

## The Effect of Software-Supported Electronic Feedback on L2 Learners' Writing Proficiency

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### Abstract

This study explores the student and teacher benefits of using electronic mail (e-mail) in an EFL writing class. EFL essay writing is considered one of the most important academic courses that should help develop students' skills to write cohesively and coherently. Teachers' feedback plays a crucial role in improving and enhancing the quality of students' written essays. The aim of the current study was to shed light on the potential of e-feedback for language learners and their teachers in an EFL essay writing class. The research project will begin with a detailed review of current literature regarding technology enhanced feedback practice. In view of the exploratory nature of this study, and its context-specificity, qualitative research is an appropriate choice. The study is administered during 6 months, and will use Pretest posttest control group design which is a one of common true experimental designs and work in partnership with two groups, an experimental group and a control group, to undertake a comparative study of their experiences of receiving electronic feedback and traditional feedback. Each group consists of a teacher and 30 female intermediate ESL learners, whom are randomly selected and assigned to groups. By selecting female learners sex variable is held constant. In experimental group learners are given feedback via E-mail by the use of Electronic Feedback Software. Electronic Feedback developed by Dr Phil Denton is an MS Office Marking Assistant that can generate and email MS Word processed reports to students. The software can return considerably more feedback to students, in a shorter space of time, than traditional approaches would normally allow. In control group learners are given traditional face to face classroom feedback. Then two groups are compared using t-test statistics. Finally a questionnaire is administered to experimental group to investigate the potential of e-feedback in improving EFL students' essay writing skills. Essays are scored by analytic approach. This study has got two innovative dimensions, one being software-supported and the other being electronic. The current study aims at fulfilling a number of things. First, it aims at integrating technology in language teaching and learning in general and essay writing in particular. Second, it seeks to understand students and their teachers' views about using e-feedback in developing their quality of written essays. Third, it aims at investigating students' experiences of electronic peer feedback. Finally, it aims at highlighting teachers' experiences of providing e-feedback to their student-teachers in the essay writing course. Findings of the study revealed learners in experimental group outperformed those in control group and electronic feedback as a new pedagogic practice was generally effective in terms of providing positive learning environment different from the traditional physical classroom environment, encouraging students' responsibility for their own written work, facilitating peer and teacher collaboration, increasing student participation, sharing learned outcomes between students, and giving writing feedback to students electronically was a well-received and helpful pedagogic practice. Thus, the current study recommends the use of electronic feedback as a solution to help both teachers and students overcome the feedback related challenges and improve students' proficiency in essay writing.