JURNAL KEPEMIMPINAN & PENGURUSAN SEKOLAH
Homepage : https://ejurnal.stkip-pessel.ac.id/index.php/kp
Email : jkps.stkippessel@gmail.com

p-ISSN : 2502-6445 ; e-ISSN : 2502-6437
Vol. 11, No. 5, October 2026
Page 3835-3841
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Jurnal Kepemimpinan & Pengurusan Sekolah

INVESTIGATING ZOOM AS A PLATFORM FOR SYNCHRONOUS ELECTRONIC FEEDBACK IN ACADEMIC WRITING

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DOI: https://doi.org/10.34125/jkps.v11i5.2938

Sections Info

Article history:
Submitted: 6 August 2026
Final Revised: 30 September 2026
Accepted: 9 October 2026
Published: 30 October 2026

Keywords:
Academic writing,
Digital pedagogy,
Feedback literacy,
Synchronous feedback,
Zoom

ABSTRAK

Digital technology integration in higher education has drastically changed teaching methods, especially in academic writing pedagogy. Synchronous electronic feedback via video conferencing services such as Zoom is a new strategy. The purpose of this study is to determine how effectively Zoom serves as a synchronous feedback platform for improving students' academic writing skills, engagement, and feedback comprehension. 26 second-semester English Department students at STAIN Mandailing Natal participated in a descriptive qualitative study design. Open-ended surveys, Classroom observations, and student writing assignments were used to gather data. The results show that synchronous feedback greatly improves students' comprehension and application of the input, resulting in gains in grammar, coherence, organization, and clarity of ideas. Additionally, because real-time communication is dynamic and dialogic, students showed increased levels of motivation, engagement, and participation during feedback sessions. However, issues like inconsistent internet access and disparities in digital literacy were also noted. According to the study's overall findings, Zoom-based synchronous feedback is an effective teaching method that enhances academic writing outcomes in higher education settings, fosters feedback literacy, and facilitates interactive learning.

ABSTRAK

Integrasi teknologi digital di pendidikan tinggi telah mengubah metode pengajaran secara drastis, terutama dalam pedagogi penulisan akademik. Umpan balik elektronik secara sinkron melalui layanan konferensi video seperti Zoom adalah strategi baru. Tujuan dari penelitian ini adalah untuk mengetahui seberapa efektif Zoom berfungsi sebagai platform umpan balik sinkron untuk meningkatkan keterampilan menulis akademik, keterlibatan, dan pemahaman umpan balik siswa. Sebanyak 26 mahasiswa semester dua Jurusan Bahasa Inggris di STAIN Mandailing Natal berpartisipasi dalam desain penelitian kualitatif deskriptif. Survei terbuka, observasi kelas, dan tugas menulis siswa digunakan untuk mengumpulkan data. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa umpan balik sinkron sangat meningkatkan pemahaman dan penerapan input oleh siswa, yang menghasilkan peningkatan dalam tata bahasa, koherensi, organisasi, dan kejelasan ide. Selain itu, karena komunikasi real-time bersifat dinamis dan dialogis, siswa menunjukkan peningkatan motivasi, keterlibatan, dan partisipasi selama sesi umpan balik. Namun, masalah seperti akses internet yang tidak konsisten dan perbedaan literasi digital juga dicatat. Menurut temuan keseluruhan studi tersebut, umpan balik sinkron berbasis Zoom merupakan metode pengajaran yang efektif untuk meningkatkan hasil menulis akademik di perguruan tinggi, mendorong literasi umpan balik, dan memfasilitasi pembelajaran interaktif.

Kata kunci: *Penulisan akademik, Pedagogi digital, Literasi umpan balik, Umpan balik sinkron, Zoom*

INTRODUCTION

Since academic writing necessitates the integration of several competencies, including linguistic knowledge, cognitive processing, rhetorical awareness, and critical thinking abilities, all of which must operate simultaneously to produce coherent and meaningful texts, it is widely recognized as one of the most difficult and demanding skills in second language acquisition (Hyland, 2019; Wingate, 2018). Writing in higher education allows students to express their opinions, synthesize material, and engage in scholarly discourse communities. It also functions as a tool for knowledge building (Hyland, 2019; Zhang & Hyland, 2018). Despite its crucial role, many students still struggle to become proficient in academic writing, especially when interpreting and applying instructor feedback, which is often perceived as ambiguous, inadequate, or difficult to apply (Nicol, 2021; Winstone et al., 2017). Feedback is an essential component of the writing process because it helps students edit their drafts, spot flaws, and improve the overall quality of their texts. However, traditional written feedback frequently falls short of its goals because it is one-sided and lacks interaction, which can result in miscommunication and low engagement (Carless & Boud, 2018; Nicol, 2021; Zhang & Hyland, 2018).

