
The use of electronic feedback via Microsoft Word in promoting students' writing skills

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A B S T R A C T

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Students' writing skills were an essential component of language learning. However, in practice, teachers often provided limited feedback, and many students struggled to improve their writing. In the digital era, electronic feedback has emerged as a potential strategy to support students' writing development. This study aimed to explore the use of electronic feedback in Microsoft Word to develop students' writing skills. A qualitative case study research design was employed, involving 15 fourth-semester undergraduate students as participants. Data were collected through observation, documentation, and analysis of students' written assignments. The findings indicated that electronic feedback provided through Microsoft Word, such as comments and track changes, could help students identify errors in grammar and vocabulary and support more effective revision. In addition, this type of feedback appeared to enhance students' motivation and engagement in the writing process. Therefore, electronic feedback in Microsoft Word could be considered a useful strategy to support students' writing development in English language learning.

1. INTRODUCTION

Writing is widely recognized as one of the most essential skills in learning English as a Foreign Language (EFL). Through writing, learners can express ideas, construct arguments, and communicate information in a structured, coherent manner (Ramadhani, 2024). Writing competence is particularly important in academic contexts, as it reflects students' cognitive processes in organizing ideas, applying prior linguistic knowledge, and refining their thoughts for clarity (Mao et al., 2024); (Witari & Mahardika, 2024). However, developing writing proficiency remains a significant challenge for many EFL learners due to difficulties with grammar, vocabulary use, coherence, and organization of ideas (Sulaymanovna, 2025). Even for most fluent English speakers, advanced academic writing in English is a challenging task to cope with (Rinda et al., 2022). As a result, many students struggle to produce clear and well-structured texts.

Feedback has long been considered a crucial pedagogical element in promoting students' writing development in EFL classrooms. It enables learners to identify their errors, improve language accuracy, and revise their writing more effectively (Pertiwi & Ashadi, 2024). One commonly used approach is written corrective feedback (WCF), which teachers or peers can provide to support improvements in grammar, vocabulary, and overall text organization (Rahayu, Dwi., Sagimin, 2024); (Rizkiani, Siska., Bhuana, Gartika Pandu., & Rizqiya, 2020). Previous studies have shown that feedback plays a significant role in helping learners recognize their weaknesses and develop strategies for improvement in subsequent writing tasks (Sahmadan & Hasan, 2023). Moreover, feedback can enhance learner engagement and foster

self-regulated learning by encouraging goal-setting and a sense of ownership in the writing process.

Advancements in educational technology have transformed the way feedback is delivered in language learning (Billah, 2024). With the increasing integration of digital tools in education, electronic feedback has emerged as a promising alternative to traditional paper-based feedback (Yulia & Amirudin, 2020). Electronic feedback refers to feedback provided via digital platforms or software, enabling teachers to comment on, edit, and track changes in students' writing (Rahmayanti et al., 2020); (Bansa et al., 2021). The immediacy, clarity, and accessibility of electronic feedback may facilitate students' revision processes and increase their engagement in writing tasks (Billah, 2024). Furthermore, technology-mediated feedback can provide more detailed and timely guidance, particularly during the revision stage (Saragih, N, A., Madya, S., Siregar, R.A., Saragih, 2021)

In the context of academic writing, information and communication technology (ICT) brings implications for the writing process and students' participation in writing classes (Nurisma et al., 2024). Microsoft Word is one of the most commonly used ICT tools in writing instruction. It provides various features that support electronic feedback, such as comments, track changes, and built-in grammar-checking tools. These features enable teachers to provide targeted feedback, identify errors, and systematically monitor students' revisions. Previous studies. It has been shown that using Microsoft Word in writing classrooms can improve the effectiveness of feedback and increase students' engagement during the revision process (Amrizal., Rukmini et al., 2024). With these features, students can more clearly recognize their mistakes and revise their writing multiple times.

Several studies have examined the role of feedback in improving EFL students' writing performance. For instance, Putri et al. (2024) found that written corrective feedback significantly improves students' writing accuracy and language awareness (Putri et al., 2024). Similarly, Abri et al. (2021) reported that the integration of peer feedback can enhance students' writing ability as well as their critical thinking skills (Abri et al., 2021). In addition, feedback delivered through digital platforms, including automated and electronic feedback systems, has been shown to support students' writing development and increase their engagement in the revision process (Nugroho & Benecia, 2022).

However, despite the growing body of research on feedback in EFL writing, several gaps remain. Many previous studies have focused on traditional written feedback or automated feedback systems, with limited attention to the use of simple and widely accessible digital tools, such as Microsoft Word, in classroom-based writing instruction (Amrizal., Rukmini et al., 2024). Furthermore, although the benefits of written corrective feedback are well documented, there remains a need to explore how electronic feedback delivered via commonly used applications can support students' writing development in real Classroom contexts.

