

## AN ALTERNATIVE DIGITAL FEEDBACK THROUGH SCREENCAST: BLENDED LEARNING PRACTICES ON ACADEMIC WRITING

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**Abstract:** Aiming at elucidating screencast use as alternative digital feedback in the academic writing class throughout blended learning, screencast was alternative digital feedback that was investigated in classroom action research with three cycles. The three cycles were performed with three diverse styles of feedback; using text feedback, using screencast feedback without the teacher's appearance, and using screencast feedback with the teacher's appearance. Each cycle was done in four stages; planning, implementation, observation, and reflection of each type of feedback. In every cycle, data were collected through participant observation, documentation, and survey techniques. The obtained data from the observation and documentation were analyzed by descriptive qualitative technique, while the survey results were first analyzed using the percentage formula, then interpreted descriptively. All the analysis results were triangulated. The results discovered that screencast feedback was successfully implemented and evidenced to enhance students' writing skills. The success was proved by the higher number of students who passed the passing score as competent writers. Given screencast feedback, students found it was helpful, clear, and easy. Also, they felt an increased teacher-student interpersonal relation, improved teacher praise, and a conversation-like atmosphere during screencast feedback with an additional teacher's visual presence. Several teachers' reflections from each cycle were also discussed further. In Conclusion, screencast was implemented successfully in academic writing courses and was able to enhance students' scientific article writing.

**Keywords:** *academic writing; blended learning; screencast feedback.*

### INTRODUCTION

English writing ability has become more prominent to master to get success in schools, workplaces, and daily life matters (Graham, 2019). Moreover, the technological advance throughout this digital era urges people to reflect on English writing ability as the only written communication option to choose from in most document-needed-based fields (Selvaraj & Aziz, 2019). Most people in particular fields are required to master how to write any letters, or documents in English so well that they must have learned it in schools or colleges. Jusun and Yunus (2018) point out that writing in English has been regarded as the most challenging skill to teach and learn by people whose English is their foreign language. As a mandatory skill to teach in EFL classes, the process of teaching English writing is therefore required a big thoughtfulness portion of their writing skill enhancement bound for achieving high-quality writing for EFL students.

In classroom practice, copious problems have been found experienced by teachers during

teaching English writing in EFL blended-learning classes. Academic writing class owns a number of teaching and learning problems. The preliminary study on writing class problems has shown that 85% of them found that understanding text feedback by the teachers through the Microsoft Word© Comments Feature on their drafts was somehow problematic. In response to questions about the learning practice of academic writing class, 70% of students admitted that the problem was getting themselves disciplined either in writing drafts or revision processes. On the contrary, the teachers believed that blended learning in writing classes is dependent on students' revision results which are built essentially from their understanding of the feedback provided by the teachers.

Understanding the feedback affects how students write the revision. Those who do not completely understand the teachers' feedback possibly will write the revised version of their draft solely based on what they understand which can result in inappropriateness. The inappropriate revision not only wastes the time in revision and

editing stages but also influences feedback ineffectiveness. The fact that the selection of appropriate feedback affects the feedback quality (Carless & Boud, 2018), and reduces students' difficulties in understanding the feedback is unquestionably essential. Appropriate feedback also affects students' revision which enhances and yields a better-quality of their scientific article.

The problem of students' inability to accurately understand teachers' text feedback was rooted in a single type of feedback selection. Integrating text feedback with audio-visual feedback during the teachers' review process is one of the solutions. Electronic feedback over screencast is one digital video or audio-visual feedback type that allows teachers to join text, audio, and video feedback to show how students can revise appropriately and improve their writing quality. Creating screencasts as video form feedback is employed through various software like Screencast-O-Matic (Mota & Vivancos, 2018). Mota and Vivancos (2018) further revealed that utilizing Screencasts during teaching which is discovered as brief, user-friendly, and ideal technology revealed to be useful to explain concepts and procedures and potentially help students to conquer the material (Savaşçı & Akçor, 2022). As a result, screencast feedback is evidenced to be beneficial in teaching and learning.

