EFL students’ voices on digital peer feedback

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Abstract

Education and technology have been tailed by some conditions. Some parts in education are technologized including peer feedback activity, but the use of peer feedback combined with e-learning needs to be reviewed in terms of its practical use. The affordance of technology has enabled peer feedback to take place online. Despite the potential benefits that online peer feedback may offer, there is a lack of studies on the topic. Therefore, this paper aims to explore students’ perspectives on the benefits of online peer feedback. This research was done qualitatively. Interview to six students of English Language Education Department was conducted to gain the data. The academic year 2018/2019. In selecting the participants, purposive sampling was applied. The finding of this study revealed that the use of technology particularly in giving peer feedback brought some benefits e.g., increasing students’ autonomy and reviving student’s critical thinking. Besides, the cons of this phenomenon were that students felt the activity ruined their energy to stay focused in front of the screen to give others a review. Some suggestions in the last part of this paper also appeared as the researchers respond to this phenomenon.

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INTRODUCTION
For the sake of innovation in education, in this era education has integrated with technology which has an aim to ease the teaching method and learning process. A popular concept was raised by some scholars to respond this. Information Communication Technology (ICT) has raised as the effect of development of technology. Moreover, ICT offers interaction among the users. By knowing this function, some teaching activities has been integrated with ICT including English language teaching. For instance, the use of website materials could improve students’ skills in listening, speaking, and increase other students’ assessment score, (Mateo, 2012; Comi et al., 2017). Additionally, Ammanni and Aparanjani (2016) also stated that the use of Interactive White board to stimulate students in learning vocabularies.

Therefore, Information Communication Technology (ICT) is oftenly said as the way to boost modernization of education. ICT has given a positive impact to both students and teacher in terms of learning process. Along with the concept of ICT, modernization also brings a new tems in learning namely E-learning (Puspawati & Juharoh, 2021). The concept of using E-Learning is to make easier the process in education. Furthermore, E-learning can be described as non face-to-face instruction or face-to-face instruction delivered using digital device which has a purpose to promote learning material or topic discussion (Clark and Mayer, 2016). E-learning has a pivotal role in promoting education without any places and times restriction (Mayer, 2017). Therefore, in the education field, many things have collaborated with technology, including giving feedback.

In the larger discussion, if we break down the term of feedback, (Ravand & Rasekh, 2011) has said that feedback is essential in offering educational and professional literacy abilities to learners and it is a way to help learners negotiate access to information and procedures. Moreover, writing feedback also projected to be one-way teachers to promote students writing development. As mentioned by (Dayat, 2021) that in higher education particularly in EFL, the use of writing feedback is to improve students’ writing with two focus objectives which are knowledge and writing improvement. In addition, the researcher tries to take a topic related to feedback which is peer-feedback. The existence of peer-feedback based on (Wu & Schunn, 2021) is to decrease the workload of teacher in giving feedback. Moreover, the students were more facilitated in learning process by receiving and giving multi peer-feedback that feedback from teacher only (Cho & Schunn, 2007). Wirantaka (2019) supported, “The importance of feedback emerges with the development of student-centered learning especially in language education context” (p.1). On the other hand, giving feedback also train students’ critical thinking and perspective of something in several sides, because when they are giving feedback, they have to be critical person to see the weakness or the strength of someone’s work. Students might be in charge of obtaining solutions that are tailored to their own learning requirements (Choi & Ho, 2002 as cited in Sweeny, 2010). In addition, Peer feedback based on Sholihah (2015), peer feedback is an activity that allow students to give comment and review towards other students’ written work.

In correlation with modernization of education, the process of giving feedback has been technologized by several institutions by using E-learning. The ideas of integrating of giving feedback and E-Learning make some benefits not only for teachers but also for students. The invention of integrating feedback and E-Learning also want to implement an innovation to create students be an active learner. The development of E-learning also has an aim to make students as student centered learning environment (SCELE) (Hasibuan and Santsoso, 2005). For instance, Kassymova et al. (2020) argued that e-learning also ease the access of students and educational institution because it provided in an open access. Another researcher, Roblyer and Ekhaml (2001) as cited in (Appana, 2008) asserted that students show a positive effect of e-leaning towards their flexibility and responsiveness. In addition, Portability, immediacy, connection, ubiquity, and flexibility are technical aspects of e-learning. In addition, making the activity of giving peer-feedvak to be associated with E-learning is not that easy. Emphasized by (Wu & Schunn, 2021) that peer-feedback is a complex processing activity either giving or receiving feedback.

