the impact of applying peer assessment in motivating students in writing and how this technique improves students' writing skill. It can be concluded that the implementation of peer-assessment is very effective for students, especially among high-level students because there is good learning for students to forge themselves in the academic life. It can be seen that the participants respond as positive on how this technique can motivate them and also the effects that enhance their writing skills and critical mindset. However, there are several issues that must be considered in the implementation of this technique, such as the readiness of students to assess their peers. Otherwise, there will be a mistake that can result in an evaluation that is not on target.

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