Past studies examining screencast feedback in writing mostly resulted in a positive response to its implementation (Bakla, 2020; Cunningham, 2019; Cunningham & Link, 2021; Ghosn-Chelala & Al-Chibani, 2018; Kim, 2018; Maharani & Santosa, 2021; Zubaidi, 2021), proved to be able to enhance students writing performance and progress since it encouraged better comprehension, user-friendly, engagement, and active listening (Cunningham, 2019; Ghosn-Chelala & Al-Chibani, 2018; Kim, 2018; Maharani & Santosa, 2021), provided boundless for teacher-students social relationship (Cunningham & Link, 2021) and audio-visual feedback provision evidenced to be more effective to decrease students procrastination in doing the revisions (Nourinezhad *et al.*, 2021).

In terms of methodological use, past studies on screencast in writing were dominated by an experimental study (Cunningham & Link, 2021; Nourinezhad *et al.*, 2021), a descriptive qualitative method (Maharani & Santosa, 2021), a mixed method (Bakla, 2020; Kim, 2018), a case study (Ghosn-Chelala & Al-Chibani, 2018; Irwin,

2019) and perceptions toward screencast feedback (Cunningham, 2019; Zubaidi, 2021). Literature studies on the screencast feedback overview on writing have also been done by a lot of researchers up to nowadays (Bakla, 2018; Mali & Santosa, 2021; Pachuashvili, 2021). However, classroom action research investigating screencast feedback was found to enhance students' reflection on the microteaching course (Odo, 2022) and to enhance students' intelligence of their verbal linguistics (Hasanudin & Fitrianiingsih, 2018). Accordingly, no research on screencast was found to relate to the writing class as a solution to the encountered problem during the writing class.

It is observable that past studies do not talk about how screencast feedback served as solving problems implemented in writing classes designed for classroom action research as two irregularities were found between the teachers' perception and their actual practices of screencast feedback (Zubaidi, 2021). Another hole found from a past study that students inconsistently preferred one of the three feedback modes (written, audio, and screencast feedback) but they emphasized the potential benefits of each mode since the comparison of three feedback modes (written, audio, and screencast feedback) resulted in no difference to students' revision (Bakla, 2020).

Screencasts in this research are directed to enhance teachers' feedback clarity and quality to enhance students' scientific article writing within an academic writing course. Academic writing is a two-credit course aimed at training students on how to write a scientific article in a well-organized, precise structured, full-content, and up-to-date and avoid plagiarism practices. By selecting and applying screencast feedback, it is expected that students take advantage of the audio-visual technology for their articles to get better continuously. For that reason, this research works to solve students' problems in understanding teachers' feedback and enhance students' scientific article writing using screencast feedback as video feedback.

The aforementioned problems and offered solutions lead to generating one grand research question to answer; "How Screencast feedback practices in academic writing through blended learning classes can enhance students' scientific article writing?" For that reason, current research is targeted to explicate the practices and perceptions on screencasts as video feedback in an academic writing course to enhance students'

skills in scientific article writing.

**METHOD**

The research was designed in a classroom action research where the researcher plans, teaches, observes, does a self-reflection of the teaching process as well as evaluates the whole by trying to offer the solution in the teaching process concurrently to enhance students' learning experience (Meesuk *et al.*, 2020) in accordance to the encountered problems. In this research, problems were found in a preliminary observation of an academic writing course with blended learning circumstances. Students got difficulties revising their writing because of the inadequate feedback selection applied to comment on their drafts in earlier classes.

The second-year students from English Education Program Study in Universitas Islam Darul 'Ulum Lamongan who enrolled academic writing course were involved as participants in the research. A total of 25 students enrolled in academic writing courses who have passed essay writing and paragraph writing courses in earlier terms as pre-requisite courses. Since the course requires students to use a productive skill in writing, a combination of theory delivery and its practice. To get better results from the practice, feedback is essential to apply. Various kinds of feedback were executed during the process of practice.

The design of classroom action research by Kemmis (2021) as a central base underlying this research method was implemented in three cycles with three diverse styles of feedback done in four stages; planning, implementation, observation, and reflection of each type of feedback (Eilks, 2018). The first cycle was using text feedback given by commenting on students' first drafts of their documents files. Cycles 2 and 3 were using screencast feedback in the form of video screencasts. In cycle 2, the teacher used a screencast by combining oral comments (audio) and actions in the form of a typed comment on the screen (video) to show how students can revise appropriately their drafts. Cycle 3 was implemented screencast with the additional use of a webcam to show the teacher's appearance during the screencasting.

