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Teachers Feedback on the Use of Digital Writing Platforms in ESL Instruction

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ABSTRACT: The use of digital writing tools in English as a Second Language (ESL) teaching has grown significantly with the development of Mobile-Assisted Language Learning (MALL). Though lots of studies have concentrated on student results and perspectives, not enough attention has been directed to teacher experiences and input regarding the practical application of these tools in actual learning environments. This study examines ESL teacher opinions on the effectiveness, obstacles, and teaching application of WordPress and Hemingway Editor in writing teaching. The research utilized a descriptive qualitative survey approach to gather feedback from 43 English as a Second Language teachers at two institutions that implemented digital platforms into their writing instruction over a six-week period. Data were collected through a structured Google Forms questionnaire that examined tool usability, learning efficacy, observed student engagement, and implementation challenges through Likert-scale items and open-ended questions. Research indicated that teachers saw WordPress as significantly helping in encouraging collaborative writing environments and increasing student involvement through exposure to a genuine audience, but the Hemingway Editor was appreciated for delivering immediate, practical feedback on grammatical and accessibility challenges. Teachers expressed considerable worries regarding the significant amount of time commitment required, the necessity for extensive professional training, the potential for student over-dependence on automated feedback, and the ethical implications associated with the use of digital tools. This study, informed by teacher feedback, offers essential insights into the practical challenges of applying digital writing tools in ESL classrooms, highlighting the requirement for structured institutional support, a balanced teaching strategy that merges automated and human feedback, and the significance of teacher directed implementation. The findings enhance understanding of the responsible and effective incorporation of digital feedback tools in ESL writing instruction in higher education settings.

KEYWORDS: Teacher Feedback, Digital writing tools, ESL writing instruction, Thematic analysis, Higher education, Technology-mediated feedback

I. INTRODUCTION

The use of digital technologies in English as a Second Language (ESL) writing instruction has transformed traditional teaching methods in the last decade. The transition from Computer-Assisted Language Learning (CALL) to Mobile-Assisted Language Learning (MALL) has provided new ways for learners to participate in writing activities beyond traditional classroom environments (Chen & Brown, 2023). Digital writing platforms and automatic feedback processes have surfaced as advantageous tools that provide quick, specific guidance to language learners while possibly reducing the feedback burden for educators (Martinez & Lee, 2024). The improvement of writing in ESL environments is significantly dependent on efficient processes of feedback. Traditional instructor feedback, though helpful in handling content and descriptive issues, encounters practical restrictions such as limited time and delayed response times (Johnson et al., 2023). Digital platforms like WordPress enhance collaborative writing environments, allowing students to submit their work, share drafts, and obtain peer criticism instantaneously (Anderson & Smith, 2022). Automated writing evaluation systems, such as Hemingway Editor, offer immediate algorithmic input on grammar, style, readability, and sentence complexity (Williams & Chen, 2024). These technological capabilities position digital tools as possible alternatives to conventional writing training techniques. Recent studies have examined various facets of the use of technology in learning a language. Research has investigated student perspectives of digital writing platforms, finding that motivation and engagement improve when learners write for real potential readers (Parker & Davis, 2023). More research has assessed learning outcomes following digital interventions, indicating enhancements in grammatical accuracy and revision practices (Thompson et al., 2022). Studies on automated feedback tools reveal that although these systems effectively identify basic mistakes, they struggle in addressing higher-order issues like the quality of reasoning and expressive impact (Roberts & Kim, 2024).

The effective integration of educational technology essentially depends on teacher acceptance, adaption, and implementation. Educators act as essential intermediaries who determine the method, timing, and reasons for the adoption of technology into the classroom (Garcia & Martinez, 2023). Their expert opinion determines if digital tools help or hinder learning activities. Educators evaluate instructional effectiveness, control interactions in the classroom, meet varied learner needs, and move within institutional limitations (Chang & Wilson, 2024). Comprehending educators' experiences with digital writing tools provides vital details into the practical realities of combining technology that result measurements alone cannot provide.

Even instructors are important in the implementation of educational technology, research has mainly concentrated on student perceptions and learning outcome. A major need exists in the systematic recording of ESL educators' feedback concerning the classroom utilization of digital writing platforms (Lee & Anderson, 2023). However, it is established that certain tools can enhance particular writing skills in controlled environments, there is a shortcoming in our understanding of teachers' experiences during the integration process, the pedagogical issues they recognize, and the support systems they need for sustainable implementation.

