

Challenges and Opportunities to the Use of Google Docs Sharing for Realtime Writing Task Feedback: Inclusive ESL Classroom at Jakarta Multicultural School

Athifah Utami, Jakarta Multicultural School, Indonesia

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Abstracts

The integration of technology in language learning is not something new in the formal education context. This study explores the challenges and opportunities in real teaching and learning experiences toward the use of Google Docs Sharing for real-time feedback in writing task applied in inclusive lower secondary level context. Through observation and experiment in English Second Language (ESL) class at Jakarta Multicultural School (JMS), this study will evaluate the challenges for students to understand the feedbacks from teacher, the opportunities to apply this approach in inclusive classroom with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) students, and the students' perspective upon the lesson. The interviews will be conducted with ESL students (special needs and non-special needs students), other ESL teachers and a shadow teacher (an assistant teacher who helps special needs student) of ASD students. The research result will be completed after the second-semester finish and all the writing task cycles from all lower secondary levels have been done.

Keywords: writing task, real-time feedback, Google Docs Sharing, English Second Language (ESL), Inclusive Classroom, and Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD).

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Introduction

The immersion of technology in language teaching and learning is not something new in the formal education context. In Indonesia education system, the implementation of technology-based integration or e-learning has been widely known in both public and private education context. According to the survey result released by Esfindo in 2008 (E-school for Indonesia), the number of schools that have been registered and owned a learning site was about 187 schools in 20 provinces and most of the schools are in Java region. The survey result showed that the integration of technology in school is still very low compared to the number of schools in the region. In addition, in the capital city of Indonesia, Jakarta, there are 16 schools that have been implemented e-learning, yet this number is still very low compared to a total number of schools in the city which is around 2,546 schools. (Suhartanto & Junus, 2014). However, Indonesia's government has been putting this technology-based education as a concern since 2001 that specifically explained in the ICT National Plan. Based the ICT National Plan under Presidential Instruction No. 6/2001, it is stated that there are four priorities for the education field: Development of ICT networks for education and research; Development and implementation of ICT curricula; Use of ICT as an essential part of the curricula and learning tools in schools, universities and training centers; Facilitation of the use of internet for more efficient teaching-learning process. (Firman & Tola , 2008). These priorities have been implemented through several projects and initiatives conducted by the Ministry of Education in primary and secondary education fields, such as Wide Area Network (the project builds wireless based connection among schools in 30 cities); ICT for Vocational Education (established a forum and created a mailing as well as trained basic skills of information technology); School 2000 (connected 2000 upper secondary schools to the internet through an educational portal); Edukasi (provided internet-based learning materials for lower secondary, general upper secondary schools and vocational secondary schools students in some of the school subjects, including mathematics, physics, chemistry, biology, electronics, and information technology) (Firman & Tola , 2008).

In general, there are two purposes of e-learning integration in Indonesia based on its implementation model, a complementary and a substitution. A complementary model of e-learning applies face-to-face session and combine with the e-learning system. On the other hand, a substitution model uses the e-learning system as the main medium of the learning process. In Indonesia, a specific regulation made by the Ministry of Education under its instruction No. 107/U/2001 stated that in upper secondary school, the suggested model to be used by schools is a complementary model. This model is considered as the most effective model to be implemented at schools to enhance the learning process, where teachers are helped to deliver the additional materials through learning websites when it is not possible to be covered during the classroom session. In addition, teachers are allowed to open a virtual class, create quizzes for pre and post-test, open a discussion forum and create a video conference to replace the missing face-to-face session. For students, they can upload assignments, open the active the learning session or topic, follow and get involved in a discussion forum, do the quizzes and get the result of the quizzes right after the test. (Hartatik, Cahyaningsih, Purnomo, Hartono, & Tri Bawono, 2017). There are some well-known learning websites and applications are being used in Indonesia's schools (public and private school), such as Moodle, Schoology, Edmodo, Google Classroom and so forth. Those website domain and application are used to enhance the learning process as complementary or substitution model for most of the subjects in schools.

The varied learning websites are differed from one to another, especially their features, yet the main functions are moderately similar, is to enhance the learning process. In order to make it more efficient and effective, the approaches the teachers use in integrating technology into part of learning will boost the function of the technology itself. Take for example in the language class, there are a lot of approaches to engage students to be active learner through e-learning as the learning medium, such as collaborative reading and writing, video teleconference or online presentation, classroom discussion and many more.

