The Effect of Employing Electronic Peer Assessment on Iranian EFL Learners' Writing Ability and Autonomy

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Abstract—Peer assessment known as an effective technique in improving English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners' achievement as well as their autonomy has taken a new form thanks to the employment of electronic applications and web-based tools. The purpose of this study was to explore the effects of employing electronic peer assessment on Iranian EFL learners' writing ability and autonomy. To achieve the goals of the study a sample including 48 Iranian upper-intermediate EFL learners were selected from among 90 female learners studying English in a language institute in Kashmar, Khorasan Razavi, according to their scores in Quick Placement Test (QPT), Version1. These participants were randomly assigned to control (N=24) and experimental (N=24) groups. Both groups took writing pretest and Learner Autonomy Questionnaire developed by Zhang and Li (2004). Throughout the experiment which lasted for 12 sessions, the experimental group benefited from the treatment, electronic peer assessment. However, the control group received the same treatment but peer assessment technique was carried out without any electronic interventions. Finally, both groups sat for the posttest being the same as the pretest. In addition, a semi-structured interview was conducted to the participants in the experimental group. Results of data analysis indicated the experimental group's outperformance in both writing and autonomy scale administered at the end of the study. Results of qualitative data (interview), also, showed that these participants had positive beliefs about employing electronic peer assessment. Pedagogically, the present findings support the employment of the treatment in EFL settings.

Index Terms—peer assessment, electronic peer assessment, writing ability, descriptive writing, autonomy

I. INTRODUCTION

There seems to exist a different look to assessment which considers it as an effective teaching tool and it's effective to integrate assessment in to teaching approach. Several academic achievements may have their roots in proper assessments taken place inside or outside the classroom. Teachers should become aware of their students' understanding and then utilize this information to make effective changes in their teaching (Tavakoli, & Atefi Boroujeni, 2012). Due to the shift toward creating learner-oriented classrooms in which English as Foreign Language (EFL) teachers receive less responsibilities and specific attention is devoted to EFL students, a different kind of assessment may replace the common type of assessment administered by teachers.

Recently, by the developing learner-centered class, peer assessment has become one of the famous favorite subjects among EFL (English as a foreign language) teachers. Peer assessment causes teachers share the evaluation of assignment with learners (Khodadadi & Khodabakhshzadeh, 2012). The goal of peer assessment is to encourage and enable individuals to take responsibility and to promote skills for analyzing, controlling, measuring, and evaluating the aspects of the learning process and their peer products. Investigating peer assessment studies shows that this kind of assessment leads to improving students' higher order reasoning, individuals' higher level of cognitive thought (Birdsong & Sharplin, 1986), improving student-centered learning (Oldfield & MacAlpine, 1995), nurturing active and flexible learning (Entwhistle, 1993), and developing a deep approach rather than a surface one regarding learning (Entwhistle,1993; Gibbs, 1992). Earl (1986) also puts out that peer assessment plays a socializing role and reinforces interpersonal relationships. Chen (2008) believes that learners can achieve ownership and control of their learning process via assessing their performances. Even, Piaget mentions the importance of peer assessment in active learning theory. Also, Vygotsky refers to the significant role of peer assessment in social construction.

With the advent of communication software such as Viber, Telegram, Skype, et. the educational contexts witness the integration of such applications into EFL area. Baradaran and Khalili' findings (2009) indicated that those learners who underwent the chat room treatment significantly outperformed those who did not with respect to oral fluency. Online peer assessments provide the students with the chance of assessing not only the work of their peers, but also assessing their own work. Also, self-assessment techniques are mostly restricted to basic cognitive levels, but peer assessment

makes the students able to promote learning at high cognitive levels which are beyond the basic ones. In fact, peer assessment gets the students involved in the online process of revision, assessment, and feedback (Bloom, 1956; Anderson & Krathwohl, 2001). However, as Doiron (2003) puts out, there are some researchers that criticize peer assessment by the use of information and communication technology because first, technology based assessment is not as severe as traditional types of assessment, second, technology based assessment asks for too much effort and pressure on the part of the students, third, technology based assessment cannot be relied on and is not usually fair.

According to Dam (2001), classroom tasks have been useful for developing autonomous language situations during the last decades. Thus, focusing on tasks which help students develop autonomy is of great importance. Peer assessment is a technique that needs to be investigated upon regarding how successful it is in coming up with autonomous learners. According to the researchers, autonomous learners are responsible for their own learning. Learner's autonomy refers to the extent in which learners are able to attend in the learning process independently (Benson & Voller, 1997).

