

RETROSPECTIVE REFLECTION: UTILIZING GOOGLE CLASSROOM FOR LEARNING ENGLISH SKILLS IN ESP CONTEXT

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Abstract: Google classroom is one of the most popular Learning Management Systems (LMS) that can be used to provide students with online learning materials, assignments, projects, and tests. This paper aimed to share the teacher and students' experience in using Google Classroom to learn listening, speaking, writing, and reading skills in ESP context based on the students' opinion after utilizing it for half-semester. Google Classroom was used for reinforcement and collaborative assignments accompanying face to face class. Thirty students of Faculty of Agriculture Brawijaya University Malang were involved and were given a questionnaire halfway through the semester regarding their personal experience in using Google Classroom to learn the four English skills. Based on the results of the questionnaire, the students said that they were more comfortable using Google Classroom since it personalized learning for them. They could also do self-correction and had peer feedback before submitting the assignment. From the teacher's perspective, Google classroom helped engaging students actively and monitoring their progress. The paper also discusses some limitations and alternative solutions in using Google classroom.

Keywords: *Google Classroom, English skills, reflection, ESP*

INTRODUCTION

The rapid growth of technology has created many online platforms that make learning easier, one of which is called Learning Management System (LMS). Learning management system (LMS) is a web-enabled software platform for the effective management and distribution of teaching materials to learners (Govender & Govender, 2012). Many free and paid LMS platforms have been created with various learning features. Google Classroom is a top LMS and most-downloaded since it is free and has complete basic features, such as submit assignment and post materials, comments, due date, and assessment. It is also integrated with Gmail, Google docs, Google forms, Google drive, and YouTube. Google Classroom provides learners and teachers more flexibility connecting. It saves time and paper, making it simple to develop courses, distribute tasks, interact, and remain organized.

The focus of this paper is to explore the students' perceptions towards the use of Google classroom as online learning tools to accompany the ESP face-to-face class which can be used as an evaluation to design better learning in Google classroom. A previous study by Khalil (2018) was conducted to know the EFL university students' perception of Google Classroom as online collaborative tools in learning grammar in Palestine. According to the students, Google Applications assist to create a collaborative learning atmosphere as they promote student and student interactions with teachers and the majority of respondents prefer to use such apps for future classes as they can benefit from written feedback from teachers and simple access. Rabby, Zakaria, & Tonmoy (2018) worked on similar topic which was teaching Listening skill through Google Classroom in tertiary level in Bangladesh. The findings showed that Google Classroom can be used as a learning tool to enhance the listening skills of learners and the positive impact of using Google Classroom for tertiary-level learners proves its value.

In this study, the researcher utilized Google Classroom to give online assignment to foster ESP students' listening, speaking, reading, and listening in tertiary level. By doing so, the researcher believes that using Google Classroom will create a personal learning environment.

Personal learning environment is described as a variety of social media apps and instruments that simply connect formal and informal learning (Dabbagh & Kitsantas, 2012). Hakim (2016) asserted that students were more motivated when learning was done using e-learning systems that integrated multiple media. Instead of focusing only on student's perception, this current study also highlights the lecturer's retrospective reflection regarding the advantage and the limitation of Google classroom for teaching the four English skills. Retrospective reflection is a deliberate and simultaneous attempt to reconsider a process systematically to learn from it (Krogstie, 2009). Krogstie (2009) also affirmed that learning from experience is imperative and needs to be reflected.

The study aims at finding the answer regarding (1) ESP students' perception of using Google classroom as supplementary learning tool to learn the four English skills and (2) the advantages and limitations of Google classroom from the lecturers' retrospective reflection.

METHOD

The participants of this study were 30 students of Agriculture Faculty in Brawijaya University Malang who took English for Agriculture course. They were in the same class which had an equal number of female and male. At the beginning of the English course, they had to download Google Classroom application, register and sign in with their Gmail account, and join the class by using the class code from the teacher. If they did not have a Gmail account, they could not sign in or register the Google Classroom. Google Classroom was used for listening, speaking, reading and writing skills reinforcement and collaborative assignments accompanying face to face class.

