

THE TENDENCY OF TEACHERS' FEEDBACK ON STUDENTS' ENGLISH WRITING WORK

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Abstract. The objectives of this study were to find out the kinds and categories of teachers' written feedback on the students' writing work in high schools in Bogor. This research used descriptive qualitative method and the data were collected through observation, documentation and interview. The samples consisted of five English Teachers from several high schools in Bogor and 40 students' English writing work. The findings found that 38% feedback is belong to direct written feedback by giving the response using written comments and the highest categories is holistic remarks, it is 34%. In conclusion, the teachers' feedback in High Schools in Bogor tends to use direct written feedback by responding using the comments and using holistic categories. In other words, the tendency of teachers' feedback on the students' English writing work is using direct written by responding and holistic remark.

Keywords: feedback; tendency; direct written feedback; holistic remark

I. INTRODUCTION

Teacher is a professional educator with the main task of educating, teaching, guiding, training, assessing, and evaluating students not only in early childhood education and basic education, but also in high education (Republic of Indonesia Law 2005 on Teachers and Lecturers in Fadli, Irawan, Haerazi [1]). The task applies for all teachers of social subjects, humanities and sciences. English subject that belongs to humanities are taught in high education almost in all schools in Indonesia. The focus of English subject taught to the students in Indonesia is on language skills (listening, speaking, reading and writing). When teachers do their task, they have to provide learning activities with insightful processes and at the end of the activities they must give feedback on the result of learning. The aims of giving feedback are to motivate students to improve their learning, to help the students in learning process, to reflect a commitment of the learning activities better, and to improve students' learning strategies (Fadli, Irawan and Haerazi [1]).

In teaching writing, giving the feedback is essential because it can make easier to analyze their mistakes or errors in their writing (Fadli, Irawan and Haerazi [1]). Although giving the feedback is very essential in teaching writing, based on our observation, many teachers in Bogor do not give any feedback on their students' writing work. The reasons are because they do not have a lot of spare time to check and give feedback on students' work. Thus, although they give the feedback, most of them give a simple comment or a holistic remark to what the students write. Besides, the students do not have to revise and return the correction even though the teachers give the direct and indirect written feedback. Based

on that condition, there are some questions come up in this research:

- (1) What types of feedback do the teachers give to the students' writing work?
- (2) What are mostly written by the teachers as the feedback on the students' writing work?

As a productive skill, writing is crucial for the student to develop to gain academic success (Erkan [2]), however, it is believed that writing is as the most difficult skill to be learnt since it is a progressive activity that needs several processes to make it done (Faroha, Muslem, Fajrina [3]). In fact, writing is one of the skills that must be learnt and mastered by students in Indonesia. The reasons of writing being the most difficult skill to learn and to master are (1) it requires certain skills of how to find the ideas and express them into sentences; (2) to generate or organize the ideas and also to distribute the idea into meaningful writing needs efforts from the writer that are not easy; (3) the writer has to know how to write well in any language that can express themselves clearly with logical and well develop organization that accomplishes an intended purpose (Fadli et. al. [1]). Based on Wingard's terminology, there are two basic inseparable aspects of the learning and teaching written English: (1) writing as a channel of foreign language learning in which it reinforces the grammar, structure, idioms and vocabulary that have been learnt by students. Therefore, writing exercises can consolidate the language that has been presented and practiced orally; (2) writing is as a goal of a foreign language learning. Writing tasks can help learners develop the communicative skill in writing even though they are still at the lower levels of learning. According to Harmer [3] there are four stages in writing process: planning, the writer needs to collect certain points to elaborate as the whole ideas; drafting is a process of

producing the first rough of writing that a writer has been planned before; editing is a process for the writer to improve the progress through reflecting and revising the draft by receiving feedback from the teacher and the peers; final version is a process in which the writer finishes adding or diminishing the plan and draft, and constructs the final version.