In particular, the incorporation of synchronous communication tools that enable real-time interaction between instructors and students has opened new possibilities for changing feedback practices in higher education, driven by the rapid development of digital technologies (Dhawan, 2020; Hrastinski, 2019). Particularly in light of the global trend toward online and blended learning environments, platforms like Zoom have grown in popularity in academic settings. These platforms allow teachers to provide prompt feedback, clarify misunderstandings, and engage students in interactive discussions (Martin & Bolliger, 2018; Rapanta et al., 2020). Synchronous feedback encourages a dialogic process that enables students to actively participate in meaning-making and feedback interpretation, improving their comprehension and engagement in contrast to asynchronous feedback, which is frequently delayed and lacks immediacy (Hikmiah, 2024; Nicol, 2021; Tai et al., 2018). This change reflects modern pedagogical viewpoints that regard feedback as an interactive, collaborative process rather than a one-way transfer of information (Carless & Boud, 2018; Winstone et al., 2017).

According to (Martin & Bolliger, 2018; Wijayanti & Gunawan, 2021), synchronous electronic feedback offers several pedagogical advantages in academic writing instruction, particularly in improving clarity, engagement, and learning outcomes. Teachers can use features like screen sharing and live annotation to show revisions directly on students' texts, making feedback more explicit, visual, and accessible. Additionally, real-time contact fosters deeper cognitive processing and better comprehension of writing conventions by enabling students to ask questions, seek clarification, and engage in meaningful conversations with teachers (Nicol, 2021; Tai et al., 2018). Additionally, this interactive process fosters feedback literacy, the capacity of students to comprehend, assess, and apply feedback to enhance their learning (Carless & Boud, 2018). Furthermore, studies have demonstrated that synchronous feedback can boost student engagement and motivation by fostering a more encouraging and cooperative learning environment in which students feel closer to classmates and teachers (Hrastinski, 2019; Martin & Bolliger, 2018; Serhan, 2020).

Despite these benefits, synchronous electronic feedback implementation is not without difficulties, especially in settings where digital literacy and technological infrastructure may be lacking. Problems such as inconsistent internet connectivity, a lack of suitable devices, and varying levels of technological proficiency can make it difficult to participate effectively in online learning environments (Adedoyin & Soykan, 2020; Rapanta et al., 2020). Concerns

regarding scalability and practicality are also raised by the possibility that instructors' ability to give personalized feedback during synchronous sessions may be limited by time constraints and big class sizes (Nicol, 2021; Winstone et al., 2017). These difficulties underscore the need for additional empirical research on the efficacy of synchronous feedback, especially in educational contexts such as Indonesian higher education institutions, where research in this field remains limited (Tai et al., 2018; Zhang & Hyland, 2018).

Based on these factors, this study intends to explore the use of Zoom as a platform for synchronous electronic feedback in academic writing, focusing on its effects on students' writing performance, engagement, and feedback comprehension, and identifying potential implementation challenges. This will add to the expanding body of literature on technology-enhanced feedback and offer useful implications for teachers looking to enhance writing instruction in digital learning environments (Carless & Boud, 2018; Dhawan, 2020; Nicol, 2021).

The use of synchronous video conferencing tools like Zoom as a medium for delivering interactive and dialogic feedback in academic writing contexts, particularly in Indonesian higher education settings, has received less attention than asynchronous feedback or general online learning environments, despite the fact that many studies have looked at the role of feedback in academic writing and the integration of digital platforms in education. Furthermore, there is a knowledge gap regarding the comprehensive effects of real-time feedback practices in EFL writing classrooms because previous research has not adequately examined how synchronous feedback influences students' engagement, feedback comprehension, and writing development simultaneously within a qualitative framework. Thus, by offering a thorough analysis of synchronous electronic feedback via Zoom and concentrating on students' experiences, views, and writing progress, this study aims to close this gap.

Based on the research gap identified above, the research questions of this study are formulated as follows:

1. How does synchronous electronic feedback via Zoom influence students' academic writing development?
2. How do students perceive the use of synchronous feedback in improving their writing skills and feedback comprehension?
3. What challenges are encountered in the implementation of synchronous feedback through Zoom in academic writing classes?