The screencast software used was "Screencast-O-Matic", a software that can easily record and edit videos that have already been extensively applied in blended learning education and are currently popular because of its ease and communicative ability (Pachuashvili, 2021).

Screencast-O-Matic is a screen capture tool that allows users to add a webcam or narration so that they can personalize the videos such as adding text, shapes, or images (Pachuashvili, 2021). In July 2021, Pachuashvili (2021) further evaluated based on the Screencast website that Screencast-O-Matic was used in 190 countries with more than 60,000,000 screens already taken.

In addition, two kinds of data and data sources were obtained in this classroom action research. The data and the data sources obtained along with the instruments used in this research can be seen as depicted in Table 1 below.

Table 1. *Research data, data source, and instrument*

Data	Data Sources	Instrument
The practice of each type of feedback	Students' drafts before and after feedback giving	Documents, field notes
The perceptions toward each type of feedback	Students' responses to each type of feedback	Questionnaire

In every cycle, data were collected through participant observation, documentation, and survey techniques. The observation was performed by field notes based on each kind of feedback. The documentation was also employed by collecting students' scientific article writing in the form of a first draft, several revisions, and a final paper in all cycles. Once the implementation of each cycle was completed along with the teacher's observation, students filled out a survey questionnaire to identify their problems, obstacles, and perceptions related to the experience of using the feedback type to improve their scientific article writing skills. The result of each cycle survey functioned as guidance for ensuing cycles.

The whole obtained data from the observation and documentation were analyzed by descriptive qualitative technique. Moreover, the survey results were first analyzed using the percentage formula, then were interpreted descriptively consistent with the percentage results. All the analysis results were triangulated so that the data were related to each other to explain the overall results.

At the end of each cycle, the evaluation of students' writing progress was assessed through a writing analytical scoring rubric to obtain students' writing scores. To state the implementation of screencast feedback as a success, minimally 70% of students' writing

scores are equal to or higher than 70 which is categorized as competent writers. Furthermore, competent writers who obtained equal to or higher than 90 are classified as very competent writers. Those whose scores were under 70 were categorized as moderate writers if their scores were above 50, while students who got lower than 50 were considered incompetent writers.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

As written in the Semester Learning Plan of Academic writing course under the research, it proposes one grand learning outcome that students are expected to be able to master language principles and systems of writing a scientific article and apply them honestly and with full of responsibility. To reach the learning outcome, students have to master five sub-expected learning outcomes; 1) mastering the basic concept of a scientific article, 2) mastering language principles of scientific article writing, 3) mastering the organization of scientific article writing 4) applying systems of scientific article writing, 5) producing a good scientific article.

To master the learning outcomes, students were informed about the concept of a scientific article and subsequently trained to master the language principles ability of scientific article writing to quote directly, paraphrase, summarize, select reporting verbs, and list references as well as trained to organize scientific article ideas before starting to write during four weeks online and offline learning. In week five, students started to select a topic and write a draft of an introduction. The introduction was further given comments in the form of hand-written feedback accompanied by oral feedback through face-to-face consultation sessions and typed-comment feedback through Microsoft Office Word Comments in online mode. The revision of their first draft of the introduction was submitted in week 7 and provided a similar to previous feedback. Students' second revision of their introduction writing was submitted as their mid-term project in week 8.

The weeks after the mid-term were the introduction and implementation of the screencast. The first screencast feedback was given on students' second revision of the introduction handed in during week 9. In the following week, they had to write the article body along subsequently another screencast feedback was provided. After students handed in the first revision of the article body, another screencast feedback was presented in week 11. The

submission of the second revision of the article body was given screencast feedback with an additional teacher's presence on the video. Additionally, the last part of the article writing is the conclusion writing submitted in week 13 and was given screencast feedback with the teacher's appearance on the video. After submitting students' revision of the conclusion writing along with the screencast feedback in week 14, they were ought to submit all section of their article in week 15 and was given screencast feedback before the final submission of their article. Week 16 was the due-date submission of their final article involving the introduction, body, and conclusion.