The significance of this difference lies in the fact that educators' readiness to embrace technology and their ability to execute it proficiently directly affect the extent to which digital tools attain a substantial presence in the classroom. Avoiding teacher viewpoints in educational technology initiatives may lead to the adoption of solutions that seem effective in research environments but are ultimately impractical in real classroom situations. Teacher feedback discusses the practical factors influencing practicality, such as time commitment, technical challenges, student response trends, and congruence with established instructional methods.

This study thus fills an important research gap by examining ESL teacher feedback regarding the pedagogical efficacy, obstacles, and classroom applicability of WordPress and Hemingway Editor in writing teaching. The goal of this study aims to systematically document teachers' experiences, views, and concerns to inspire more educationally responsible methods for integrating digital tools in ESL writing classrooms. The study does not assess learning results instead; it concentrates on collecting teacher input to comprehend the practical implications of using these digital platforms in real educational environments.

II. SURVEY OF LITERATURE

Feedback is essential for effective writing instruction, especially in ESL situations where learners concurrently improve language and writing abilities. Traditional teacher feedback has been valued for an extended period; yet, it requires significant effort and time, limiting teachers from delivering quick responses to all students (Hyland & Hyland, 2019). Research indicates that prompt and targeted feedback facilitates writing development; however, educators often dedicate 20-30 minutes to assess each writing piece, posing challenges in large classroom environments (Ferris, 2022). Automatic writing evaluation (AWE) systems have emerged as alternative methods for delivering feedback, utilizing software to identify grammatical errors and propose improvements (Warschauer & Grimes, 2023). These tools offer immediate feedback, enabling students to modify their work without waiting evaluations from teachers. Research indicates that AWE enhances surface-level accuracy, especially in grammar and mechanics (Stevenson & Phakiti, 2019). Still, automated systems encounter difficulties in understanding context, meaning, and advanced writing elements such as reasoning and organizing. Research shows that although programs such as Hemingway Editor may detect intricate sentences and passive constructions, they are unable of assessing if the proposed changes truly enhance the overall quality of writing (Link et al., 2020).

Digital platforms have transformed writing instruction by facilitating collaborative writing among students and allowing them to post their work for authentic audiences. Blogging systems such as WordPress enable students to disseminate their writing, gain peer comments, and enhance both digital literacy and writing skills (Godwin-Jones, 2018). Studies indicate that writing enhances student motivation as learners compose for real audiences beyond simply their instructor (Arslan & Şahin-Kızıl, 2010). Research indicates that students exhibit heightened involvement when composing writings as opposed to traditional paper assignments, resulting in enhancements in both writing frequency and length (Sun & Chang, 2012). However, digital platforms provide hurdles such as technical difficulties for students lack technological proficiency, security concerns with web-based sources of work, and increased time demands on educators to learn and manage these platforms (Ducate & Lomicka, 2008).

2.1Educator Perspectives on Educational Technology

Educators are essential in ascertaining the success of instructional technology within classrooms. Studies indicate that teacher acceptance is based upon their perception of technology's value and ease to use (Scherer et al., 2019). In language instruction, educators assess technology according to its real contribution to learning objectives rather than mere novelty (Hubbard, 2013). Research suggests that educators who evaluate technology as aligned with their teaching approach are able to employ it regularly (Egbert et al., 2002). Many teachers, however, indicate that insufficient training is a significant obstacle to making use of technology. Educators require assistance not only in technical skills but also in grasping the instructional integration of technologies into their instruction (Kessler, 2018). In addition, educators articulate fears regarding data privacy, equitable access for all students, and the potential for technology to engender new disparities in education (Selwyn, 2016).

Though many studies have examined the impact of digital writing tools on student learning outcomes and satisfaction, there is a lack of detailed information about teacher experiences in the use of these tools within actual teaching settings (Chapelle & Sauro, 2017). This gap is significant since educators' readiness to embrace and proficiently utilize technology directly influences the extent to which digital technologies merge into classroom practices. This study fills this gap by gathering ESL teachers' views on how they make use of WordPress and Hemingway Editor in their writing teaching.

