Three Types of Corrective Feedback on Higher Education Students' Academic Writing

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Abstract

This present study compared three different types of corrective feedback – peer corrective feedback, teacher-written corrective feedback and video-based corrective feedback – to investigate which mode was more beneficial for students' academic writing skill. The participants were 120 first-semester university students taking the academic writing course. An Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was performed to determine the relationship between students' academic writing performance and the types of corrective feedback they experienced with. In addition, a post hoc Tukey's HSD test was conducted to explore the differences among the corrective feedback given to the students. The result shows that corrective feedbacks provided by teachers – written and video-based – were statistically significant in assisting students' academic writing performance. In addition, based on the result of this study, it seems that teacher-written feedback could be the most beneficial mode of feedback for students' writing.

Keywords: Corrective Feedback, Academic Writing

Introduction

The idea of providing corrective feedback for second language learners' writing has created some debates on whether or not it will be beneficial for students' learning outcome. Some scholars believe that feedback as one of the major components in the writing process is an essential element in supporting students to develop their writing skill. Written corrective feedback in writing instruction received strong support from some researchers (Bitchener & Ferris, 2012; Ferris, 1999). Feedback contains information given to students regarding their performance of the learning task (Ur, 2008). The mode of feedback which is commonly used is written feedback, be it paper-based or online-based, or oral feedback through conversation with teachers (Brick & Holmes, 2008). In the academic setting, written feedback becomes the dominant mode of providing feedback (Hyland & Hyland, 2006).

In contrast, some other scholars believe that providing corrective feedback is not useful for the learners. Krashen (1985) stated that there is no role of Corrective Feedback in helping learners to develop their acquired knowledge. He emphasized that there is no value for acquisition in the learning that

results from instruction and corrective feedback. Second to Krashen, Truscott (1999) specified that in teaching writing, giving feedback in the form of grammar correction is not useful and counterproductive for foreign or second language learners. Truscott's statement was regarded as controversial and resulted in heated discussions and debates (Ferris, 1999). Up to now, research result cannot find the confirmation of this debate due to the fact that researches were conducted in a short time and there is no long term effect that can be investigated (van Beuningen, de Jong, & Kuiken, 2008). This present study is intended to contribute to the ongoing debate on corrective feedback.

Purpose of the Study

This study is intended to investigate the effect of three different modes of corrective feedback, among others are peer corrective feedback, teacher-written corrective feedback and video-based corrective feedback, towards the students' academic writing performance. This study will look at whether or not there is any influence of corrective feedback towards students' academic writing performance. In addition, this study will also try to find out which corrective feedback benefitted the students most.

Hypothesis

H0 – There is no significance difference in using corrective feedbacks towards the students' academic writing performance.

Literature Review

Feedback can be a valuable component in students' learning process (Orsmond & Merry, 2011) and can be an influential factor which affects students' achievement (Hattie & Timperley, 2007). Effective assessment feedback provides more than a number or letter grade to students (Joint Information Systems Committee [JISC], 2010). In spite of the fact that literature confirmed that assessment feedback has become important art of the learning process, some also highlights that many students only paid attention to grades they obtained, ignoring the feedback given to them (Bailey & Garner, 2010; Orsmond & Merry, 2011). In regard to this matter, many researchers have started to pay attention to different types of feedback in order to improve the quality of feedback provided by teachers. Written feedback, student-teacher conference, peer feedback, and video corrective feedback are some types of feedback which are considered beneficial for students' learning.

Many studies have been conducted to examine the power of different types of feedback toward students' writing skills. Written feedback and student-teacher conference can be beneficial to level up students' accuracy in their writing (Bitchener, Young, & Cameron, 2005). As for large class setting, in which time becomes the constraint for individual student-teacher corrective feedback, recent recent researchers have shown some interests in looking at peer-to-peer feedback to assist learning. Kuiken & Vedder's (2002) study in examining the effect of peer interaction show that it is a promising technique to help learners acquire grammatical knowledge. With the advancement of technology, the use of video feedback has also been recognized by some researchers in response to some facts that written comments can lead to ambiguity while face to face feedback might be highly depend on the students' memory (Henderson & Phillips, 2014).

The different type of feedbacks given to students are relevance to the notion of zone of proximal development (ZPD) proposed by Vygotsky, which refers to the gap between a learner's current development level and the learner's potential level of development with assistance. As the educational implication of ZPD, Wood, Bruner, & Ross (1976) introduced the term "scaffolding" to describe how learners' could perform task which they cannot do alone through some aids provided by others. The concepts of ZPD and scaffolding show that social interaction and collaboration may facilitate students' learning process.

Teacher-written Corrective Feedback

In helping EFL/ESL writers, marginal comments, request for clarification, and comments on grammatical issues provided by teachers are proven to be effective. Students expect teachers to comment on those areas and feel frustrated when they do not received any of them (Bitchener & Ferris, 2012). Grammar feedback has been regarded as helpful and useful by college level ELS students (Srichanyachon, 2012). In addition, students also want the teachers to comment on the content and idea in their writing. Teacher-written corrective feedback on global issues (i.e. content, organization, and purposes) and local issues (i.e. sentence structure, word choice and grammar) are desirable by the students (Straub, 1997 in Srichanyachon, 2012).