In one of the private schools in South Tangerang, Indonesia, Jakarta Multicultural School (JMS) has been integrating technology into their learning process by using Google Classroom. In addition, this school accommodates varied students' abilities and they are all engaged in face-to-face and e-learning session. Therefore, this study examines the challenges and opportunities of the technology integration in the language classroom, especially in an inclusive classroom with ASD (Autism Spectrum Disorder) students.

Technology Integration In Language Classroom

English as Second Language Class (ESL)

English Second Language (ESL) is generally for students whom primary language or their home language, is other than English and would require additional English language support to develop reading, writing, listening and speaking skills. There are no typical There are no typical ESL students. They come from many linguistic and cultural backgrounds and have had a wide variety of life experiences. They can significantly enrich the life of the school and help enhance learning for all students (Special Programs, 1999). The need for ESL classes is growing throughout the world followed by the number of immigrants' movement to English speaking countries like England, Canada, USA, New Zealand and Australia (Thornton, 2009).

In Indonesia public school context, the Ministry of National Education released Decree No. 22/2006 on The Structure of National Curriculum. The decree requires English as a local content subject with an instruction period of up to 1 hour and 15 minutes per learning session. Public schools were given the freedom to start teaching English earlier than Grade 4 and were instructed to implement a competency-based curriculum developed at the Local Education Unit (Kurikulum Tingkat Satuan Terpadu – hereafter KTSP). In the following years, in 2013 Ministry of National Education conducted the piloting of Curriculum 2013 in 2,598 model elementary schools throughout the country, and a few months later major provinces such as DKI Jakarta (the capital region) banned all public elementary schools from teaching English during school hours. Recently, in 2015 the policy has changed, the Ministry of Education and Culture instructed schools to teach three languages: Indonesian as the national language, an indigenous language of the school's choice and English as a foreign language (Zein, 2017).

On the other hand, most of the private schools in Indonesia that are using international-based curriculum like Cambridge and International Baccalaureate (IB) program have a different timetable for their English subject. Take for example in Jakarta Multicultural School (JMS) that uses IB PYP Program for Year 1 to Year 5 (Primary), Cambridge Curriculum and JMS Program for Year 6 to Year 8 (Lower Secondary), Cambridge Curriculum for Year 9 to Year 10 (Upper Secondary) and IB Diploma Program for Year 11 to Year 12 (Upper Secondary). In this school, they conduct English lesson 5 (five) times a week for 50 (fifty) minutes per learning session. In Lower Secondary (Year 6 to Year 8), students are divided into two different classes for their English subject, English Second Language (ESL) and English First

Language (EFL). The designated of students into those classes based on the result of their English Placement Test (EPT) conducted prior to the semester 1 begin. The EPT consists of reading, writing and speaking skills.

Google Docs and Writing Task Feedback

There are numerous applications, programs, websites, and internet services that can help students to learn better in language class, one of the services is Google Docs. This free web-based Microsoft Word offered by Google Corporation allows their users to create, edit and store their documents online. The users can view their working document as it appeared at any time in the past and they can choose to return to an earlier version. This service supported by other features such as Google Documents, Google Spreadsheets, Google Presentations and Google Drawing (Suwantarathip & Wichadee, 2014). This review emphasizes on Google Document and how the real-time writing task feedbacks are given from teacher to students in English language class through a complementary model of the session.

Google Docs, as the online working tool, can help students in English language class especially in the writing skills. Supported by the capability to share the online working document to others make this service a beneficial tool to do a collaborative working and peer editing of students' writing task. According to Sharp (2009), the collaborative editing tools allow a group of individuals or students to edit a document instantaneously while they can view the changes made the others in real time (Suwantarathip & Wichadee, 2014). Therefore, as it is beneficial for collaborative working, the share document feature can help teachers as well to assist students in doing their writing task.