Although numerous studies have investigated written and technology-enhanced feedback in EFL writing instruction, the use of electronic feedback via common word-processing software, such as Microsoft Word, has received relatively limited attention. Most existing studies focus on automated feedback systems or online learning platforms rather than on practical, widely accessible classroom tools. Further research is needed to explore how Microsoft Word-based electronic feedback can support students' writing development and facilitate the revision process in EFL classroom contexts. Therefore, this study aims to explore the use of electronic feedback in Microsoft Word to develop students' writing skills. Specifically, it examines how feedback features in Microsoft Word, such as comments and track

changes, help students revise and improve their writing.

2. METHOD

2.1 Research Design

This study employed a qualitative case study research design to explore how electronic feedback delivered through Microsoft Word supports students' writing development. This design was appropriate as it enabled the researcher to examine learning processes within a natural classroom setting without manipulating variables. The study focused on how students used electronic feedback to revise and improve their writing. In this approach, students' drafts and revisions were analyzed to identify changes after receiving feedback.

2.2 Research Setting

This study was conducted in a college-level English as a Foreign Language (EFL) writing class. In this course, students were assigned various writing tasks requiring them to produce written texts. All assignments were submitted digitally, and the instructor provided feedback using Microsoft Word features, such as comments and track changes. This setting allowed the researcher to observe how electronic feedback was integrated into the writing process and how students responded to it.

2.3 Participants

The participants of this study were fifteen fourth-semester students from the English Education Department. They were selected using purposive sampling to ensure their relevance to the research objectives. The selected participants had basic writing proficiency and consistently submitted their assignments using Microsoft Word. This selection enabled the researcher to obtain relevant data on how electronic feedback supports students' writing development.

2.4 Data Collection Techniques

Data were collected through three main techniques: observation, documentation, and analysis of students' written work. First, classroom observations were conducted to examine how the instructor delivered electronic feedback and how students responded. The focus was on students' engagement and their interaction with the feedback. Second, the documentation included students' initial drafts, revised versions, and the instructor's feedback, all provided through Microsoft Word. These documents were used to track revisions and identify changes in students' writing. Third, students' written work was analyzed to identify improvements in grammar, vocabulary, sentence structure, and coherence.

2.5 Data Analysis Technique

The data were analyzed using descriptive qualitative analysis. First, the data obtained from observation and documentation were organized systematically. Next, students' initial drafts were compared with their revised versions to identify patterns of revision after receiving electronic feedback. The analysis focused on key aspects of writing, including grammar accuracy, vocabulary use, sentence structure, and coherence. To enhance analytical clarity, recurring patterns of changes were categorized and interpreted. Finally, the findings were

interpreted to explain how electronic feedback through Microsoft Word supports students' writing development.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Results

The findings of this study indicated that electronic feedback delivered through Microsoft Word supported students' writing development in several aspects, including language accuracy (grammar and vocabulary), organization and coherence, student engagement and revision activity, and students' motivation. The analysis is based on classroom observations and comparisons between students' initial drafts and revised versions.

3.1.1 Improvement in Language Accuracy

The analysis of students' drafts showed that electronic feedback helped students identify and correct errors in grammar and vocabulary. This was evident from recurring patterns of revision across the data.

Table 1. Examples of Grammar Revisions

No.	Initial Draft	Revised Version
1.	She go to school with his friends every morning.	She goes to school with her friends every morning.
2.	They was very happy last night.	They were very happy last night.
3.	I am agree with his opinion.	I agree with his opinion.
4.	I am study English now.	I am studying English now.
5.	I am having lunch while you call me yesterday.	I was having lunch when you called me yesterday.
6.	I do not can understand the topic.	I can not understand the topic.
7.	My cats has four paws.	My cats have four paws.

Table 2. Examples of Vocabulary Revisions

No.	Initial Draft	Revised Version
1.	I very like that blue dress.	I really like that blue dress.
2.	Tika feels boring in the class.	Tika feels bored in the class.
3.	The teacher gives us many knowledge.	The teacher gives us a lot of knowledge.
4.	The material is delicious to learn.	The material is interesting to learn.
5.	He very smart and cool boy.	He is a very smart and cool boy.

3.1.2 Development of Writing Organization and Coherence

In addition to language accuracy, students' ability to organize their ideas also improved. In several cases, students' initial drafts lacked clear topic sentences and logical progression. After receiving feedback, their revised texts showed more structured organization. Below are the the example of students' initial writing organization and coherence and the revised version.

Table 3. Example of Organization and Coherence Improvement

No.	Aspect	Initial Draft	Revised Version
1.	Paragraph	English is important. Many people use English. I study English every day. It is difficult, but I try.	English is an important language used by many people around the world. Therefore, I study English every day, even though it is difficult sometimes.

No.	Aspect	Initial Draft	Revised Version
2.	Paragraph	I have a best friend. She always helps me. We study together. We also play together.	I have a best friend who always helps me. We often study and spend time playing together, which strengthens our friendship.

The revised version demonstrated clearer idea development, better sentence connections, and improved coherence. The instructor's comments often included suggestions such as adding topic sentences, clarifying ideas, and improving paragraph flow. This revision indicated that feedback played a role in supporting students' higher-level writing skills, not only surface-level corrections.