Based on the stages above, Feedback is needed in teaching and learning writing. Erkan [2] says that feedback is still one of the most fundamental aspects of any writing classroom for any writing teacher. In writing classes, the student and the teacher are constantly negotiating meaning through exchanging information. With teachers' guidance, the learner can recognize several issues and their errors in their writing. Keh [3] states that there are three types of feedback in writing, they are peer feedback, conferences and written comment. Peer feedback is a technique where the students read each other's paper and provide some feedbacks to the writer; conference is the feedback using interaction between teachers and students by adding oral comments; written comment is the feedback that provided by the teacher to communicate the error or mistake to the students in written form. The written comment can be categorized into praise, criticism and suggestion. All the types are needed to improve the students' writing ability. However, the written feedback that usually in the form of comments, questions or error correction is mostly needed to give the students' opportunity to improve their writing, to be served as a powerful tool to motivate students in the writing process. According to Faroha et al. [3] there are two kinds of written feedback: direct written feedback and indirect written feedback.

(1) Direct written feedback

It is the feedback given by the teacher to provide the correct form of the error or mistake made by the student. The form of direct feedback is responding in which the teacher gives comments on the student's error, then the teacher gives recommendation towards the errors or mistakes made. Harmer [3] stated that responding is an effective feedback on the student's writing because it discusses the problem judges the student's work. When the teacher gives the responding, he will give the recommendation or the correct form, so that the students know the correct form of their writing mistake or error. It also provides the explicit guidance about the errors and help the student who cannot do self-correcting by themselves. Besides, this kind of feedback is the most effective way to help the student in mastering specific targeted on the structural writing over a short term process (Faroha et al. [3])

(2) Indirect written feedback

There are two kinds of indirect written feedback: coded indirect feedback and un-coded indirect feedback. The first kind means the teacher underlines the student's errors or mistakes, then the teacher writes the symbol above the targeted errors or mistakes, then the teacher gives the composition for the student to think what error the student made as the symbol can help the student to think. The second kind is when the teacher underlines or circles the errors, the teacher does not write the correct sentences or any symbols.

The student himself should think clearly what the errors are and how to correct them accurately.

According to Brown and Abeywickrama [4] there are three approaches to score writing performance, they are holistic, primary trait, and analytical. In the first method, a single score is assigned to an essay, which represent a reader's general overall assessment; the second method is a variation of the holistic method in that the achievement of the primary purpose of an essay is the only factor rated; the third one breaks a test-taker's written text into a number of subcategories (organization, grammar, etc) and gives a separate rating for each. For classroom instruction, holistic scoring provides little washback into the writer's further stages of learning. Meanwhile, primary trait scoring focuses on the principle function of the text and therefore offers some feedback potential but no washback for any of the aspects of the written production that enhance the accomplishment of the purpose. The best classroom evaluation is served through analytic scoring, because the six major elements of writing are scored, thus enabling learners to hone on weaknesses and capitalize on strengths (Brown and Abeywickrama [4]). The analytical scale or rubric for rating composition tasks (Brown and Abeywickrama [4]) are consisting Organization (introduction, body and conclusion), logical development of ideas (content), grammar, punctuation, spelling and mechanics, style and quality expression. In addition, the holistic rubric consist of excellent, good, satisfactory, and needs work (Wilson [5]).

II. RESEARCH METHODS

The method applied in this research was qualitative research and the data was gathered from the students' writing and teachers' interview. The subjects are five English teachers from several high schools in Bogor (SMAN 1 Bogor, SMAN 6 Bogor, SMAN 4 Bogor, SMAN 1 Cibinong, MAN 1 Kabupaten Bogor), and the students' writing work consist of 40 students' work that have been given the feedback from the teachers. Those students' writing documents were an essay task given by their teacher in several topics. The data were analyzed by using analytical method proposed by Emzir [6]. In this study, the data is focused on the result of the interview and the feedback given and written by the teachers on the students' work, both analytic and holistic rubrics or scales.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The following tables show the findings of the data of the research. The data are divided into two parts: the first one is based on the kinds or types of the written feedback; and the second one is based on the categories or scoring scales used by the teachers in giving the feedback on the students' writing work. The table 1. above shows that from 40 students' work, the direct feedback by giving written comment as the response to the students' writing is the highest, it is 38 %. The second one is still the direct feedback by giving the direct answer 32%,

the third one is the coded indirect feedback which is 18%, and the last one is the un-coded indirect feedback which is 12%.