Therefore, this study intended to answer the research question: To what extent students' perspective about advantages and disadvantages doing online peer-feedback. This study is taking a gap between peer-feedback and e-learning. The researchers believe that the use of e-learning as a platform to allow students giving feedback also raise some issues and facts. Therefore, the study about giving online peer-feedback is intended by finding the benefit and the issues in attempting online peer-feedback in one of ELED in private university. Some suggestion for novice or department that want to apply this phenomenon also appear as the researchers’ responsibility towards this current study.
Feedback has an essential role in learning, because its activities have offering educational and professional literacy abilities to learners, and it is a way to help learners negotiate access to information and procedures, (Ravand & Rasekh, 2011). Moreover, there is two types of feedback that depend on different learners and situation: oral and written feedback. Teachers must consider various aspects while providing oral feedback, such as the length of therapy and the age of the student (Lyster et al., 2013) Furthermore, peer feedback, to put it simply, is the careful, unbiased evaluation of any scientific work that has been submitted for formal review (Ruiz et al., 2007). Therefore, teachers usually give peer feedback activity to their students as one of the assignment or event an assessment. Students need to see examples of writers revising their work after receiving criticism through think-alouds (or any other type of peer review) (Nelson & Schunn, 2007). The statement above is one of example of written feedback. In this example, it's worth noting that throughout the course of the semester, the students in the receiver group improved in both overall and specialized categories (Lundstrom & Baker, 2009).

In the development of the era, E-learning has used to ease teaching and learning process. Learning and technology were brought together in E-Learning (Aparicio et al., 2016). It was used for substituting the media of learning to be easier. Most schools use E-Learning as their ways to enhance students’ skill. Through E-Learning students could access the material of schools; search the explanation of the teachers about a subject and etc. Means that E-Learning could enhance students’ receptive skills and productive skills. Students can form deep bonds with their peers in an engaging online learning community (Murdock & Williams, 2011). In relation with the development of technology in education and the benefit of peer feedback, therefore, teachers start to conduct peer feedback activity in E-learning. This phenomena can be supported with the massive use of E-learning in higher education context. Digital peer feedback is powerful to promoting and stimulating students’ writing process, (Latifi et al., 2021). Besides, digital peer feedback also suggest a critical activity to students without having fear to the other students, (Al Abri et al., 2021). (Noroozi and Hatami (2019) supported that digital peer feedback on the argumentative writing help students in improving their ability. In addition, digital peer feedback also offers a supportive atmosphere of learning, proven by (Latifi et al., 2021) in their finding mentioned that students seemed attractive and engaged with the activity in digital peer feedback. Therefore, this research aimed to investigate students’ perception about advantages and disadvantages of using digital peer feedback.

Furthermore, some scholars tried to jump in to this topic discussion. In the past a decade ago some scholars discussed about online peer feedback, such as Lu and Law (2012); Latifi et al. (2021); Liu (2016) and many others. A Study about the effect of conducting an online peer review also has successfully conducted by Lu and Law (2012). With their article, "Online peer evaluation: Impacts of Cognitive and Emotional Feedback," they set out to investigate the effects of cognitive and affective feedback on online peer assessment. 181 thirteen- to fourteen-year-old Hong Kong secondary school pupils took part in this study. The goal of this study was to see if high school students’ participation in online peer evaluations influenced their success on LS projects. Because it allowed students to review the work of others, online peer evaluation was found to have a substantial impact on the quality of students’ project learning results. We talk about how grading affects people, then we go into cognitive and emotive feedback.

Another research by Liu et al. (2016) focused on the impact of peer review on the creative self-efficacy has similar research’s objectives, in which investigating peer feedback on education aspect. The recommended peer feedback was found to improve narrative performance without compromising creative self-efficacy. It’s also worth noting that this was a small-scale study that focused mostly on narrative activities. Two classes of 53 sixth graders from a northern Taiwanese primary school were chosen at random to be the study’s subjects. Students' creative performance and self-efficacy may be influenced by cultural differences. It would be fascinating to study how Web 2.0 learning activities affect the creative processes of students of all ages and from other nations. Despite this, many online Web 2.0 learning activities include a peer review method. Despite the sample size and creative task constraints, this study might nevertheless suggest ways to use Web 2.0 technology to enhance learning activities in other fields.

One more research by (Latifi et al., 2021) entitled How Does Online Peer Feedback Improve Argumentative Essay and Writing. The participants were 52 college students. Moreover, the participants were required to use E-learning platform namely Edutech platform by the researchers. Then, they were signed by the researchers to make an argumentative essay and also give feedback to others. The result revealed that students were more motivated in giving comments and suggestion
other students because they would be able to give comments and suggestion anonymously. Consequently, the students could give their critical comments without feeling intimidated. In the mean time, the argumentative essay by the students were also getting increased in terms of the quality because the others’ comments.