There has always been a need to help EFL learners improve their writing ability. Writing skill often constitutes a problematic task for both students and teachers. It is problematic for students because they don't know how to write appropriately, and it is troublesome for the teachers since assessing writing skill demands for too much time and effort (Rada, 1994). According to several authors (Rada, Michailidis & Wang, 1994; Fisher, 1999), peer assessment can be beneficial as an alternative solution to decreasing teachers' responsibility and workload. Therefore, based on Cho (2006), unlike the development during the last two decades regarding the learners' writing skills, the courses hardly involve comprehensive writing tasks. Cho (2006) offer resorting to peers to assess the learners' work instead of systematically resorting to evaluation by teachers (Rada et al., 1994).

A. Research Questions

The present study seeks to address the following research questions by the researcher.
Q1: Does electronic peer assessment have any significant effects on Iranian EFL learners' writing ability?
Q2: Does electronic peer assessment have any significant effects on Iranian EFL learners' autonomy?

B. Research Null-hypotheses

According to research questions, the following research null hypotheses were proposed:
H01: Electronic peer assessment does not have any significant effects on Iranian EFL learners' writing ability.
H02: Electronic peer assessment does not have any significant effects on Iranian EFL learners' autonomy.

II. REVIEW OF THE RELATED LITERATURE

Among several methods and techniques through which the goals of educational assessment could be achieved, the alternative means of assessment are studied most forcible. These alternative means include the use of checklists, videotapes, audiotapes, teacher observations, journals, logs, conferences, portfolio, self-assessment, and peer-assessment (McKay, 2006; Brown, 1998; Brown & Hudson, 1998, 2002). According to Brown and Hudson (1998), the alternative means of assessment wants the learners to fulfill, create, and produce in real-world situation or simulations. Besides, the nature of these methods is effortful and lets students be assessed on everyday class activities. The duties used in these methods represent considerable instructional activities which focus on both the process and the product of learning. Higher-level thinking and problem-solving skills are also the essential tools for doing the assessment tasks, and the teacher's feedback about the task performance manifests the learner's strengths and weaknesses. In addition, human judgment rather than machine judgment, as well as open revelation of standards and rating criteria are emphasized upon.

Topping (1998) believed that peer assessment is a preparation in which people at the same situation emphasize on the amount, level, quality, worth, value, or success of the learning products. Peer assessment forces students to give feedback on their work, and make decision about the quality of their work (Davies, 2006). Both self and peer assessment involve students in their destiny, improve their autonomy, and promote motivation (Brown, 2004). Cheng and Warren (2005) mentioned that involvement and having control on the methods, ways, and products of evaluation and assessment are vital for both teachers and students. Peer assessment is an alternative and a significant method that is considered important educationally since it can help learners to take part in the evaluation process and gives learners a chance for participating in and evaluating their peers' learning process and their outcomes. According to Black, Harrison, Lee, Marshall, and William (2003), peer assessment is an assessment tool for learning and it should be a constant way of assessment in writing process (Graves, 1994). "Peer assessment requires students to provide either feedback or grades (or both) to their peers on a product or a performance, based on the criteria of excellence for that product or event which students may have been involved in determining" (Falchikov, 2007, p.132). Wen and Tsai (2006) reported positive thought about peer assessment among university students in Taiwan. However, neither case specifically measured learners' understanding of fairness about peer assessment. Moreover, Wen and Tsai mentioned that students are less eager to the concept of online peer assessment in comparison with other peer assessment methods, and they showed little confidence in the validity of online assessment. On the other hand, Davies (2000) and Liu and Carless (2006) mention that some learners who think negatively regarding to peer assessment hesitate the expertise of their fellow learners (as compared to their teachers).