The data were collected in March 2019. There were seven face-to-face meetings in the first half of the semester and Google classroom was used four times purposely to represent each skill. In the first section, the students had to do a listening task, in which they listened to one out of three agriculture talks taken from VOA English, answered the exercises individually, and submitted it. The second section was speaking activity where the students watched an agriculture video about Genetically Modified Food (GMF), and they had to create a one-minute video in pairs from their mobile phone talking about their opinion on GMF as well as the positive and negative impacts of GMF. The next section was small group reading activity (in a group of four students) in which the students read the agriculture text taken from IELTS reading exercises entitled "*The Risks Agriculture Faces in Developing Countries*" with 13 questions. In the last section, the students wrote one to two paragraphs reviewing an agricultural product based on their or other customers' experiences.

The questionnaires regarding students' perception of the use of Google classroom as supplementary course and collaborative assignment were distributed in the 7th meeting of face to face class. The questions in the questionnaire were adapted and modified from Muslimah (2018). The types of questions were classified into 4 aspects namely ease of use (6 items), usefulness (6 items), communication and interaction (4 items), and satisfaction (5 items). The variables were measured in a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The results were counted by tallying the number of each item answered and the data were then described descriptively. In addition, those who responded "disagree" or "strongly disagree" to the items in the questionnaire were asked to provide reasons for their responses.

In terms of the lecturer's perspective, the subject was the researcher as the ESP lecturer who utilized Google Classroom in her teaching of English for Agriculture course. She would share her experiences as a Google Classroom user in accessing the platform, managing the class, giving

instruction and feedback, scoring, recording and tracking students' progress, and interacting with the students.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The findings were divided into 2 sections, namely the students' responses and the lecturer's retrospective reflection. The students' responses were classified into four sections based on the students' questionnaire namely ease of use, usefulness, communication and interaction, and satisfaction.

Ease of Use

The following question items aimed to know the ease of using Google classroom and the results were presented as in Table 1.

Table 1 Ease of Use

No.	Statements	SD	D	N	A	SA
1.	Signing and Joining on to the Google Classroom	0	0	3	20	7
2.	Accessing course materials	0	0	5	17	8
3.	Submitting assignment	0	5	14	10	1
4.	Notification	0	18	9	3	0
5.	Uploading documents, pictures, audios, or videos	0	10	12	8	0
6.	Navigating the platform	0	2	5	19	4

N = 30

Notes: **SD**: Strongly Disagree; **D**: Disagree; **N**: Neutral; **A**: Agree; **SA**: Strongly Agree

According to the result of the questionnaire, signing and joining Google classroom was easy for the students as long as they have Gmail account and knew the class code. In joining the class, the students only needed to click the "+" icon on the top right of the front page and entered the class code. As the materials were presented on the front page in chronological dates from the newest to the oldest, access to the course materials was also easy. Regarding the ease of submitting the assignments, the students needed to upload documents either in words or pdf format, pictures, audio, or video in which 26 out of 30 students stated neutral because of slow internet connection and unfamiliarity with the steps in submitting the assignment. This finding was slightly different from the study by Muslimah (2018) who found that submitting assignment was easy in Google Classroom. The next issue was the notification. Google classroom sends all the push notification through Gmail and the notification feature in the apps does not provide the complete list of information. If the students did not activate push email notification, they would miss the new task or information in the class. This finding was in line with Mastoni and Rahmawati (2019) who identified the same notification problem in Google Classroom. Overall, more than 50% of the students agreed that operating Google classroom was easy because most of them were familiar with the icon button in Google Apps and there was information in every single button. Manual guide was also provided in the platform. This finding was also in line with the study by Shaharane, Jamil, and Rodzi (2016) which indicated that the majority of the students were satisfied with the Google Classroom's features that were introduced in the class.