RESEARCH METHOD

The usefulness of synchronous electronic feedback provided via Zoom in enhancing students' academic writing abilities, engagement, and feedback comprehension was investigated in this study using a descriptive qualitative research approach. To achieve complete data representation, all students registered in the course were included in the study, which was conducted at STAIN Mandailing Natal and involved 26 second-semester English Department students selected using the total sample technique. To obtain a comprehensive understanding of students' experiences, views, and interactions during synchronous feedback sessions, particularly regarding how they perceive and use feedback in their writing process, a qualitative method was chosen.

Three primary tools were used to gather data: open-ended questionnaires, observation sheets, and student writing papers. Each tool was intended to gather comprehensive, in-depth information about the research phenomenon. The open-ended questions in the questionnaire were designed to investigate students' perceptions of synchronous feedback

sessions, including their usefulness, clarity, engagement, and interaction. Students' engagement and interaction during Zoom sessions were recorded on observation sheets that focused on behavioral markers such as responsiveness, attentiveness, and participation in discussions. Additionally, to find trends of development in grammar, organization, coherence, vocabulary, and idea clarity, students' writing drafts (before and after feedback) were subjectively examined.

Initial writing drafts were collected to establish baseline data, followed by a series of synchronous Zoom feedback sessions in which students actively participated through questions and discussions, and the instructor provided real-time feedback via screen sharing and verbal explanations. Finally, revised writing drafts were analyzed to assess improvement. To identify recurrent themes related to students' engagement, feedback comprehension, and writing development, data from questionnaires, observations, and writing documents were coded, categorized, and interpreted using thematic analysis (Cohen, 2018; Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Based on qualitative data from students' writing documents, questionnaires, and Classroom observations, the study's conclusions show that the use of synchronous electronic feedback via Zoom has a significant and varied impact on students' academic writing development, engagement, and feedback comprehension. Students' overall writing performance showed noticeable improvement before and after synchronous feedback sessions were implemented, according to an analysis of their writing drafts. This suggests that students successfully internalized and applied the feedback given during in-person interactions. Students showed a greater capacity to construct well-organized essays, develop logical arguments, and use appropriate academic vocabulary. These improvements were especially noticeable in critical areas of writing, such as grammatical accuracy, sentence structure, paragraph organization, coherence, and clarity of ideas. This is consistent with earlier research showing the efficacy of interactive feedback in improving writing quality (Nicol, 2021; Tai et al., 2018; Zhang & Hyland, 2018).

The synchronous nature of Zoom-based sessions allowed students to seek immediate clarification, ask questions, and engage in direct dialogue with the instructor, thereby reducing ambiguity and misunderstanding commonly associated with traditional written feedback. The results also show a significant improvement in students' comprehension of feedback, as well as improvements in writing performance. In line with the idea of feedback as a dialogic process, students reported that they were better able to understand the purpose of corrections and the techniques needed to improve their writing. This suggests that synchronous feedback facilitates deeper cognitive processing and encourages active engagement with feedback (Carless & Boud, 2018; Nicol, 2021; Tai et al., 2018).

Additionally, the results show a significant increase in student engagement during synchronous feedback sessions. This can be attributed to the dynamic, interactive nature of real-time communication enabled by Zoom. Observation data indicate that students actively participated in discussions, responded to instructor feedback, and showed greater motivation to revise their work. Students found synchronous feedback more engaging, interactive, and effective than traditional feedback methods, according to questionnaire responses, which further supports this increased engagement and highlights the role of technology in boosting student motivation and participation in learning activities (Hrastinski, 2019; Martin & Bolliger, 2018; Serhan, 2020).

The emergence of collaborative learning dynamics is another significant finding.

Students gained additional insights into common mistakes and effective writing strategies by observing feedback given to their peers in addition to receiving feedback on their own writing. This promoted peer interaction and shared learning. In addition to improving students' capacity to critically assess their own work, a crucial feature of feedback literacy, this collaborative component of synchronous feedback helps to create a supportive learning environment (Carless & Boud, 2018; Nicol, 2021).

Furthermore, the results show that students developed metacognitive awareness through reflective discussions during feedback sessions, thereby enhancing self-regulation and independent learning by making them more aware of their writing processes, strengths, and weaknesses. Nevertheless, despite these favorable results, a number of difficulties were noted, including technical problems such as erratic internet connections, variations in students' digital literacy, and time constraints during synchronous sessions, which occasionally reduced the efficiency of feedback delivery (Adedoyin & Soykan, 2020; Rapanta et al., 2020).

