FACEBOOK AS A MEDIATION OF PEER ASSESSMENT: EXPLORING CHALLENGES AND BENEFITS IN AN EFL SPEAKING CLASSROOM SETTING

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to address students' perceptions about integrating Facebook as the mediation of peer assessment in EFL Speaking Classroom. The participants of this study consist of four students in the fourth semester pursuing English Education major in an Indonesian university. The data was collected by semi-structured interview and then the data were analyzed qualitatively, and interpretively by using thematic analysis. The result indicates four emerging themes about the students' perception on using FB as the mediation of peer assessment; challenges encountered by the students during FB-mediated peer assessment, the importance of being an autonomous learner, FB as a platform to build speaking learning motivation, and FB as a platform to build speaking learning confidence. This study provided language instructors with insights into the adoption of Facebook in an EFL context and supported them with better design tasks on FB.

Keywords: Facebook, Speaking Classroom, EFL, Student Perception, Peer Assessment

INTRODUCTION

Facebook (henceforth, FB) has become one of the most popular and widely used networking sites which allow its users to post information, to chats with others, and to collaborates within the system (Stelter, 2008). FB offers its users a great opportunity to participate in various communities of knowledge building and knowledge sharing (Crook et al. 2008). The number of FB users has reached 2.17 billion in January 2017 around the world (Voivonta & Avraamidou, 2017). Most of them belong to the young adult age group (Junco, 2012). It mainly consists of students at the university level. The influence of FB on various fields has encouraged scholars and educators to explore its potential for pedagogical purposes (Voivonta & Avraamidou, 2017). Likewise, Barrot (2018) conducted a study which concerned on the educational use of FB for language teaching and learning. One of these fields of interest is language teaching and learning speaking (Al Saleem, 2018). FB is considered to be used in learning speaking since the users may not face the pressures of communicating in person or in a real-time voice, where they are forced to respond immediately (Liu & Jackson, 2008).

Along with the times in the 21st century, the rapid increase in the utilization of online learning environments and social network sites, such as FB, could potentially lead to increase the use of online peer assessment (Demir, 2018). For instance, Li and Law (2012) performed their study on the effects of online peer assessment in form of peer grading and peer feedback on the students' learning. Meanwhile, Cheng et al. (2014) focused on exploring the emotional responses and participation of university students in an online peer

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assessment. The results suggest that response behaviors play a role in reflecting a learner's participation and emotional response during an online peer assessment process. Finally, Demir (2018) performed his study on the use of online peer assessment in FB, especially in instructional technology and material design course through social media. It is concluded that online peer assessment can be used as a cognitive tool, which gives beneficial contributions to knowledge building and learning reflection in educational field.

The term peer assessment is usually associated with the term of peer feedback. It is because peer feedback serves as the learning element of peer assessment (Liu & Carless, 2006). Furthermore, the previous studies have reported that feedback promotes learning achievement (Demir, 2018; Xie et.al, 2008). However it must be considered, how the appropriate feedback can provide better changes for the students not only cognitively and affectively, but also metacognitively.

Many studies have led to the use of Facebook as a potential educational tool, but only little of them specifically point towards students' perception on the use of Facebook as a mediation of peer assessment in speaking classes (Voivonta & Avraamidou, 2017; Barrot, 2018; Demir, 2018). One might question how well the purported benefits and challenges appear in peer assessment based on the students' point of view. Therefore to fill this gap, the researchers tried to investigate students' perceptions on the use of Facebook as the mediation of peer assessment in EFL Speaking Classroom.

METHOD

A. Research Method

The design of this study is a descriptive case study since it focused on presenting a detailed, and contextualized picture of a particular phenomenon (Yin, 2003, as cited in Hood 2009). In other words, the researchers conducted a case study to investigate the students' perception of how the purported benefits and challenges appears in peer assessment based on the students' point of view. Hence, this research investigated the perception of doing peer assessment in FB as a mediation of peer assessment.

B. Settings and Participants

This research conducted in a university, located in West Java, Indonesia because of two considerations: (1) the researchers and the participants are the students of this university and (2) the EFL Speaking Classroom in this university has implemented FB as peer assessment mediation. It employed four students of the third semester having FB account, consisted of male and female whose age ranged around 21-22 years old. In addition, they have taken EFL Classroom courses and their GPA was above 3.0. Before conducting the interview, the participants were asked to sign a consent form verifying their agreements to participate voluntarily in this research. They were also informed that any personal data of the participants will be confidential information.