III.DESCRIPTION OF THE DIGITAL TOOLS USED

3.1Word press as a Digital writing Platform

In this study, WordPress was used as a digital platform to support writing, publishing, sharing, and feedback. Teachers used WordPress to create writing environments in the classroom where students could submit drafts, view the work of their classmates, and interact with one another through comments. The platform allowed writing to be presented in a way that went above traditional paper-based submission, allowing students to view writing as an interactive and socially visible process. Based on a teaching perspective, WordPress extended feedback opportunities and encouraged students' interaction. Teachers observed writing practices as part of a shared learning environment instead of as individual submissions. However, the platform also required teachers to handle the technical setup, stay updated on online interactions, and set apart instructional time for orientation and guidance.

3.2 Hemingway Editor as an Automated Feedback Tool

Hemingway Editor was used as an additional writing tool that focused on sentence-level aspects. The application offers automated comments on stylistic clarity, passive structures, phrase complexity, and readability. During the revision stage, teachers encouraged students to self-edit their work before submitting it by asking them to paste drafts into the editor. Hemingway Editor serves as an individual revision tool rather than an interactive platform like WordPress. Instructors emphasized its value in highlighting basic writing errors and increasing students' awareness of conciseness and clarity. Likewise, they observed that the qualitative feedback provided by the tool required instructional framing for the purpose of avoiding blind acceptance of suggested changes.

IV.PARTICIPANTS AND CONTEXT

There were 43 teachers from two different colleges that taught language-related or academic writing. Using a convenience sample, teachers were chosen based on their willingness to implement digital technologies into their teaching methods and offer input on how they are used. While they had a variety of fields of study in higher education, the participating teachers took responsibility for directing the writing growth of their students. Participation was voluntary, responses were gathered in confidence, and no personally identifiable information was provided to ensure ethical conduct.

4.1Procedure

Teachers took part in an overview instruction before implementation, which highlighted the educational goals and key characteristics of both tools. Over a period of six weeks, teachers included WordPress and Hemingway Editor into their regular writing. Teachers observed classroom integration during this period, saw students interact with the tools, and assessed how useful they were in real-world situations. Teachers were asked to fill out a structured google questionnaire after the implementation process in order to provide feedback. Open-ended questions in the survey encouraged teachers to think critically about the tools' learning benefits, observed advantages, and difficulties.

V.THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This Figure explain Theory Sociocultural theory defines learning as socially mediated activity through participation in traditionally organized practices with more knowledgeable others scaffolding performance beyond current independent capabilities (Vygotsky, 1978). Several sociocultural constructs guide this investigation. Teachers serve as essential mediators in digital tool use. Technology needs educational framing, teaching oversight, and situational integration (Lantolf & Thorne, 2006). Teacher mediation greatly impacts whether tools are learning resources or classroom additions. Cultural resources like digital platforms reflect writing, learning, and feedback assumptions. Tools are culturally formed technology with unspoken principles and affordances that support some actions and inhibit others (Warschauer, 1999). Understanding teacher views on these technologies shows how cultural materials fit into teaching contexts. Feedback is scaffolding, which is temporary help for individual learning. From a sociocultural perspective, scaffolding should meet learner needs, gradually withdraw as competence grows, and be educational rather than corrective (Aljaafreh & Lantolf, 1994). This methodology raises important considerations regarding whether automated feedback scaffolds development or limits educational value.