Adaptive testing has been computerized and has been changed from its paper and pen form since computerized administration of tests is interesting and attractive for a couple of reasons. Computerized administration of tests offer efficiency, easement, aesthetic and pedagogic developments (Rafaeli & Tractinsky, 1989, 1991). On-line sharing of information or knowledge has a positive influence on learning outcomes. Findings disclosed that those who were highly involved in question-posing and peer-assessment activity received higher scores on their final exam in comparison with their counter peers (Barak & Rafaeli, 2004). The research outcomes support the claim proposed by other researchers that question posing can be regarded as a part of high level thinking abilities and as a stage in the problem-solving process (Ashmore, 1979; Shepardson & Pizzini, 1991). Computer Technology is accompanied with the notion of autonomous learning since it provides the learners with the chance to experience autonomy via providing a large amount of materials for self-learning (Godwin-Jones, 2011). Based on Schemenk (2005, p.107), "The reputation of learner autonomy may be at least partially related to the rise of computer technology and the growing importance of computers in language learning environments worldwide". Thus, Godwin-Jones (2011) emphasizes that learners should be motivated to promote and use meta-cognitive strategies that aid to refine students' autonomy via the use of computer technology.

As claimed by Tarigan (1985), writing is a productive skill and indirect communication which differs from what Harmer (2001) defines writing as a kind of communication that receives or expresses feeling or thought with use of written form. Suparno (2003) argues that writing is not a kind of one step activity, but it is a continuous activity and has several steps including the primary step, the content improvement and review, and reconsiderations or improvements posts. Jonah (2006) states that writing is an indirect communication for sending information. During the last decades, there have been many studies about writing investigating issues like how to develop it, what are the efficient and effective factors on writing styles, how to evaluate the writing process, etc. One of these studies was carried out by Khodadadi and Khodabakhshzade (2012). Their discovery indicated portfolio and self-assessment were significantly effective in increasing learners' self- adjustment. Another study done by Little (2005) showed that self-assessment develop students' autonomy. Based on a needs analysis study carried out by Noriah Ismail (2010), it was disclosed that in online writing, learners must have suitable resources that can apply them out of class and work on writing skill independently.

According to another study that was conducted in Korea by Jyi-yeon Yi G (2009), interpretation of writing depends on educator expectations, writing philosophy and purposes of pedagogy, and this can be a problem since based on this concept each teacher assess and evaluate learners' writing with especial criteria and this results in having unsystematic, incompatible and invalid assessment plan. Effect of peer assessment and self-assessment was investigated by Birjandi and Siyyari (2010). Their research indicated both self and peer assessments have significant influence on learners' writing through the way they are effective on students' rating accuracy and both of them are equally important in developing writing.

III. METHODOLOGY

A. Participants and Setting

The participants of this study were selected from 90 Iranian EFL learners learning English in a language institute in Kashmar, Khorasan Razavi, according to their scores in Quick Placement Test (QPT), Version1. They were 48 upper-intermediate EFL learners who scored 40 to 47 out of 60 were randomly assigned to control (N=24) and experimental (N=24) groups. Participants' age ranged from 14 to 18. Also, due to some gender segregation rules only females participated in this study. The participants' native language was Farsi.

B. Instrumentations

The following instrumentations were employed by the author.

Quick Placement Test (QPT)

To select participants with the same level of language proficiency QPT including 60 multiple-choice items, developed by Oxford University Press and Cambridge ESOL was administered to 90 female learners. The examination time took 30 minutes. This questionnaire is composed of two parts, part 1 (1-40) and part 2 (41 to 60), QPT contains 60 multiple-choice items. The first part was administered to EFL students of different proficiency level. However, the second part was administered only to high proficient ones. Those learners who scored 40 to 47 out of 60 participated in the study. Reliabilities reported by Granpayeh (2003) were 0.9 for 60 items test and 0.85 for the 40 items test.

Writing Test

To assess the participants' ability in writing descriptively, a writing test was administered at the first and at the end of the study. The participants were asked to write a text composed of at least 150-200 words (one paragraph). The time allocated for the test was 30 minutes. The topics were selected by the researcher after consulting with two professors at Islamic Azad University in Torbat-e Heydarieh. The students' writings were scored by two raters based on a rating scale adopted from Jahin and Idrees (2012). A rubric for scoring of the papers was delivered to the raters. It was composed of the six categories such as mechanics, content, organization, vocabulary, grammar and cohesion, the rating scale provided the raters with a criterion to score the writings based on a four-point scale (1, 2, 3 & 4) for each of the six

categories. So an analytic scoring procedure was followed. The inter-rater reliability was used to ensure the reliability of the test. The reliability index for the writing test calculated via Coronbach's Alpha was 0.71.