Table 1. Kinds Of Feedback

No	Kinds Of Feedback	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1	Direct Feedback (Direct Answer)	13	32%
2	Direct Feedback (Responding By Written Comment)	15	38%
3	Indirect Feedback (Coded)	7	18%
4	Indirect Feedback (Un-Coded)	5	12%

Most of the feedback given by the teachers are by giving comments directly to what the students wrote on their paper. The examples are: *You can elaborate some information based on your observation, experience or what you need, You can break down again, Is it good? Do you think it important?* Meanwhile, the direct answers are by showing directly the correct writing after the teachers underlined or gave a circle or question mark to the mistakes or errors made by the students. The coded indirect feedback used by the teachers are underline, circle, question marks, exclamation marks in red ink and with correction or comments. Only several feedbacks were written un-coded without any correction or comments.

Table 2. Categories Of Feedback

No	Categories	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1	Organization	5	8%
2	Logical Development Of Ideas (Content)	14	22%
3	Grammar (Concordance, Tenses)	14	22%
4	Punctuation, Spelling, Mechanics	4	7%
5	Style And Quality Of Expression (Vocabulary)	4	7%
6	Holistic Remark	21	34%

The data in table 2 are taken based on the categories of scoring methods from Brown and Abeywickrama [4] and Wilson [5]. The categories are not separated, analytic and holistic. The highest percentage of the written feedback given by the teacher is holistic remark (34%), the second one is content (22%) and grammar (22%), the third one organization (8%), and the last one is mechanics (4%) and vocabulary (4%). The holistic remarks that were used by the teachers are *nice, good, great* and *excellent*. It shows that the teachers used different feedback from what is written by Wilson [5]. However, the meaning is the same. The teacher also paid attention to the syntax and structure. The syntax focused on

the rules of English. They were like the concordance in the sentences, the singular or plural, and the word-classes. The teachers also paid attention to the tenses. Besides, the feedback given by the teachers also focused on the content of the students writing by giving the ideas of the development of their writing. The tendency of the written feedback of the teachers can be seen in Table 3 below.

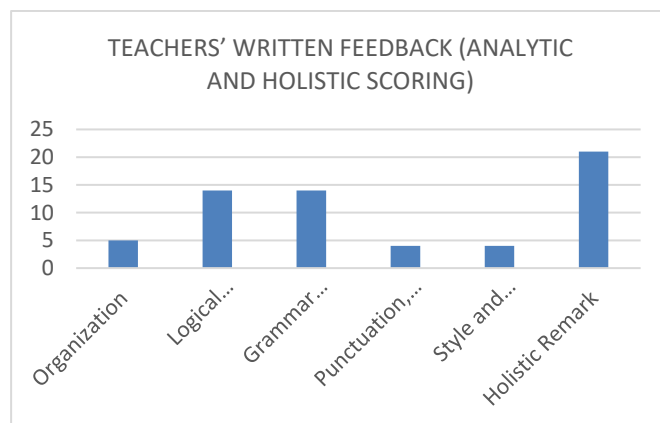


Figure 1. The Graphic of Teachers' Written Feedback

The researcher found that the use of direct written feedback by responding is 38%. It is higher than the direct written feedback by answering directly or correcting directly which is only 32%. However, the direct written feedback is higher than indirect written feedback. The results means that the teacher pay attention to what mistakes or errors written by the students and they give the comments and the correctness of the mistakes. By doing that, it will make the students easy to know their mistakes and they are able to correct them directly. Besides the kind of the feedback given by the teachers, the data can be seen from the categories of writing assessment, analytic and holistic. From the data showed in Table 2 and Table 3, the teachers' feedback mostly focused on the holistic remarks in which the teachers gave or wrote *nice, good, great* and *excellent* to the students' writing. Some of them did not write any other comments instead of those holistic remarks. Meanwhile, some used mixed feedback by writing the holistic remarks, the analytic categories and the coded or un-codec indirect written feedback.

IV. CONCLUSION

Based on the data showed above, the researcher concluded that the type of feedback given by the teachers to the students' writing is the direct written feedback by responding using the written comments. It is the highest used by the teachers. The number is 38% of the whole data. Meanwhile, the categories that are mostly used by the teachers are holistic remarks. It is about 34% of the whole data. It means that the teachers in Bogor mostly pay attention to the

final results of the writing of the students as the texts. Based on the result of the interview, some teachers said that by doing the holistic remark, the teachers do not need a lot of time to check the students' writing. It is simple, but it can draw the picture of the students' ability in writing.

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