Usefulness

Table 2 describes the perceived usefulness of Google Classroom. Twenty students agreed that Google Classroom could be used as a reinforcement or supplementary online assignment by applying what they had learned in the face-to-face meeting in class. It was also found that Google

classroom was a great medium to interact with the lecturer and other students through the comment sections. Students could consult and ask questions in the comment sections about the task given and the other students would also read the lecturer’s feedback. Twenty-three students believed that the feedback from the lecturer was beneficial for them. They could evaluate their assignment before it was submitted.

Other findings showed that 21 respondents enjoyed using Google Classroom because it personalized learning. Personalized learning differs the time, location and speed of learning for each student, involves the student in creating learning paths, and uses technology to handle and document the learning process and access rich data sources (Murphy, Redding, and Twynman, 2016). The study also revealed that the students can learn and do the assignment anywhere and anytime before the due date, browse for the answers on the internet, and use their own learning style.

Table 2 Perceived Usefulness

No.	Statements	SD	D	N	A	SA
1.	Google classroom help me to submit assignment on time	0	0	6	14	11
2.	The feedback provided by the lecturer is useful	0	0	3	23	4
3.	The grading system in Google classroom help in monitoring my performance and understanding the current topic discussed.	0	0	21	9	0
4.	The course activities helped me to apply what I have learned and to evaluate my tasks before submitting.	0	0	4	20	6
5.	Google classroom is an excellent medium for social interaction (lecturer vs. students and students vs. student) as demonstrated by the learning activity	0	3	4	19	4
6.	Google Classroom personalized learning	0	0	2	21	7

N = 30

Notes: *SD*: Strongly Disagree; *D*: Disagree; *N*: Neutral; *A*: Agree; *SA*: Strongly Agree

Communication and interaction

In terms of communication and interaction through Google classrooms, the majority of students agreed that an approachable, friendly lecturer, as well as clear instruction, would facilitate communication between the students and the lecturer. It is supported by Gonzalez (2016) who affirmed establishing a positive relationship with the teacher helps a student feel more comfortable and safe in their classroom environments. Meanwhile, conversing and interacting with other participants was seen as uncomfortable for some students which was shown by 10 students who disagreed and 2 others who strongly disagreed. They reasoned that they preferred personal chat among friends because they could not express their talk freely, especially using English. The number of participants’ responses for ‘neutral’ and ‘agree’ were similar. They stated that interacting with friends in the Google classroom comment section could be seen as an opportunity to practice their writing communication. However, some of the students wished that Google classroom had “mentioned-friend” (@) feature to track the flow of the conversation.

Table 3 Communication and Interaction

No.	Statements	SD	D	N	A	SA
1.	I felt comfortable conversing and interacting with other participants through this medium for this activity.	2	10	7	7	1
2.	Lecturer helped to keep course participants engaged and participating in productive discussion.	0	0	16	11	3

3.	Lecturer is friendly, approachable and could be easily contacted.	0	0	2	25	3
4.	Lecturer gives clear instruction on each task	0	0	0	27	3

N = 30

Notes: *SD*: Strongly Disagree; *D*: Disagree; *N*: Neutral; *A*: Agree; *SA*: Strongly Agree

Satisfaction

Table 4 depicted the number of students' responses regarding the questionnaire statements on students' satisfaction in using Google Classroom to learn the four English skills and as a collaborative assignments tool.

Table 4 Students' Satisfaction

No.	Statements	SD	D	N	A	SA
1.	I like using Google Classroom to learn Listening	0	3	7	15	5
2.	I like using Google Classroom to learn Speaking	0	2	9	15	4
3.	I like using Google Classroom to learn Reading	0	7	18	3	2
4.	I like using Google Classroom to learn Writing	0	2	14	10	4
5.	I like doing the Collaborative Assignment in pairs or in small group through Google Classroom	5	15	5	4	1

N = 30

Notes: *SD*: Strongly Disagree; *D*: Disagree; *N*: Neutral; *A*: Agree; *SA*: Strongly Agree