Learner Autonomy Questionnaire

In order to evaluate participants' autonomy in learning, Learner Autonomy Questionnaire developed by Zhang and Li (2004), was administered to the participants in both groups. The questionnaire has two parts: Part 1 contains 11 multiple-choice items on a 5- point Likert scale ranging from 1 (never) to 5 (always). Part 2 contains10 multiple-choice self-reporting items. Participants answered to this questionnaire in 30 minutes. This questionnaire has been frequently used in previous studies for example Dafei (2007) and claimed this questionnaire has been proved to have high content validity and high reliability. Recently, Iranian researcher used it, e.g. Shangarfam and Ghazisaeedi (2013).They claimed reliability of this questionnaire based on Cronbach's Alpha calculated and it's in acceptable range (0.70). Reliability of this questionnaire is an acceptable range and researcher assured about it.

C. Procedure

Forty-eight upper-intermediate EFL learners were selected from female students learning English in a language institute in Kashmar, Khorasan Razavi according to their scores in QPT. The selected students were randomly assigned to control and experimental groups. At the outset of the study, participants in both groups were asked to write a description under the title of "My City". In addition, participants in both groups were given Learner Autonomy Questionnaire to complete.

Throughout a six-week course, participants in the experimental group registered in a social network (Telegram) which was supervised by the researcher as the administrator of the group. The members of this group were asked to attend the online group on Sundays and Thursdays. At the first session, required instructions from Academic Writing from paragraph to essay by Zemach and Rumisek (2010) were introduced. These participants were asked to create accounts in g-mail. They were also divided into 12 groups of two. The night before each session the topic selected by the teacher was sent to their g-mail address. The 120 minutes of each session was divided into two parts: the first 30 minutes was devoted to the peer assessment. The next 90 minutes focused on the participants' chatting in Telegram. In other words, having written their descriptions, the two members of each pair exchanged the writings. Following the assessment, every pair was given about a 7-minute time in Telegram to discuss on their writings. The teacher supervised the peer assessment and gave her views. The mistakes and errors disregarded by the participants were highlighted by the researcher. Sometimes the researcher asked them to send the original papers to annotate the required information in the margins. The annotations were sent to the email address of the two people of that pair.

The control group, on the other hand, did not receive any technology-based instructions or assistances. A traditional pen and paper method was used in the class. They attended a physical class on Sundays and Thursdays. Similar to their counterparts in the former group, they received the required instructions on writing. Also, they were asked to write about the same topics as those used in the experimental group. The process of peer assessment was conducted under the teacher supervision in the class by reviewing the comments of the peer learner after finishing the writing. Similar to the former group the 120 minutes of this class was also divided into two parts. The first 30 minutes was devoted to the peer assessment in the class. The next 90 minutes focused on the participants' discussions in the class. The peer assessment procedure was also supervised by the researcher to avoid any mistakes. Marginal annotations were also written by her so both parties could recognize their mistaken or erroneous structures, spellings, vocabulary usages, etc. During the course a total number of 10 texts were written. Due to the researcher's willingness regarding lack of any extra difference between the two groups, the same topics were given to the participants.

Every session, the participants' paragraphs from the previous session were rated by the teacher, and the necessary feedbacks were given to the participants. The feedbacks were given via written and oral comments on those aspects of the students' paragraphs which need to be revised. Some sample paragraphs were sometimes read aloud by the students. During the course participants wrote their paragraph with focusing on descriptive form and participants in experimental group sent their written productions to the g-mail of her classmate. Finally, the participants sat for the posttest, and they were asked to write a description on "Tourist Attractions of My City". In addition, participants in both groups were asked to complete autonomy questionnaire to declare their beliefs on the treatment they received.

IV. DATA ANALYSIS

After obtaining required data from the instrument, data were analyzed by employing SPSS (19.0).

A. Results of Normality

TABLE 1
RESULTS OF NORMALITY TEST

		QPT	pretest	posttest	autopre	autopost
N		48	48	48	48	48
Normal Parameters	Mean	42.71	56.9271	65.7500	2.4481	3.0739
	Std. Deviation	1.978	6.90897	9.39783	.52516	.55829
Most Extreme Differences	Absolute	.161	.072	.122	.141	.167
	Positive	.161	.054	.122	.121	.098
	Negative	-.097	-.072	-.090	-.141	-.167
Kolmogorov-Smirnov Z		1.113	.496	.842	.973	1.154
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)		.168	.966	.478	.300	.139
a. Test distribution is Normal.						

As Table 1 shows, p-value for all data is greater than .05 (.16 for QPT; .96 for pretest; .47 for posttest; .3 for autopre; .13 for autopost), therefore the null-hypothesis of One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test is supported which confirms that the data are normal. Therefore independent samples t-test (parametric test) can be conducted.