There are a lot of writing assistant services that can help people minimize their technical language issues (verb tenses, punctuation and spelling), such as Grammarly (to give general feedback on technical languages such as spellings, verb tenses and word choice, with free or a paid service options that enables users to adjust the feedback according to document type; Cambridge's Write & Improve (to give automatic feedback to non-native writers English in set writing assignments specified in the tool); Write-Away (an autocompletes writers' sentences with words taken from a corpus); Write Assistant (to integrate a bilingual Danish-English dictionary and predictive text as an add-in to Microsoft Word) (Tarp , Fisker, & Sepstrup, 2017). However, in this research, the real-time feedback that the teacher gave through Google Docs is not limited to the technical language issues. The feedbacks that are given in a time when students working on their writing task, are mainly aimed to keep students on track with the specific writing goals (based on the given rubric for different text type), scaffold students to brainstorm a starter ideas through online discussion (provide suggestion of reading material), remain any missing part of their writing before it is submitted as final work and gradually able to check students' progress. This kind of feedback approaches is given to only ESL students in Lower Secondary level at JMS.

Previous Studies

There are some previous studies discussed the use of Google Docs in English language class to help students improving their collaborative skill and writing skills. The latest research took place in San Francisco, United State was conducted by Woodrich and Fan (2017) about Google Docs and the collaborative writing in the middle school aimed to explores student participation in anonymous collaborative writing via Google Docs can lead to more successful products in a linguistically diverse eighth-grade English Language Arts classroom.

The researchers conducted their study in quantitative mode through face-to-face, online, and anonymous writing activities, a rubric, and a survey, to compare anonymous collaborative writing with other modalities, equalizes participation among students of varying language fluencies, and if anonymous collaborative writing, compared to other modalities, affect student comfort levels. They found that students of varying language fluencies participated more equally when they were able to remain anonymous. In addition, face-to-face writing showed the highest overall scores, and students enjoyed working on Google Docs.

Another research from Southeast Asian context was conducted by Suwantarathip and Wichadee (2014) about the effect of collaborative writing activity using Google Docs on students' writing abilities. The research compared writing abilities of students who collaborated on writing assignments using Google Docs with those working in groups in a face-to-face classroom. The researchers have conducted this experimental research with students enrolled in EN 012 course in the first semester of Academic Year of 2013. Through writing tests and questionnaires data collection, the researchers found that there is a significant difference between the two groups' writing mean score after the experiment. Students in the Google Docs' group could achieve higher mean scores compared to those working in a face-to-face classroom setting. Moreover, students reported that they had positive attitudes toward collaborative writing activity and high collaboration in their groups using Google Docs.

An Inclusive English Class – Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)

Inclusive English Class and ASD Language Skills

There are no typical students in ESL class, especially in our school, Jakarta Multicultural School (JMS). Some students are Indonesian-born with limited English language skills especially in speaking and writing, some have immigrated to Indonesia with their families after having received some formal education in their home countries (some of them have learned English as a foreign language) and some others are Indonesian-born with special needs, especially Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). Our ESL class accommodates special needs students by including them in our regular class with mainstream students (inclusive classroom). An inclusive classroom can be defined as including students of different conditions, backgrounds, and abilities to be in the same classroom.

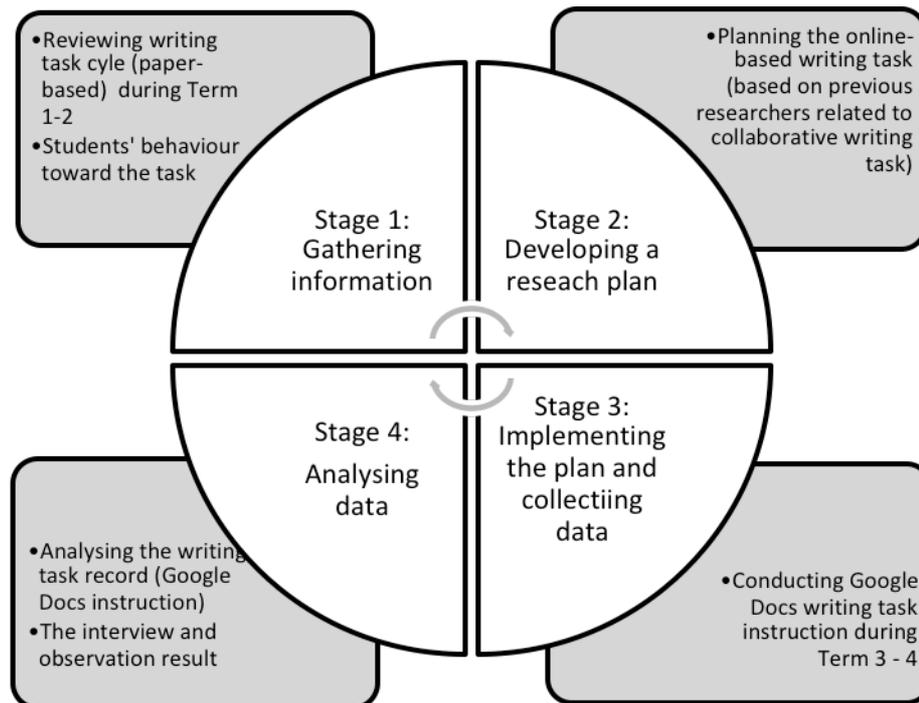
Theoretically, inclusion is related to philosophical decision that emphasizes 'the importance of bringing together diverse students, families, educators and community members', in the purpose of establishing supportive learning atmosphere that helps every individual student the feeling of respect, acceptance and the sense of belonging. Inclusive education recognizes that all students are learners who benefit from a challenging, meaningful, appropriate curriculum (Padmadewi & Artini, 2017).