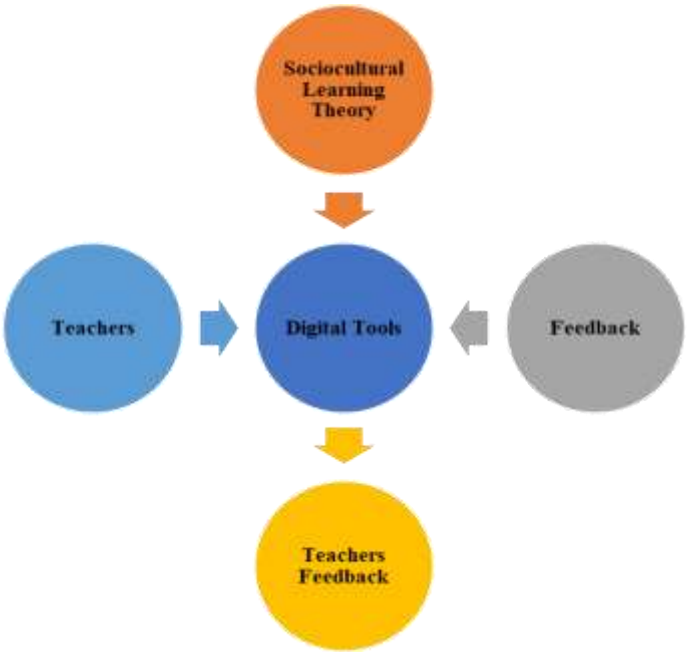


Figure1: Socio cultural Theory Framework

VI.RESEARCH QUESTION

RQ: 1what are teachers' experiences and perceptions when integrating WordPress and Hemingway Editor into ESL writing classes?

RQ: 2what barriers and training requirements do teachers identify for effective use of digital feedback tools?

VII.OBJECTIVES

To examine ESL teacher opinions regarding the instructional efficacy of Word Press and Hemingway Editor in writing education.

To identify the advantages and difficulties teachers encounter when adopting these digital writing tools into ESL classrooms

To explore the professional development and support requirements of teachers for effective usage of digital writing tools.

VIII.METHODOLOGY

A descriptive survey was used to gather ESL teachers' perspectives and experiences with WordPress and Hemingway Editor in writing education. 43 ESL teachers from two different colleges gave permission to utilize these digital tools in their writing classes for six weeks and provide feedback. The main data collection instrument was a Google Forms questionnaire for teacher feedback with four sections: Tool Usability (ease use and technical reliability), Pedagogical Usefulness (educational value for writing instruction), Student Engagement (observed student motivation and participation), and Challenges and Ethical Concerns. Teachers might provide thorough comments and teaching examples in each segment using Likert-scale items (1-5 scale) and optional open-ended questions. After a two-hour WordPress and Hemingway Editor orientation, teachers used these tools in daily activities over 6 weeks. Teachers completed the online Google Forms feedback questionnaire after installation to share their perspectives. Descriptive statistics such as counts, percentages, and average scores were calculated for the numerical responses, while thematic analysis was used to find common themes, patterns, concerns, and helpful suggestions from teachers written feedback.

8.1Data collection Instrument

A Google Forms questionnaire with mostly open-ended questions was used to gather data. The questionnaire explored four main topics:

1. Classroom usability of the tools
2. Teaching value for writing instruction
3. Observed effects on student engagement and revision practices
4. Challenges, concerns, and training needs

This format enabled teachers to provide in-depth, experience-based answers based on their teaching practices.

8.2Data Analysis

Using empirical thematic analysis, qualitative data were examined. To ensure that participants were comfortable with the facts, they were read repeatedly. The purpose of the first programming session was to identify major shifts in the usage of tools,

feedback management, instructional support, and limitations. Following the grouping of codes into deeper themes, these were examined and improved to ensure internal reliability as well as theme difference. The analysis identified excellent passages that represented each subject, giving priority to common themes across responses rather than specific comments.

IX.RESULT

9.1The effectiveness of digital tools in teaching ESL writing using Word Press.

42 out of 43 respondents said they will keep using Word Press, suggesting that it was a successful tool for teaching ESL writing. The platform's main benefits were that it assisted the entire writing process from writing to publication, gave students real readers that encouraged them to write more carefully, allowed for effective student and teacher feedback through comments, and helped students develop their digital literacy. Teachers valued how simple it was to observe students' development over time and effectively handle feedback, and students showed increased writing confidence, interest, and pride in their published work.

9.2The Effectiveness of Hemingway's Editor

In the same way 42 out of 43 respondents said they would keep using Hemingway Editor because of its quick and useful comments on complicated structures, accessibility, passive voice, and sentence clarity. The tool successfully motivated students to edit on their own, raised their awareness of sentence-level errors, and reduced their need for teacher correction for common issues. Nevertheless, respondents constantly stressed that Hemingway Editor should be used as an additional tool rather than as a replacement for feedback from teachers, pointing out its drawbacks in resolving more complex grammar and tense issues as well as the possibility that students may depend on it without understanding basic rules.