B. Results of Independent Samples T-test for QPT

TABLE 2
RESULTS OF INDEPENDENT SAMPLES t-TEST FOR QPT

Group	N	M	SD	df	t	sig(2tailed)
Experimental	24	42.88	2.30	46	.58	.56
Control	24	42.54	1.61			

As Table 2 shows there is not any significant (df=46, t=.58, sig=.56>.05) difference between experimental (N=24, M=42.88, SD=2.30) and control (N=24, M=42.54, SD=1.61) groups in QPT at the outset of the study which confirms the participants' homogeneity.

C. Results of Inter-rater Reliability

It is a measure of reliability which is employed to assess the degree to which different judges or raters agree in their assessment decisions. Inter-rater reliability is the most easily understood form of reliability. Table 3 summarizes the data obtained from Pearson product-moment correlation.

D. Results of Inter-rater Reliability for Writing Pretest

TABLE 3
RESULTS OF INTER-RATER RELIABILITY (PRETEST)

		ratpre1	ratpre2
ratpre1	Pearson Correlation	1	.860**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	48	48
ratpre2	Pearson Correlation	.860**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	48	48
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).			

As Table 3 shows there is a significant (r=.86, sig=.000) agreement between the two raters which indicates that the test enjoys a relatively high inter-rater reliability.

E. Results of Inter-rater Reliability for Writing Posttest

Table 4 presents a summary of relevant data of inter-rater reliability obtained for writing posttest.

TABLE 4
RESULTS OF INTER-RATER RELIABILITY (POSTTEST)

		ratpost1	ratpost2
ratpost1	Pearson Correlation	1	.916**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	48	48
ratpost2	Pearson Correlation	.916**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	48	48
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).			

NOTE: RATPOST 1 INDICATES RATER 1 IN POSTTEST; RATPOST2 INDICATES RATER 2 IN POSTTEST;

As Table 4 depicts there is a significant (r=.916, sig=.000) agreement between the two raters which indicates that the test enjoys a relatively high inter-rater reliability.

F. Results of Writing Pretest

To compare the means of the two groups before the treatment, independent samples t-test was conducted. Results are shown in Table 5.

TABLE 5
RESULTS OF INDEPENDENT SAMPLES T-TEST FOR WRITING PRETEST

Group	N	M	SD	df	t	sig(2tailed)
Experimental	24	56.91	7.42	46	.01	.99
Control	24	56.93	6.51			

Data in Table 5 indicate lack of any significant (df=46, t=.01, sig=.99>.05) difference between the experimental (N=24, M=56.91, SD=7.42) and the control (N=24, M=56.93, SD=6.51) in writing pretest which confirms that the two groups were homogeneous before the treatment.

G. Results of Writing Posttest

To test the first null-hypothesis "Electronic peer assessment does not have any significant effects on Iranian EFL learners' writing ability" independent samples t-test was employed. Data are shown in Table 6.

TABLE 6
RESULTS OF INDEPENDENT SAMPLES T-TEST FOR WRITING POSTTEST

Group	N	M	SD	df	t	sig(2tailed)
Experimental	24	70.25	8.59	46	3.75	.000
Control	24	61.25	8.02			

Table 6 indicates significant difference (df=46, t=3.75, sig=.00) between experimental (N=24, M=70.25, SD=8.59) and control (n=24, m=61.25, sd=8.02) groups in the writing posttest ate the .01 level of significance. Accordingly the first null-hypothesis was rejected and positive significant effects of using electronic peer assessment on upper-intermediate EFL learners' writing ability in Iran.

H. Results of Autonomy Pretest

To compare the means of control and experimental groups in autonomy questionnaire before the treatment, independent samples t-test was used. Table 7 shows the data.

TABLE 7
RESULTS OF INDEPENDENT SAMPLES T-TEST FOR AUTONOMY PRETEST

Group	N	M	SD	df	t	sig(2tailed)
Experimental	24	2.39	.47	46	.76	.45
Control	24	2.50	.57			

As Table 7 shows, there is not any significant (df=46, t=.76, sig=.45>.05) difference between the experimental (N=24, M=2.39, SD= .47) and control (N=24, M=2.50, SD=.57) groups in autonomy pretest.