By recognizing the previous studies, the researchers indicate that the use of digital peer feedback need to be reviewed. Therefore, the digital peer feedback can be more applicable for students. Furthermore, from the previous studies mostly mentioned about the effects of online peer feedback, but the students’ views of online peer feedback have not been much discussed by scholars. Therefore, this current research aimed or research question: what extent students’ perspective about advantages and disadvantages doing online peer-feedback?

METHODS
This current study implemented a qualitative research design and used a qualitative method to gather and analyze the data. Individual interpretation and the need to report the complexity of a situation were discussed in the qualitative method (Cohen et al., 2018). By doing in-depth interview to six students in English Language Education Department. Interview would be used as the way how to collect the data toward the participants because interview could enrich the statements of the participants, besides the researchers also would get many information through interview (Adhabi & Anozie, 2017). The participants of this study were six students of an English Education Department in a university in Yogyakarta. The participants were suitable for this research because they had experienced using online peer-feedback during their learning process. Moreover, all of participants had been experiencing online peer-feedback for one semester in their second academic year. Therefore, they could express what their thought, feeling, and idea about online peer-feedback. In doing the in-depth interview we use ten questions toward the research and some questions related to the research question. The questions have been translated by the researcher to ease the participant understand the questions. The interview protocol was developed by the researchers using two types of questions by (Fraenkel at al., 2012) namely experience question and feeling question. Furthermore, the experience questions consist of questions that lead to the experiences that the participant have had. While the feeling questions will lead to what participants’ feeling in experiencing some phenomena. All of the recording of in-depth interviews had been transcribed and member checked for reliability and validity (Meriam, 1998)

The data were analysed using coding process. According to (Elliott, 2018) coding is a process of labelling or mapping data to suggest an overview of data. The process of coding started by giving some marks to participants’ responses. Then, it followed by selecting the same responses to be led into the categorized finding. The data were grouped based on participants’ responses. Furthermore, the research’s results were categorized into two focus, namely advantages and disadvantages of digital peer feedback. Then, the researcher put some responses into a big result by referring them with the research question: To what extent students’ perspective about advantages and disadvantages doing online peer-feedback. In addition, all of the participant names had been anonymously by the researcher to keep the privacy of the participants toward their responses. In presenting the result of interview process, the researcher had already set and excerpt the conversation into standardized English and the result.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION
Increasing students’ autonomy
The first finding that researcher found in the research was online peer feedback increase students’ autonomy. It was being said by participant 4. They assumed that in processing of giving peer feedback, they also opened other resources to make their comment and reviewed more credible and reliable

“I have to search for some theories on the internet just to make sure whether my correction true or not…”.#S4-Line4

It also indicated that when the students were doing online peer-feedback, they would use their skills or any kind of stuff that they have such internet or book just to make sure what they had given to the other students’ assignments, or their comments were right or not. The activity that had been done by the participants were really their initiatives not from the order of the teacher or someone. Meaning that, students were in the processing of giving online peer feedback, they tried to browse other resources
by themselves. This also indicated that students’ autonomy was played role in giving online peer feedback.

**Reviving students’ critical thinking**
The second advantage from online peer-feedback was students being more critical. The task that students had to review require them to evaluate and give a comment to others’ work. There was a popular taxonomy named bloom’s taxonomy that put evaluate in the middle of process of thinking. It could be assumed that evaluation process in online peer feedback also could be a decoyed to hook students’ critical thinking. It had been proved by participant 3 by saying:

“In finding someone’s mistake, I need to be focus to see the lack…”. #S3-Line17

The researchers assumed that the process of finding a lack of someone’s work could be interpreted as the process of reviving students’ critical thinking, because the students have to give more attention and increase their critical thinking just to see and make sure that there would be no errors on the other students’ assignments. It means that peer feedback activity is affect students’ critical thinking. Moreover, the other participant, they are participants 1, 2, 4, and 6 said:

“I got a new idea for making my work better by giving feedback…”. #S1-Line19
“ I think I have to revise my work after giving comments to my friends”. #S2-Line19
“...I tried to analyzed my friends’ work by comparing it to my own work”. #S4-Line15
“I do not why, why my friends’ writing seems like just on the surface”. #S6-Line17

By giving peer feedback also could be reference for corrector’s work. It meant that when the students see the other students’ assignments, they could get such inspiration, or they were realizing something wrong, or they got additional ideas to improve their own assignments.