Table 4 showed that 15 students agreed with the first statement on the overall enjoyment of learning listening skill through Google Classroom. The students could play and listen to the audio repeatedly to get the answers. This is supported by Gilakjani & Ahmadi (2011) who claimed that listening levels of learners are different from each other because listening is affected by various factors. Therefore, the students were far more comfortable listening to the audio and doing the listening task individually. Similarly, in the second statements, 15 participants 'agreed' with the comfortable use of Google Classroom in practicing speaking skills. They claimed that it reduced their nervousness because there were not many people watching them in the video making and they could practice and edit the video before submitting. Eighteen participants expressed a 'neutral' opinion regarding using Google classroom for reading activity. Half of the eighteen respondents stated that they did not enjoy reading the long text either in a mobile phone or on a laptop. Meanwhile, 7 responders disagreed because the reading questions were quite difficult for them. A few students suggested that it would be better if they could do the exercise directly on their mobile phone so that they did not need to print out the exercises. In terms of writing activity, 14 participants answered neither agree nor disagree, and 10 out of 30 relished writing activity in Google classroom. Most of the students were happy that they could type their writing assignment without doing the handwriting and it was easy for them to edit it. They also liked the individual writing feedback from the lecturer through personal chat feature in Google classroom.

As for the fifth statement, ten participants disagreed that Google Classroom influenced the group's collaborative learning experience positively, whereas 5 participants 'strongly disagreed'. Most of them affirmed that Google classroom did not significantly help them do the pair or group work because it did not have a group chat feature like in WhatsApp. They had to do and manage the group work manually through other messaging Apps. For the rest of the respondents, 5 reflected a 'neutral' opinion and only 4 participants agreed. This translated into 50% of the

participants confessed the helpfulness of Google Classroom as a collaborative learning tool was insignificant.

The Lecturer's Retrospective Reflection

As the lecturer who makes use of Google Classroom a lot in managing the class, I would like to review the benefits and limitation feature from the teacher-user perspectives. The configuration method is quick and convenient in Google Classroom. By using this application, the teacher only needs access to the application to share tasks and learning materials. Google Classroom is simpler and more user-friendly, making it perfect for lecturers with a varied and minimal e-learning experience.

The features of this application combine three Google Apps: Google Docs, Gmail, and Google Drive. Google classroom stores all information in one main place, both documents and assignments. Student can save every task in a specific folder, and it can save teachers' materials and grades in the application.

Lecturers can send notifications to students when using Google Classroom to start a simple online discussion or inform students about assignments and learning activities. For the push notification issue in Google Classroom, it could be resolved by messaging the class coordinator to check the recent task and informed it to the other students. Google Classroom makes it easier for lecturers to give grades directly and to leave private messages relating to their student assignments. Students can also get feedback by posting directly to the discussion flow if the lecturers set the assignment mode into "can be seen by everyone" in the classroom.

Students will also learn to be more disciplined with a time limit function in Google Classroom. Late submission will result in notification that the task collected has passed the allocated time limit. Lecturers can also see how disciplined their students are because Google Classroom will also share information regarding late submission once the deadline has been set.

The limitations of the application include the issues with notification feature, the need for a quite big size of memory storage on the mobile phone, and issues related to the speed in internet connections. Another issue is that Google classroom quiz makers are not as simple as other similar apps. The steps of making quizzes are rather complex.

CONCLUSIONS

Learning English through Google Classroom gives convenience for students and lecturer in the learning process because of its ease of use, bridging more interactions between the students and the lecturer. Google Classroom allows all the materials and assignments to be reserved so they can still be accessed in the future. The application can also motivate students to do and collect assignments on time because of its time-limit feature. The results also showed that the students were more comfortable doing the listening and speaking tasks through Google Classroom because it can reduce their learning anxiety. Furthermore, in the writing sections, students benefited from the written feedback provided by the lecturer through the comments feature because it helped them to make a better composition. On the other hand, students did not enjoy doing group work or collaborative learning through Google Classroom because the application does not have a private message group chat and communication via Gmail is considered impractical. Further studies are required to optimize the use of Google Classroom to teach the four English skills to create a more interactive learning.

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