9.3Ideas for Implementation and Training Needs

Teachers highlighted those digital technologies work best when carefully combined with traditional training rather than being utilized alone. This requires an effective approach that includes automated feedback, teacher instruction, and classroom discussion. The most often requested support included practical advice on how to understand and clarify automated feedback to students, how to resolve technical difficulties, how to successfully combine digital and traditional teaching methods, and hands-on instruction on merging tools into classroom instruction. Also, respondents asked for online teacher communities for exchanging best practices, ready-made teaching materials, and continual professional development specific to ESL teaching environments. The findings of the survey showed a high level of support for the use of digital tools in ESL writing instruction, as long as they are used along with teacher-guided instruction rather than in place of it, with proper institutional support and training to ensure effective implementation.

X.DISCUSSION

This study examined how teachers make use of digital writing and feedback tools in their learning environments, emphasizing their real-life teaching experiences. When examined through a sociocultural perspective, which highlights the role of social contact and traditional instruments in learning, the results indicate that these digital tools are most effective when teachers actively support their implementation, instead of only due to their digital attributes. During the survey, educators generally characterized digital tools as beneficial instruments requiring sufficient teaching. Automatic feedback enabled students to identify writing issues they may have overlooked, as educators explained how to make use of and understand that feedback. Teachers saw that students exhibited greater independence in writing when digital resources were frequently included in classroom practices. This corresponds with the concept of scaffolding which provides assistance that gradually reduces as learners gain skills. Still, teachers expressed concern that students could develop too much dependence on automatic corrections, hindering their comprehension of basic writing ideas. Effective learning involves writing abilities rather than simply rectifying external mistakes. The experiences of teachers with limited time and differing digital skill levels highlight that learning tools do not function in isolation. a sociocultural perspective, tools operate within various institutional and social settings.

lack of sufficient education and institutional support, even effective digital tools could fail to achieve their potential or may be employed in manners that do not align with educational objectives. The principal conclusion is that digital writing tools are most effective when included in teacher-directed learning. Teachers are not just providing information; they are actively supporting students in using these tools, helping them understand feedback, and guiding their transition from dependence to independence. This study supports the sociocultural view that technology enhances learning not alone by digitization, but through its planned inclusion into socially structured instructional techniques. In conclusion, digital tools serve as cultural resources that gain educational value through teacher guidance, institutional support, and intentional implementation into classroom methods. Technology improves learning when used in significant, structured educational experiences instead of as a replacement for traditional instruction.

XI.LIMITATIONS

This study examined the usage of digital writing tools such as WordPress and Hemingway Editor by teachers in university. The research has several limitations: it depended on teachers' self-reports instead of direct classroom observations, focused on only two colleges, failed to assess student learning results, and may have drawn teachers with a previous affinity for technology. The results showed that teachers assessed these digital tools as beneficial for enhancing student writing, facilitating revisions, and automating feedback processing. Still, teachers highlighted that these tools are most effective when accompanied by appropriate instruction and training from instructors. They advised avoiding excessive dependence on automated input and highlighted issues such as time limitations and differing levels of technical expertise. The primary conclusion is that digital tools should augment teaching rather than replace it. Their efficacy is dependent upon the manner in which teachers incorporate and direct how they are used within the learning environment.

XII.CONCLUSION

This study explored ESL teachers' feedback on integrating WordPress and Hemingway Editor into writing teaching, providing a significant research gap that has emphasized student outcomes over teacher perspective. The 43 ESL teachers from two institutions had mostly positive attitudes, with 43 willing to use both tools. WordPress offered authentic writing environments that motivated students and supported collaborative learning; Hemingway Editor gave quick feedback on sentence clarity and accessibility to encourage self-editing. The study found that digital tools perform best when integrated with teacher-guided instruction, not as replacements. Teachers repeatedly emphasized that automated feedback needs an instructional framework as well as guidance to avoid repetition and enhance meaningful learning. Time investment, technological proficiency, institutional support, and professional development were major issues. These findings demonstrate that technology is a cultural instrument that gains educational value through teacher mediation and purposeful integration into structured routines. Technology does not promote learning without teacher scaffolding, feedback, interpretive coaching, and student independence. The study found that implementation required a balanced approach, sufficient instruction, institutional support, and specified instructional guidelines. Teachers require practical instruction, help balancing automated and human feedback, professional associations, and readily available tools. This research provides teacher-centered perspectives for realistic, effective digital writing use in ESL instruction.

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