I. Results of Autonomy Posttest

To test the second null-hypothesis "Electronic peer assessment does not have any significant effects on Iranian EFL learners' autonomy", independent samples t-test was also conducted (Table 8).

TABLE 8
RESULTS OF INDEPENDENT SAMPLES T-TEST FOR AUTONOMY POSTTEST

Group	N	M	SD	df	t	sig(2tailed)
Experimental	24	3.25	.52	46	2.42	.01
Control	24	2.88	.53			

As Table 8 shows, participants in the experimental group (N=24, M=3.25, SD=.52) significantly (df=46, t= 2.42, sig=.01<.05) outperformed those in the control group (N=24, M=2.88, SD=.53) in the autonomy posttest. Therefore, based on the data shown in Table 8 the second null-hypothesis was also rejected and positive significant effects of using electronic peer-assessment on writing ability of Iranian upper-intermediate EFL learners were confirmed.

V. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

To achieve the objectives of the present study, three research questions were posed. Forty-eight upper-intermediate EFL learners from Kashmar, Iran took part in the study. Data obtained from the instruments were analyzed and the questions were addressed.

Concerning the first research question "Does electronic peer assessment have any significant effects on Iranian EFL learners' writing ability?", results from independent samples t-test indicated positive significant effects of using the treatment in EFL writing. With the emergence of new technology (internet-based) there seems to exist a shift toward using electronic devices and virtual contexts as learning facilitators. Electronic peer-assessment as an effective technique can cause EFL learners feel more responsible regarding their classmates' writings to critically read and assess.

Lack of physical presence in traditional and physical classrooms while assessing their classmates, can help EFL learners feel relaxed without any stress or fear resulting from comments of highly proficient classmates or teachers.

The present finding is in agreement with what claimed by Hirvela (1999) who stated that learners working in couples or groups are provided with the chance to learn from each other as they work together to complete a project. "Through cooperative group production, students experience precious opportunities to improve their ability to read and write because the continuous association direction of this approach enables them to draw upon the strengths and resources of their peers while sorting through their own growing knowledge of L2 reading and writing" (p. 12). Online peer assessment system (OPAS), according to Lan, Sung, and Chang (2009) is mobilized implementation of peer assessment activity which has the advanced functions such as immediate feedback, data analysis, confirmation of assessment quality, and error pattern diagnosis to assist the EFL teacher to further understand students' oral reading and listening performance. Lan et al. (2009) found that the proposed online peer assessment system, OPAS, overcomes the inherent deficiencies of traditional peer assessment with the support of technology.

Concerning the second research question "Does electronic peer assessment have any significant effects on Iranian EFL learners' autonomy?" data analysis resulted in the claim that this kind of treatment was significantly effective in enhancing the participants' autonomy. Peer-assessment in its nature is a process which is accomplished independently from a highly proficient source which can result in an increased level of autonomy. The finding was also supported according to the participants' responses in the interview. Similarly, Cheng and Warren (2005) state that the advantages of peer evaluation include support of learner autonomy through necessitating students to take responsibility for monitoring and analyzing parts of their learning process and the performances of their peers. The direct involvement in the learning process, according to Sivan (2000, as cited in Peng, 2010) improves students' sense of ownership, responsibility. It, also, enhances learners' activity and autonomy (Orsmond & Merry, 1996; Sivan, 2000, as cited Peng, 2010).

According to the findings obtained in data analysis, it can be concluded that thanks to recent advances in technology, internet, software, and communication the process of teaching and learning has been influenced. The procedure explained in the third chapter introduced a new form of peer assessment whereby EFL learners can assess their classmates' writings through electronic lines without any physical face-to-face interactions, thus resulting in a less amount of time compared to traditional peer assessment carried out in EFL classrooms.

In addition, the results revealed the effectiveness of electronic peer-assessment in enhancing EFL learners' autonomy in learning which can result from lack of physical presence of an EFL teacher. In such contexts where EFL teacher is not physically present, EFL students can take more challenging responsibilities and work independently from their teacher hence feeling more autonomous. Assessment seems a challenging task which requires assessors improve their knowledge to appropriately score the writing. To achieve appropriate qualifications of an effective writing assessor, one should get familiar with some criteria representing general standard guidelines for evaluating writings. Electronic peer assessment can pave the way for interpersonal communications among EFL learners and involve them in effective discussions about a variety of issues. Virtual contexts, thanks to developments in communication software, can help EFL learners share their ideas and take benefits from their peers' knowledge.

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