Students with ASD have some linguistic differences due to their language impairment. They will reach the developmental indicators of their first language acquisition at different rates than the mainstream students. Theoretically, autism had been identified of having limitation in social interaction skills, restricted and repetitive behavior and activities. Their limitation in social interaction skills effects their oral language skills, students with ASD has a limitation in vocabulary and syntax, as well as the presence of unnatural pitch and intonation (Szymkowiak, 2013). Dockrell, et.al (2014) explained in their research that students with language impairment and ASD will experience difficulties in writing task, as well as it

impacts their writing product. In writing, ASD students are commonly having problems in producing a complex text with less used of difficult terms, as well as hardly able to focus on the main topic and hardly able to write the structure the ideas smoothly (Dockrell, 2014).

Research Method

A qualitative classroom action research was adopted in this study. Through the recording of real-time feedback on the Google Docs screen (teacher’s screen with screen o-metic application), interviews recordings, students' writing documents, and students' writing progress report.



Picture 1. Research outline

Subject and Setting

The subject of this study was ESL students (with and without ASD) of Lower Secondary Level (Year 6 to Year 8) and a shadow teacher of ASD student. There were 2 (two) students in Year 6, 4 (four) students in Year 7 (one student with ASD) and 3 (three) students in Year 8 (one student with ASD) and one shadow teacher. The participants' English language level was mostly in A1 – A2, it had been identified based on their English Placement Test (EPT) at the beginning of the semester. All the participants and one shadow teacher were being observed and interviewed in this study.

Table 1. Participants' Information

Class	Number of Student	Participants' Coding	Native Language	ASD student and Shadow Teacher	Average EPT Score
Year 6	2 (two) students	Student Y6.1 Student Y6.2	Student Y6.1: Indonesian Native Speaker Student Y6.2: Japanese Native speaker	No student with ASD	Y6.1: 61% Y6.2: 23%
Year 7	4 (four) students	Student Y7.1 (ASD) Student Y7.2 Student Y7.3 Student Y7.4	Student Y7.1 – Y7.3: Indonesian Native Speaker Student Y.4: Japanese Native speaker	1 (one) student with ASD	Y7.1: 41% Y7.2: 55% Y7.3: 50% Y7.4: 22%
Year 8	3 (three) students	Student Y8.1 (ASD) Student Y8.2 Student Y8.3	Student Y8.1 – Y8.2: Indonesian Native Speaker Student Y8.3: Korean Native speaker	1 (one) student with ASD and 1 (one) shadow teacher	Y8.1: 35% Y8.2: 49% Y8.3: 50%

Data Collection

The procedure of data collection of this study was begun by designing writing task instruction, documenting real-time feedback on Google Docs screen, designing semi-structure questions for the interview, deciding participants to be interviewed and conducting the interview.