Throughout 16 weeks of meeting both online and face-to-face modes of academic writing courses, observation, documents, and a survey revealed numerous vital motives of screencast feedback preference to text feedback for students. The subsequent are the details of each cycle's findings.

### *Text feedback practices in academic writing class during (Cycle 1)*

After learning the language principle's ability of scientific article writing, students were required to write a draft of an introduction on a certain topic which consists of the article's background, and its objective. In general, most of them addressed a good topic but missed particular points for instance paragraph organization and topic relevance.

In cycle 1 completed in 2 week-meetings, the teacher gave hand-written comments on students' printed drafts where some students and teachers were engaged in face-to-face consultation sessions during offline learning. In addition, due to the time limitation in offline learning, another type of feedback was further applied during online learning mode by giving feedback on some of the students' drafts by providing commentary on their document using Microsoft Office Word Comments and Track Changes Features. The result of comments in both modes was used as students' references to revise the draft.

During the face-to-face consultation session, students asked several questions in response to hand-written comments they do not understand well. Most of the questions were related to global issues including topic focus, organization, and topic appropriateness. The teacher gave explanations and suggestions orally to reorganize their ideas based on their selected topics. Some

topics that were too broad were recommended to find a more specific and narrow topic to focus on. Others needed to reorganize their paragraphs to be structurally coherent. The typed feedback through Microsoft Office Word Comments also addressed a similar issue. Most of the feedback was related to paragraph organization, topic relevance, and focus. Though most of the issues that arose were global issues, their revision was mostly not satisfied with only 23% of the global issues commented on being successfully revised. On the other hand, local issues addressing diction, grammar, and punctuation were significantly better with 81% revision success since the teacher merely gave corrections.

As an attempt to reflect both hand-written and typed feedback implemented in cycle 1, students' perceptions of both feedback modes were documented through questionnaires. Despite the effectiveness of direct written feedback in certain elements like error type and students' level of writing ability as proposed by Al Harrasi (2019), the result of the survey indicated a significant issue in offline consultation sessions that 75% of them were unsuccessful to remember what the teacher had explained and suggested writing in their revision. For this reason, they preferred typed feedback to hand-written comments. Additionally, although text feedback through typed Word Comments was considered suitable to use toward writing issues at a local level (Mao & Crosthwaite, 2019), it also created another problem where 85% of them found understanding and comprehending some typed feedback was complicated. The inadequate comprehension and understanding of the typed comment feedback led to problems in the revision writing.

The result of the students' writing assessment showed that only 40% of the students were detected as competent writers whose scores were equal to and or higher than 70, another 40% were regarded as moderate writers and 20% of them were observed as incompetent writers. The teacher reflected on the result of the document study of students' revision that most of them failed to revise the commented part both given orally during face-to-face consultation or written and typed comments on their draft. Some students seemed not to focus during face-to-face consultation sessions so they may fail to recall the comments during their revision writing and leading to being unsuccessful in writing the revision. For the unsuccessful revision and to accommodate the found problems of the ineffectiveness of text feedback in both offline

and online modes, an alternative feedback type must be sought and implemented further.

#### *Screencasts feedback practices in academic writing class (cycle 2)*

The alternative feedback provided by the teacher was screencast, digital video feedback recording anything commented orally and textually on screen and saved to a device minimizing the problem of failure to recall and comprehend the feedback commented. Screencast feedback was planned and implemented to be alternative feedback used for the rest of the meetings. The implementation of the screencast as digital video feedback was accomplished in two cycles. The first cycle was completed by combining the teacher's oral feedback through audio and her written feedback by adding text comments through Microsoft Office Word Comments. Students' second revision as a final revision of introduction writing was the first screencast feedback implemented in cycle 2. Accomplished in three weeks' meetings, the second and third screencasts in cycle two were provided as feedback on students' draft of body writing and its first revision.