**Unstable result**
Based on the interview, all of the six participants that researcher had chosen in this research had already took a part in online peer feedback in a course, they stated that online peer feedback also decrease their focus. The reasons of decreasing their focus were because of the amount of the task or others’ work that they have to be reviewed. It could be so, because the online-peer feedback activities require the students to review certain student’s fellow’s works. Due to the amount of the task that the participant got in online peer feedback. It was being said by participant 3 that:

“When I have 5 tasks to do corrections, only the first task will be the best correction…” #S3-Line25

One of the participants said that the amount of the task also would interfere their result in reviewing work. By knowing that, researchers assumed that if students have an assignment and it required the students to write an essay at least 1000 words, it means, in a day each student have to read 5000 words with different style and content. While the students also said they have other tasks to be done too. At the beginning, the students would give much attention to the other students’ assignments, but as time goes by their focus would be decreased because they tired or with the other results. It has been proven that online-peer feedback also has disadvantages for the students.

This current research had gotten the result for the research question: what did extent students’ perspective about advantages and disadvantages doing online peer-feedback? Then, the answer for advantages of online peer feedback were Increasing Students’ Autonomy and Reviving Students’ Critical Thinking, while for the disadvantage of doing online peer feedback was unstable result. For the advantages, Increasing Students’ Autonomy mean that students could get any new information and it opened their mind to get some new knowledge toward the other students. Therefore, the students who did the online peer feedback could give the best comments or suggestion toward the other student’s task. Then, for reviving students’ critical thinking mean, when students’ re-read their friends’ task, they had to give their own best comment, and it used their thought. Which the researchers could conclude that the students’ mean by used their own thought were used their critical thinking. For the disadvantage of doing online peer feedback, the participants’ answer was unstable result, where in this case it was because the total of task which the students would do was more than 3 of other students’
task, therefore it made them confused and could not be focus. When the students did not focus, the students believed that they had unstable comments and suggestion toward the other students’ task.

Discussion
Those advantages and disadvantages have answered the research question. Online-peerfeedback has two advantages and one disadvantage for students in one of department in a university in Yogyakarta. Starting from the advantages, participants mentioned that online peer-feedback increased their self-learning autonomous. On the other hand, online peer-feedback also revived their sense to be independent learning. It is also harmonized with (Appana, 2008) that every e-learning activity will raise students’ responsiveness and flexibility. This responsiveness makes students becoming autonomous. Other advantages of online peer feedback are increasing the students’ critical thinking. Furthermore, there were five out of six participants stated that the activity of online peer-feedback also reinforced them to be more critical. This could be happened because along giving the comment, the participants also had a chance to find other resources to be used in giving comment. This ocean of knowledge also require student to be more selective. Therefore, they felt that the critical thinking was needed in selecting the knowledge. (Li & Grion, 2019) stated that in giving peer feedback, students would use their critical thinking to find the best comments or suggestion toward their friends’ work. It is also in line with (Ke & Hoadley, 2009) that online learning and communities will build participant’s learning skill and knowledge. The learning skill of critical thinking also raised in the process of giving online peer feedback.

Researcher also found that online peer feedback giving a disadvantage which happen because of the amount of the task that students need to be reviewed. In this case, each student needs to review five tasks from their others. Researcher assumed that this happen because their effort has been already put on the criticizing of each task that they face. This finding also contradicted with Gazi (2009) said that e-learning process whatever it takes, it will build a positive attitude. In fact, the participant feel that the activity of online peer feedback decreased their focus and quality of their work comparing to one another work. Since the participants’ experiences in this research had to put review on more than five papers, so the finding found that the participants’ feedback were varied because the amount of the works to be reviewed by the students.

CONCLUSION
Development of technology impacts many things including the education side. Ten years ago, we only know that the learning activity should be done in the classroom with the teachers and students, but right now the appearing system in education called “E-Learning” change the terms. The teacher only needs to put a material in the e-learning system and the students will read and do the activity in the system and they all do not need to come to the class.

Previous studies had been conducted by the researcher toward E-learning system such as Murdock & Williams (2011) found that an interactive online learning community allows students to develop strong relationships with fellow students. It provides learners with opportunities to meet regularly with their partners for collaborative construction and improvement of knowledge about chosen topics. (Ke & Hoadley, 2009) also did research and found that a great deal of literature suggests that online learning communities are an effective way to promote the sharing and building of knowledge by learners.

Due to the limitation in this study such as participant and place of research, this study cannot measure the perspective of online peer feedback in a context especially Indonesian context. It is highly suggested to scholars to take wider participant number and place of research, so that the result of the research can be used as a representative of a context. As mentioned before in the introduction, the study also can be used to implicate the use of online peer-feedback for teacher or in a department. The researcher imply that online peer-feedback can be applied to boost students’ autonomy. However, the amount of task must be calculated properly so that students will be able to give feedback to others with stable result of each task.

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