C. Data Collection and Analysis

The empirical data was collected using semi-structured interviews since these interviews are intended to get participants' personal descriptions, and to dig deeper into what participants think, feel, reflect, and act when conducted peer assessment in FB (DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006). In this semi-structured interview, the outline of the topic that needs to be discussed was revealed, and the advance questions might be needed. The interview was conducted twice to three times until the researchers felt that the information obtained was sufficient. The data on interviews were recorded using digital recordings to produce more contextual data, to collect richer data, and to conduct rigorous micro-interaction and thematic analysis (DuFon 2002; Fetterman 2010). Then,

it was listened, formed, and communicated with interpretative intentions, reproduced or (rebuilt) built and built for credibility (see Widodo, 2014 for details). Thus, in this research, the data from the semi-structured interview were recorded, transcribed, translated, and analyzed. Furthermore, Widodo (2014) pointed out that in the interview, participants and researchers jointly create data from naturally occurring conversation and transcriptions, which in turn can assist the researchers to reconstruct the data.

The data obtained in this study were analyzed by using six steps of thematic analysis (Braun and Clarke, 2006):

1. Familiarising with the data

    The researchers were required to be familiar with the data by listening to audio recordings from interviews several times and re-read the transcriptions to avoid mismatch data.

2. Generating initial codes

    The researchers highlighted the data related to the aims of this research and then categorized the data into initial codes coloured to ease the researchers to analyze the data in the next stages.

N	But what do you think about the tasks uploaded to Facebook?	
P	*Firstly, is good for training us to what extent our confidence in showing our skills to others , second we don't become technology illiterate person*	Increasing self confidence
N	What is the difference between the challenges in the class and facebook?	
P	*The challenge for uploading the video is the first one, of course, sometimes the quota is the same as the signal.*	Student's limitation towards internet access

Figure 1: The stage of Initial Coding

3. Searching for the themes

    The researchers grouped the data which possibly have the same color that have been highlighted in order to make it easy to analyze.

Challenges encountered during peer assessment in Facebook	(15)	Becoming an autonomous learner	(17)	Facebook as a platform to build speaking learning motivation	(3)
Student's limitation toward internet access	4	Speaking Initial practices	3	Increasing Students' motivation	3
Students evaluation		Students preparation	5		
Difficulties on assessing peer	7	Students Self reflection	9		
	4				

Figure 2: The stage of Searching for theme

4. Reviewing potential themes
    The researchers reviewed all data for each theme in order to make sure it has been grouped in the right place and re-check whether or not there is a theme or code that needs to be replaced or recoded to avoid placement errors that may cause data misleading.

5. Defining and naming themes
    The researchers defined the theme for each data that has been highlighted and it will be further interpreted using socio-cultural theory.

6. Producing the report (the researchers reported what has been obtained from this study) (see Braun and Clarke, 2006 for details).

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The term social networking is defined as the environment as a medium to have cooperation and collaboration used in the classroom, boardroom, and online discussion room (Othman, Suhaimi, Yusuf, Yusof, & Mohamad, 2012). Currently, the era of technology allows the students to develop strong digital literacy and share resources and high access to social media anywhere anytime, this led them to have more opportunities to interact, collaborate, create content, and communicate with other people. The current pedagogy shifted to cater students'q need. The new learning must promote learner autonomy such as independent learning and self-regulated learning. students will be able to express their ideas freely, enhance their critical thinking, and create their own material (Zdravkova, 2016). One of respondent opinion about WBL is as follows:

"Web-based learning is one of the ways we can promote learner autonomy. I can improve my knowledge and comprehension of functional grammar. It makes me think a lot, read a lot, ponder a lot. ... In the forum discussion, I can share my reading report and give comments to others." <AN>

From the interview and questionnaire that the researcher conducted, the respondents said that SPOT UPI still unable to support web-based learning. From its system, the access is slow and need a longer time to establish a connection and it is agreed by 62% of the respondents. They also prefer to access it through a mobile phone than a computer, 46% prefer mobile phone and 54% against using a computer. Sixty-two percent of the respondents also claim that the web sometimes disrupted when accessed. It is not supported by visual (85%) and video (46%).