Students' first response to the first screencast feedback they received was positive as they were enthusiastic and interested in it during the face-to-face meeting discussing a general overview of their writing progress. The positive perception of screencast compared to written feedback was in line with Harper *et al.* (2018), Kim (2018), and Bush (2021) who also found that screencast was perceived positively to be more enjoyable than written feedback. Furthermore, screencast feedback was believed to be helpful, clear, and easy as revealed from the survey of screencast feedback in cycle 2. The majority of students (92%) perceived screencast feedback as able to help them to lead their revision writing in ideas reformation, draft reorganization, and revision points direction. In other words, screencast was able to assist students to address inquiries on what, how, and where to revise because they were provided explanations on the reasons certain points were written inaccurately. Recorded oral along with text feedback shared on the video screen was considered to be the source of the helpfulness. This perceived helpfulness was supported by Cheng and Li (2020) as well as Cunningham (2019) who also found that screencast was helpful.

A further student's positive perception of screencast feedback was it was clear. They

assessed screencast feedback as clear for the reason that the given explanation, suggestions, and examples were perceived by 80% of the students to influence them to understand clearly the points to revise. Students' writing errors were exposed on the screen while the teacher was giving an oral explanation, and suggestions to write in the revision. Both exposures to the errors and direct-oral explanation given on screencast led to them stating screencast feedback as clear which supported Cunningham's (2019) statement about screencast as clear.

Screencast was also measured as a feedback type that is easy to trace, understand, and access (84%). Students felt that the screencast was easy to trace backward and forward points by clicking particular points evaluated as being able to minimize the failure to recall the comments so that they found it was also easy to understand in facilitating their revision writing. Both easy-to-trace and easy-understand screencasts were consistent with Cunningham (2019) who found students' perception of screencast feedback as easy. An additional easiness perception found in this research was easy to access where they could access it through the phone.

However, two arising issues were nearly half of the students and the teacher assessed it as time-consuming and the teachers reflected the absence of teacher visual presence. One problem found during the first screencast feedback giving was the long duration of the video which was weighed as time-consuming in some way. Few students (20%) agreed that screencast was time-consuming, half of them responded neutrally for screencast was time-consuming (52%) and only 28% of them disagreed with the statement that screencast was time-consuming. The time-consuming issue is critically found contradictory to what Cheng and Li (2020) claimed that most of the students assessed screencast feedback did not consume their time because they revise less time. Furthermore, the reflection made by the teacher from the screencast videos was that a few of the screencast video length was 20 minutes which is in accordance with Zijden *et al.* (2021) finding that teachers' negative experience with Screencast feedback was rooted in their view of its uneasiness and inefficiency. To solve the long screencast video given at the early phase in the second cycle when the teacher was still new to working with Screencast-O-Matic, subsequent screencast videos given at the second and third phases of the cycle had shorter duration as the teacher had already accustomed to using it.

Therefore, the second screencast feedback video provided was limited to 8 minutes in maximal so that students worrying about the long duration was expected to be resolved.

In cycle 2, the number of competent writers has increased. A number of 16 students with a percentage of 64% were observed gaining scores equal to and or higher than 70. Furthermore, 2 of them got scores above 90 indicating very competent writers. On the other hand, incompetent writers were seen to decrease where only 12% of the students got a score under 50. The rest 24% of them were moderate writers which were reduced by 16% from the previous cycle.

Another emerging issue was the teacher's visual presence. In the second cycle, the screencast videos contained audio as the teacher's oral feedback and screen exposure as the teacher's written feedback without the additional visual presence of the teacher. Cheng and Li (2020) believed that the teacher's visual presence was proven to improve social and personal values among the teacher and students which can motivate them to revise their manuscript writing. Therefore, the next cycle must be implemented with the additional teacher's visual presence to encourage them to rewrite their article.

### *Screencasts feedback practices with teacher's visual presence in academic writing class (cycle 3)*

In cycle three, screencast feedback given to the students was similar to the former cycle with an additional teacher's visual presence via webcam. The implementation of a webcam as an additional teacher's visual presence during screencast feedback was expected to strengthen the teacher's and student's social and personal relations (Cheng & Li, 2020) and to give more encouragement to the students to write an accurate revision of commented manuscripts. Four screencast videos were provided to the students where one screencast video feedback on their second revision of the article body, two screencast videos toward their conclusion draft and its final revision, and one screencast video feedback to cover the overall part of each student's article. The final revision of the article was assessed as their final exam grade which was used to evaluate the implementation of screencast feedback with additional teachers' visual presence.