The results of this study offer strong proof that synchronous electronic feedback provided via Zoom greatly improves the efficacy of feedback in academic writing instruction by changing it from a static, one way process into a dynamic, interactive, and dialogic learning experience where students actively participate in applying and interpreting feedback, improving their learning outcomes and writing performance (Carless & Boud, 2018; Nicol, 2021). The argument that feedback is most effective when it is immediate, interactive, and contextualized is supported by the significant improvement in students' writing performance. This is because real-time communication enables students to receive immediate clarification and guidance, reducing the likelihood of misinterpretation and facilitating more accurate application of feedback (Tai et al., 2018; Zhang & Hyland, 2018).

Because synchronous communication via Zoom fosters a sense of presence and immediacy that motivates students to actively participate in the learning process, boosting motivation, confidence, and the overall learning experience, the increased engagement seen in this study further supports the significance of interaction in online learning environments (Hrastinski, 2019; Martin & Bolliger, 2018; Serhan, 2020). According to social constructivist theory, which emphasizes the importance of interaction and teamwork in knowledge creation, learning is most successful when students actively participate in meaningful conversations with peers and teachers (Hikmiah, 2024; Rapanta et al., 2020).

Additionally, the rise of collaborative learning dynamics highlights the social aspect of feedback, where students learn from peer interaction and observation in addition to instructor feedback. This improves their comprehension of writing conventions and fosters the growth of critical thinking abilities and feedback literacy (Carless & Boud, 2018; Nicol, 2021). Effective development of academic writing requires a sense of community and shared responsibility for learning, both of which are fostered in this cooperative setting.

As synchronous feedback enables students to ask questions and receive explanations in real time, improving their ability to interpret and apply feedback effectively, the improvement in feedback comprehension seen in this study highlights the significance of immediacy and clarity in feedback processes. This is consistent with prior research highlighting the role of dialogue in facilitating meaningful learning (Tai et al., 2018; Winstone et al., 2017).

However, the difficulties found in this study show that contextual factors like time constraints, digital literacy, and technological infrastructure affect synchronous feedback's efficacy, which may restrict its use in some educational settings, especially in developing

nations where access to dependable internet and digital resources may be restricted (Adedoyin & Soykan, 2020; Rapanta et al., 2020). To maximize efficacy, educators should take these elements into account when developing and implementing synchronous feedback strategies and investigating the integration of synchronous and asynchronous feedback methods.

Overall, the conversation demonstrates that synchronous electronic feedback via Zoom is a major development in digital pedagogy, offering a more dynamic, engaging, and effective approach to teaching academic writing that aligns with modern teaching methods and fosters students' writing abilities, engagement, and feedback literacy.

CONCLUSION

This study shows that synchronous electronic feedback via Zoom significantly improves students' academic writing, particularly in grammatical accuracy, coherence, organization, and clarity of ideas. The results show that real-time communication between teachers and students is essential for improving feedback comprehension, as it enables students to actively participate in the revision process and promptly resolve any ambiguities. Additionally, synchronous feedback's interactive and dialogic qualities encourage greater levels of student participation, motivation, and engagement, all of which are critical components of effective writing growth. These findings support the idea that feedback in a collaborative, dynamic setting is more beneficial than standard one-way written comments.

Furthermore, this study demonstrates that synchronous feedback not only enhances writing performance but also fosters feedback literacy and metacognitive awareness, empowering students to become more autonomous and introspective learners. However, the study also highlights several obstacles that could hinder the use of synchronous feedback in certain situations, such as time constraints, technological issues, and disparities in digital literacy. To enhance efficacy and ensure accessibility for all students, educators are advised to integrate both synchronous and asynchronous feedback systems. To further evaluate and expand on these findings, research is recommended to examine larger sample sizes, diverse educational contexts, and the long-term effects of synchronous feedback on students' writing growth.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The authors would like to sincerely thank STAIN Mandailing Natal for their facilities and assistance in finishing this study. The English Department students who participated in this study and provided valuable data are also acknowledged by the authors. We would also want to thank the instructors and coworkers who offered helpful criticism and recommendations during the research process. Lastly, the authors would like to express their gratitude to everyone who helped with this work, whether directly or indirectly.

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