Data Analysis and Procedure

Over and done with theory-based analysis toward the interview result based on the theory of Electronic feedback on second language writing: A retrospective and prospective essay on multimodality (Chang, Cunningham, Satar, & Strobl, 2017), Exploring writing in products in students with language impairments and autism spectrum disorders (Dockrell, Ricketts, Charman, & Lindsay, 2014) and Using Technology to Support Students with Autism Spectrum Disorders in the Writing Process: A Pilot Study (Asaro-Saddler, Knox, Meredith, & Akhmedjanova, 2015)

Finding And Discussion

Challenges and Opportunities to the Use of Google Docs Sharing for Realtime Writing Task Feedback in Inclusive ESL Classroom

According to the writing task cycle record (throughout the semesters) and the interview result with all the students (with and without ASD) in Lower Secondary Level and the shadow teacher of student with ASD, there were some challenges happened during the implementation of the task, as well as appeared some opportunities to develop this approach

better in the future. This finding was focused on discussing the phenomenon on students with ASD, students without ASD that showed significant progress and students without ASD that showed less significant progress in writing task throughout the semesters.

1. Challenges for students with ASD

According to the class observation during the writing task, there were some challenges had been found for students with ASD in doing the writing task: the problem to stay focus when working with computer and the need of extra supervision during the task. One of the students with ASD easily got distracted if she/he works with a computer, especially under the minimum supervision and assistance of his/her shadow teacher. It is confirmed from the result of the interview with the shadow teacher in responding to the question *“do you still remember Miss when I gave a writing task in the class, first I gave it on a paper and the second one we did it on Google Docs and I gave direct comment. Which one do you think is suitable, easier and helpful for special needs students? Especially for your student?”*

The shadow teacher explained:

I prefer for him to have a handwriting task (paper-based task) because when he used Microsoft Word, it was hard for him to stay focus, you know that right? He will busy opening a new tab or other things on computer, so it will take a longer time for him to finish the task, but it depends on the condition of the special needs students ya, every special need student has different needs and for Student Y8.1, this media is not really suitable for him. He can do it, but we need to be right beside him to supervise his work progress, so he cannot do it alone. The Student Y8.1 seems hardly able to stay focus for he must follow the fast rate of writing task feedback because he needed to directly revise his writing when he was doing the task. This condition supported by the student's shadow teacher in term of the cognitive skill in understanding the concept. The complex process of writing task might be challenging for students with ASD since it involved the process of organizing ideas and presenting the message (Graham & Harris, 2005 in Asaro-Saddler, Knox, Meredith, & Akhmedjanova, 2015). Therefore, the shadow teacher suggested having a paper-based writing task, because it might give him more time to think when Student Y8.1 needed to finish the task.

Then the shadow teacher responded to the question *“based on your observation, do you think Student Y8.1 has the same problems with Student Y7.1 (student with ASD in different Lower Secondary level)?”*

The shadow teacher explained:

...each of them has different problems and for Student Y8.1, his problem is in his focus and actually, he can think but his capability to understand the concept that is hard.

The shadow teacher said that every student with ASD has different needs and different problems in the classroom. This condition is confirmed to be true in some other researchers that explained students with ASD are not a homogeneous group, they vary in terms of language development, intellectual ability and adaptive functioning (Asaro-Saddler, Knox, Meredith, & Akhmedjanova, 2015). For the case of Student Y8.1, he is barely able to stay focus in the classroom, not only during the writing task but also in daily session and even in other classes. However, this condition might be affected by other factors such as the student's interest and learning motivation.

From two students with ASD, one student has shown significant issues in producing phrase, sentences, and a complete thought. In addition, their level of independence, spoken language fluency, written expression is different. Therefore, some issues were mostly found in Student Y8.1. Minor issues have shown from Student Y7.1 such as the need to be reminded to keep on track on his writing task, the need for instruction clarification, written comment clarification was found during the writing task cycle. The Student Y7.1 has a higher level of independence and language skill compare to Student Y8.1.