After observing and comparing documents between screencasts in the second cycle and the third with the additional teacher's visual appearance, it was noticeable that both of them have successfully directed students' accurate revision on both local and global issues of writing. More noticeably, comparing global issues commented on through text feedback, screencast feedback more significantly engaged students to write the revision successfully with around 75% of the global issues being correctly revised. However, a few local issues commented on through screencast feedback without any text feedback have no change indicating that a few of the commented local issues were ignored without any revision. From this result, the teacher needs to carefully address the local issue by including text feedback. Even though screencast can cover overall feedback on both local and global issues, the teachers were required to give appropriate portions of text and screencast feedback to obtain the accurate result of students' revisions. Global issues like content and organization were recommended to be commented on through screencast feedback as students found it difficult to understand the text feedback on global issues (Cheng & Li, 2020).

The survey in the third cycle addressed the additional feature use of a webcam for the teacher's visual appearance on the video. As predicted, 92% of students favored screencasts with the teacher's presence since it was considered to have enhanced student-teacher interpersonal relations, improved teacher praise, and a conversation-like atmosphere. Most of the students (88%) assessed Screencast with the teacher's visual presence enhancing student-teacher interpersonal connection. They declared that watching video feedback with the teacher's appearance gave them a touch of a synchronous-learning experience where the teacher was virtually present and commented on their writing. Such experience upgraded interpersonal relations between the teacher and the student which aligns with Cunningham (2019) and Cheng and Li (2020) who found an interpersonal improvement to contribute to students' positive perception of screencast feedback. Another result of the survey was the improvement in teacher praise. Around 76% of the students reflected that four given videos of screencast feedback with the teacher's presence gained more teacher praise where the teacher was satisfied with the some of students' revision results which were assessed as successful revision. The improved teacher praise

perception towards students' revision results after having commented through screencast feedback supported Killingback *et al.* (2019) finding which noted the improvement of teacher praise perception affected students' work. The reflection about the improved praise was that the points given feedback through screencast were mostly successfully revised accurately. Accurate revisions made by students led the teacher to give more prizes when doing screencast feedback. One more perception of students toward screencast feedback with the teacher's visual presence was a feeling of a conversation-like atmosphere. Most of the students, precisely around 80% of them felt comfortable listening to the screencast video feedback since the explanation provided turned out to be a conversation rather than comments. The teacher reflected that a total of seven videos of screencast feedback resulted in the teachers' custom to practice it and eventually changed the way the teacher gave the feedback especially when the teacher visually appeared in the screencast video. The conversation-like atmosphere perception during screencast feedback with the teacher's visual presence accords with Mahoney *et al.* (2019), Wood (2022), and Mohammed and Alharbi (2022) who found that through video feedback, a conversation can be obtained rather than text comments.

The final result of the writer category was obtained after the students' final article was assessed. The percentage of competent writers was 72% where 18 out of 25 students got a score higher than 70. Among those competent writers, 3 of them gained a score of more than 90 considered very competent writers. Furthermore, moderate writers were found in 4 out of 25 students with a percentage of 16%, a decrease of 8% compared to the previous cycle (24%). Similar to the previous cycle, incompetent writers were 3 out of 25 students who had a score under 50. Based on the final evaluation above, it can be stated that the implementation of screencast feedback was successfully practiced as alternative feedback due to the 72% accomplishment of students' scores above 70. Therefore, writing teachers are recommended to take advantage of screencasts to provide video feedback on students writing.

## CONCLUSION

The implementation of screencast feedback in academic writing classes proved to be successful and was able to enhance students' scientific

article writing skills. Students measured it positively for its helpfulness in guiding revision writing, its clarity in understanding the comments, and its easiness of access. At first, the teacher did not accustom to using screencast was a source of their long duration and negative perception, the limitation of video feedback duration then solved the problem. An added teacher's visual presence via webcam during screencast feedback also increased teacher-student interpersonal relations and teacher praise, as well as gave a conversation-like atmosphere. As to minimize the time-consuming problem, the teacher must get himself accustomed to it by practicing it more often. Since this study was limited to the implementation of screencasts without considering participants' external, internal, or psychological factors, upcoming research on screencasts may investigate those factors to contribute to the practice and success of article writing. Further research may also include students practicing peer feedback by using screencast to see the difference between the teacher's and students' screencast feedback practices.

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