3.1.3 Increased Student Engagement and Revision Activity

Observation data showed that students became more actively engaged in the revision process after receiving electronic feedback. This is reflected in the consistent changes found between initial and revised drafts. Students not only corrected the errors explicitly marked by the instructor but also made additional revisions independently. For instance, some students corrected punctuation errors (e.g., missing commas and periods), improved capitalization, and restructured unclear sentences that were not directly highlighted in the feedback. This pattern suggested that students began to develop awareness of their own writing issues and engaged more critically with their texts. Therefore, electronic feedback appeared to encourage active participation and promote self-editing behavior during the writing process.

3.1.4 Students' Motivation

The findings also suggested that electronic feedback contributed to increased student motivation and autonomy. Based on classroom observations, students appeared more willing to revise their work and showed greater interest in improving their writing. One possible explanation is that feedback provided through Microsoft Word was accessible and could be revisited at any time. Students were able to review comments and make revisions independently without relying solely on in-class explanations. This flexibility appeared to support students in taking greater responsibility for their own learning.

3.2 Discussion

The findings of this study highlight the important role of feedback in supporting students' writing development in EFL contexts. Writing is widely recognized as a complex skill that requires continuous practice and meaningful feedback to improve learners' accuracy and organization of ideas (Sukur & Mina, 2024). The results of this study support previous research suggesting that focused feedback helps students identify errors and revise their writing more systematically (Pertiwi & Ashadi, 2024); (Nugroho & Benecia, 2022). In this study, this was reflected in the observable changes between students' initial drafts and revised versions, particularly in grammar and vocabulary use.

Furthermore, the findings suggest that electronic feedback can enhance the effectiveness of written corrective feedback in writing instruction. Compared with traditional handwritten feedback, electronic feedback in Microsoft Word appears to offer clearer, more detailed guidance (Kholisyah, 2025). The use of features such as comments and track changes allows teachers to

give explicit corrections and explanations directly on students' texts. This supports previous studies indicating that technology-mediated feedback can provide more targeted and accessible guidance during the revision process (Amrizal., Rukmini et al., 2024); (Bansa et al., 2021). In the present study, students were able to revise their writing more accurately after receiving such feedback.

In addition to its pedagogical value, Microsoft Word as a medium for feedback offers practical advantages in the writing classroom. The visibility of revisions via track changes and the accessibility of comments enable students to more easily compare their original and revised texts. This finding is consistent with previous research suggesting that digital feedback tools make the revision process more interactive and flexible, allowing students to revisit feedback multiple times (Elhawwa et al., 2024). This may explain why students in this study showed increased engagement during the revision process.

The results also emphasize the importance of revision as a central stage in writing development. Writing is commonly viewed as a recursive process involving planning, drafting, revising, and editing. The use of electronic feedback appears to support students' active involvement in the revision stage, which is essential for improving writing quality. This is in line with previous studies (Putri et al., 2024); (Rahayu, Dwi., Sagimin, 2024), which suggests that constructive feedback encourages students to reflect critically on their writing and develop greater awareness of language use.

Another important finding is that electronic feedback supports improvements in specific aspects of writing, particularly grammar and vocabulary. In this study, many students initially struggled with grammatical structures. However, using track changes allowed them to see the corrections and understand the appropriate forms clearly. This finding supports earlier research, which highlights the role of written corrective feedback in enhancing grammatical accuracy in EFL writing (Akşit, 2009); (Rahmayanti et al., 2020).

In terms of affective factors, the findings suggest that electronic feedback may also contribute to increased student motivation and engagement. The accessibility of digital feedback allows students to revisit comments and revise their work independently, which may promote a sense of responsibility in the learning process. This is consistent with previous findings indicating that technology-supported feedback can reduce writing anxiety and increase students' confidence in revising their texts (Lv et al., 2021); (Sari et al., 2022).

However, these findings should be interpreted with caution. This study was conducted with a limited number of participants in a specific classroom context, which may affect the generalizability of the results. In addition, some students had difficulty interpreting certain feedback without further explanation. This suggests that while electronic feedback is beneficial, teacher guidance remains essential to ensure that students fully understand and apply the feedback provided.

4. CONCLUSION

This study explored the use of electronic feedback delivered via Microsoft Word to support students' writing development in an EFL context. The findings suggest that electronic feedback helps students identify and revise errors in grammar, vocabulary, sentence structure, and organization. The use of features such as comments and track changes appears to facilitate a clearer and more structured revision process.

In addition, the findings indicate that electronic feedback may enhance students' engagement and motivation during the writing process. The accessibility of digital feedback allows students to revisit comments and revise their work more independently, thereby supporting the development of learner autonomy. However, these findings should be interpreted with caution due to the limited number of participants and the specific classroom context in which the study was conducted. Furthermore, some students had difficulty interpreting feedback without additional explanation, underscoring the continued importance of teacher guidance.

The findings of this study have several practical implications for EFL writing instruction. Teachers may consider using Microsoft Word as a simple, accessible tool to provide clearer, more detailed feedback on students' writing. The use of electronic feedback can support a more interactive and transparent revision process. For future research, it is recommended to investigate the use of electronic feedback with a larger number of participants and in different educational contexts. Further studies may also explore the long-term impact of electronic feedback on students' writing development and examine how different types of feedback influence learning outcomes.

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