2. Challenges for students without ASD

The similar issues in generating and elaborating ideas had been found in a student without ASD. One of the students from less significant progress group preferred paper-based writing task. Based on her response to the question *“do you still remember when I gave a writing task in the class, first I gave it on a paper and you will receive the written feedback, then you will do the revision and you give it back to me. The second one, we did it on Google Docs and I gave direct comment. Which one do you prefer?”*

She said, *“the first one”* Then she was asked again *“so after you finish all the things, you get the revision? Why do you think it is easier for you?”*

She explained:

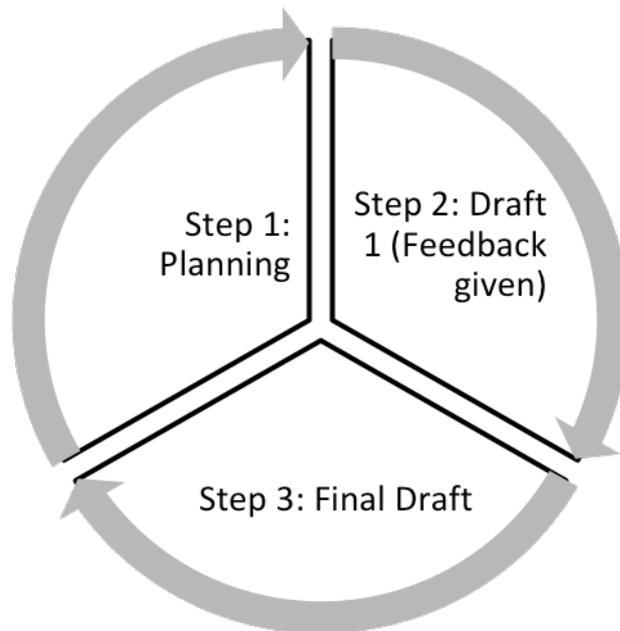
..because the second one, I think I confuse what should I write at that time, so I will forget the story, the things that I need to write...

She was one of the students in less significant progress group and the only student without ASD who preferred paper-based writing task. It is true that writing considered as a complex process of thinking and organizing ideas, then it is not only challenging for students with ASD, but also for most of the students with minimum writing skills (especially for students who have just learned English in less than a year). It is proven from her explanation and the class observation result, that she looked calmer when she was doing the writing task in paper-based mode compare to online-based, because in paper-based mode she could generate her ideas without any interruption from the real-time feedback.

Opportunities to the Use of Google Docs Sharing for Realtime Writing Task Feedback in Inclusive ESL Classroom

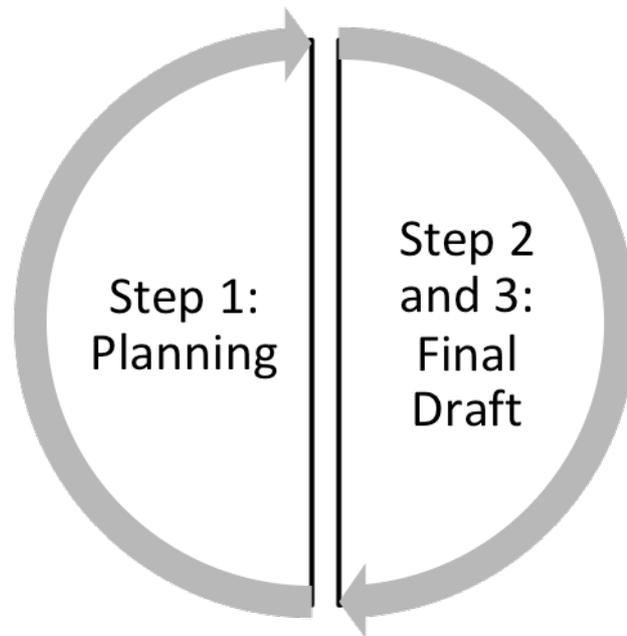
1. The efficiency of time to finish the writing task cycle

This research had been done in two writing task cycles throughout the semesters, Semester 1 (Term 1 to Term 2) for paper-based writing task and Semester 2 (Term 3 and Term 4) for Google Docs Sharing or online-based writing task. Here is the comparison of the writing task cycles throughout the semesters.



Picture 2. Paper-based Writing Task (Term 1 to Term 2)

The paper-based writing task basically took one to two weeks to finish the whole step (from Step 1 to Step 3). In Step 1: Planning, they are required to draw mind-map – their brainstorming result, their main points and any resources that they are planning to put in their writing. They were expected to finish Step 1 in one meeting (one meeting equal to 50 minutes long) or less. In Step 2: First Draft, they can start to write by following the requirements of the task such as topic, word count, tenses used and any specific requirements. It is called “First Draft” because this draft will be reviewed by the teacher and it will be given to the students to be revised and later it will be called “Final Draft”. In this task, students have a maximum of three meetings (3 times of 50 minutes) to finish the task, depends on the task requirements and level of difficulty. After they finished Step 1 and Step 2, the teacher would have two meetings (2 times of 50 minutes) maximum to read and give feedback of their writing, and after that, the “First Draft” is ready to be given back to the students. At the last, in Step 3: Final Draft, students were given one meeting only to revise their writing. In total, there were 6 (six) meetings needed to finish the whole step of paper-based writing task cycle. On the other hand, the Google Docs Sharing or online-based writing task can be finished in 2 (two) steps only with the same content of instruct.