The students are not satisfied with the current system and the online discussion is not optimized. The use of WBL means all the resources and materials are provided virtually in one packet. It is it's like a double edge sword because any technical problem no matter how small it is will make learners dissatisfied, increase their stress, and also hinder their learning process (Cook, 2007). 54% Respondents stated that web-based is not quite useful for them. 62% of respondents said that it is still unable to support distance learning. they also complained that they are unable to understand the learning material presented (85% claimed they are unable to comprehend the material). WBL is unable to save time (69% claimed they disagree that WBL can save time). 54% disagree and 38 % strongly disagree with the notion that WBL can help them manage their sources, access digital library. 85% claimed that WBL is useful for retrieving data, sending their homework, uploading a file, conducting online discussion, class discussion and in developing critical thinking. Although the system can support online discussion, 62% disagree that WBL is challenging, it truly discourages them to participate in the online lesson. WBL is seen as an uninteresting way of delivering the lesson (69% disagree WBL is an interesting way of delivering material). 85% disagree that the teacher conveyed the instruction clearly. For the good part, 69% of the respondents

claimed that they get teacher's feedback immediately and 62% of them said WBL is easier than face to face lessons.

The use of WBL is still not optimal in improving students' interaction and teacher scaffolding. In social aspect of WBL, many of the students (23%) were agree that WBL can accommodate interaction and communication with their peers and teacher, 38% disagree, and 38% strongly disagree Although the interaction perspective, the use of WBL is still poor, 46% agree that they can feel the class unity in online discussion, although, some other 38% disagree with this statement. In monitoring the students' activity, 38% agree that the teacher did the job well, but 62%% said otherwise.

In term of media richness, students response to the exchange of non-verbal communication are 31% strongly agree, 23% agree, 38% disagree, and 8% strongly disagree. 46% disagree that WBL provided a variety of multimedia. The good aspect of using WBL is students can easily exchange ideas with peers and teacher, as stated in the statement " it takes a long time to exchange ideas with peers and teacher" 77% disagree. For teacher clarification, 85% disagree that the teacher provides it.

From the findings above, it can be concluded that SPOT UPI is still had some drawbacks such as poor media richness, lack of teacher scaffolding. The teacher provides feedback but rarely clarifies. In promoting learner autonomy, language courses must reflect the learner's objective in its language, tasks, and strategies, developing language-learning process awareness, reproduce authentic communicative tasks, and encourage students to do a reflection on their learning (Harmer, 2007, p.395). The pedagogical learning structure to develop LA includes providing suitable conceptual and practical tools for the learner, using manageable steps in strengthening the development, using proper resources such as a learning library, internet, and peer support (Kuhn & Cavana, 2012). According to constructivist, "the scaffolding system can help learners who learn below the zone of proximal development". The scaffolding can include conceptual, procedural, strategic, and metafunction scaffolding to develop student's skills and comprehension. In traditional scaffolding, the scaffolding happened face to face, but using web-based learning can enrich it with cyberspace, and community (Deejring, 2014).

The system can support online discussion but the students are discouraged and unmotivated in actively participating in the class discussion. As a responsible learner, students must realize their efforts in determining their learning progress. They need to strive every chance the teacher gives, they should show their eagerness and cooperate with their peers and teacher to promote their autonomous learning (Scarle & Szabo, 2000).

The benefits the students get from WBL using SPOT UPI are it enables them to retrieve data, sending homework, uploading a file, participate in an online discussion. WBL develops their critical thinking, getting the teacher's immediate feedback. They can utilize web-based resources to improve discovery learning (ideas, knowledge, innovation, & group unity) (Fan & Li, 2011). This type of learning can avoid any misconception and develop students' thinking process through multiple perspectives especially in higher education (Deejring, 2014). WBL enables them to exchange ideas easily. WBL can facilitate because it has some ability such as retrieving information, developing ideas and constructing, the capability in generating the idea methodologically, contributing to problem-solving, reporting attendance and diligence, and communication skills (Willmot & Crawford, 2007). WBL can offer immediate feedback, record and store the student's learning development in terms of their difficulties and their successful achievements (Cook, 2007).

CONCLUSION

WBL using SPOT UPI enables students to retrieve data, sending homework, uploading files, participate in an online discussion, and develop their critical thinking, getting teacher's immediate feedback, and enable them to exchange ideas easily. For recommendation,

SPOT UPI needs to be improved. The system needs to be able to provide rich media and the willingness from the teacher to scaffold the students.

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