Picture 2. Online-based (Google Docs) writing task (Term 3 and Term 4)

The online-based writing task only took maximum one week to finish the whole process (Step 1 and Step 2) because the feedbacks were given while students working on their writing task, so it did not need to pass through the Step 2: First Draft (as it was implemented in paper-based writing task).

2. Minimizing issues on ASD students' handwriting

According to some previous researches, it has been discussed that the handwriting of students with ASD mostly have minor quality in letter formation compare to their peers (Fuentes, Mostofsky, & Bastian, 2009 in Dockrell, Ricketts, Charman, & Lindsay, 2014).

The deficit may be problematic for two reasons; first, students who have difficulty with handwriting tend to produce briefer pieces so that they do not have to endure the physical struggle of writing (Asaro-Saddler & Bak, 2014); and second, neatness of a written product tends to impact a teacher's rating of a writing sample. Specifically, illegible papers tend to score lower than those of equal quality that are written neatly (Graham, Harris, & Hebert, 2011 in Dockrell, Ricketts, Charman, & Lindsay, 2014).

It is proven that all my ASD students have problems with the eligibility of their handwriting. Some of them have a problem in differentiating lower-case and upper-case letters and another one has a problem in letter construction. It was a challenge for the teacher to understand students handwriting and their writing content. Therefore, by having the type-based writing task using Google Docs, it is a way easier for the teacher to read and evaluate ASD students' handwriting. In addition, the auto-correct and suggested-word feature help students in spelling and word choice.

3. Increase students' motivation

According to the interview result, 7 (seven) out of 9 (nine) students preferred to do the writing task in Google Docs.

Student Y7.1 said “I prefer Google Docs, because when we use Google Docs, we can get the feedback easily, so we do not need to wait for next week and we can change it directly”

Student Y7.2 said “In Google Docs I just need to type it and fix it, so it is easier, and I do not need to read it all”

Student Y8.2 said, “I choose Google Docs because I can directly edit my text.”

Some students pointed out the efficiency of time in doing writing task in Google Docs compare to paper-based and one of them pointed out her/his preference in working with electronic, which only require them to type rather than to write. It is in line with the previous study that explained the review features in Microsoft Word, have been shown to contribute to student preference for written e-feedback over handwritten comments (Ho, 2015 in Chang, Cunningham, Satar, & Strobl, 2017).

Since, all the students are exposed by technology screen in this era, which makes them easier to access any information and to do some activities online (watching, phoning, video calling), it is not surprising that they prefer to work on screen compare on paper. In addition, there were two different text types that students usually had in their writing task; informative text (non-fiction) and narrative text (fiction) writing. However, only the informative text could increase students’ motivation in doing writing task in Google Docs. It was indicated some reasons behind this preference, the informative text required them to do research (finding facts) for their writing, to insert some graphics/illustration/photos and to interact-and-share their writing with peers. Therefore, this integration helps them to find joy within the writing task and as the bridging point of their preference in technology and their need for improving their language skills.

Conclusion

Through two cycles of writing tasks from semester one to semester two, class observation and interview, it can be concluded that the challenges happened not only for a student with ASD but also for a student without ASD with minimum experience of English language learning (less significant progress group), to follow the pace in real-time feedback. However, the challenges were followed by the opportunities to develop this approach better in the future, time efficiency, students’ handwriting issues, and students’ motivation were the major opportunities can be taken as the biggest solution in nowadays language class as well as in inclusive classroom setting. It is suggested to conduct a similar research to know the challenges and opportunities in a bigger classroom context since this study was conducted in a small classroom setting with less than 10 (ten) students in total, so it was quite possible for a teacher to give the real-time feedback.

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Contact email: athifah.utami@outlook.com