Video-based Corrective Feedback

Traditionally speaking, feedback for writing is given to students in written form through paper based or email, or in oral form through face-to-face conference. Some of the challenges in giving or receiving feedback are related to the vagueness of the feedback (Mathisen, 2012). As a result, students become confused and do not know what to correct or improve (Crawford, 1997 in Mathisen, 2012). The advancement of digital technology has made it possible for user to record the screen on the computer and add voice using a screen capture software. In relation to giving feedback, teachers can use the software to record their on-screen action and their spoken comment while creating feedback, and save it in the form of video file. The video can be distributed to the students either through file sharing or online streaming. Students can watch the video of their tutor giving comments, highlighting, amending and discussing their writing (Stannard, 2007).

Peer Corrective Feedback

Peer review or peer corrective feedback has been widely used in writing class as some researches show that it contributes to students' writing skill development in both process and product (Bijami, Kashef, & Nejad, 2013; Lee, 2009). Peer feedback can be defined as "use of learners as sources of information and interactants for each other in such a way that learners assume roles and responsibilities normally taken on by a formally trained teacher, tutor, or editor in commenting on and critiquing each other's draft in both written and oral formats in the process of writing" (Liu and Hansen, 2002, in Bijami, Kashef, & Nejad, 2013). In the absence of teachers' knowledge and authority, peer feedback usually provides insights which have more focus on the content, organization and vocabulary, and lead to more reticence of students in accepting a peer's judgment (Gielen, Peeters, Dochy, Onghena&Struyven, 2010).

Method

Participants

A total of 120 first-semester students, from a state university in Bandung, West Java, enrolling in three classes of academic writing course were involved in this study. Each class consisted 40 students with intermediate level of English proficiency. At the beginning of the semester they have undergone a placement test using paper-based TOEFL-like test. The result shows that their levels of English proficiency are somewhat similar, with the TOEFL scores ranging from 400-450.

Design of the study

This experimental research investigated three groups of students receiving three different types of corrective feedbacks. Since there are there classes of academic writing, each class was randomly assigned to get different types of feedback for their writing assignments. Class A received peer corrective feedback, Class B received teacher-written corrective feedback, and Class C received video-based corrective feedback.

The research was conducted for three months. Each week they have face to face meetings for ninety minutes. At the first month, the students learned how to write an annotation from a short article. Having read the article, the students were to work in a group of four or five and discuss the content of the article. Then, they were asked to individually write a short annotation based on the reading passage. At the second month, the students learned how to write a short summary from a reading passage. This time, they were also asked to work in group, brainstorm the main I ssues of the passage, and create mind map. Then

Table 1.
Writing Task

Task 1
• A person's worth nowadays seems to be judged according to social status and material possessions. Old-fashioned values, such as honor, kindness and trust, no longer seem important.
• To what extent do you agree or disagree with this opinion?
• Give reasons for your answer and include any relevant examples from your own knowledge or experience.
Task 2
• At least 25 percent of the government budget should be spent on helping upgrade business to clean technologies, researching renewable energy sources, and planting more trees in order to control or eliminate pollution.
• To what extent do you agree or disagree with this opinion?
• Give reasons for your answer and include any relevant examples from your own knowledge or experience.

they were asked to write and individual summary of the passage. In the last month, students learned how to write a short paragraph. They were asked to choose one out of five topics given by the lecturer. Drawing from the chosen topic, they were asked to brainstorm and create a mind map on some points they are going to write, and finally write a short passage about the topic. At the end of each task, students' writings

were given corrective feedback based on the pre-designed groups. After the three months period, as the final writing task, students were asked to write another short paragraph based a guidance given by the lecturer (See Table1).

Students were given ninety minutes to finish the writing task. The students' result were evaluated and scored by the teacher and the researcher using a writing evaluation rubric (See Table 2). When some disagreement in regards to the correction of the writing result, the teacher and the researcher would discuss it to meet the mutual agreement on the final decision.

Table 1.
Writing Evaluation Rubric

10%	40%	30%	20%
1. Writing formatting checklists (Hook, Thesis, Topic Sentences, Supporting Ideas, Refutation). 2. Relevance with the topic. 3. Genre awareness.	1. Originality 2. Critical Response 3. Analysis & Synthesis 4. Use of Relevant Information 5. Exploring Details	Unity & Coherence	1. Rhetoric (e.g. Diction, Tone, Voice) 2. Mechanics (e.g. Sentence Structures, Tenses, Punctuations)

Data Analysis

To determine the relationship between students' academic writing performance and the mode of corrective feedback that they experienced with, a one way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was performed based on the result of their final writing task. A post hoc test using Tukey's HSD was conducted to explore the differences among the corrective feedbacks given to the students. The result of the post hoc test was obtained to provide specific information on which corrective feedback is significantly different from each other. Tukey's HSD was used because this procedure accurately maintains alpha levels at the intended values. In addition, Tukey's HSD was designed for a situation with equal sample sizes per group (Stevens, 1999). All analytical procedures were conducted using SPSS version 16.0. Pairwise comparisons between groups were made using one-way analysis of variance with significance was set at the $p < .05$ level for all comparisons.

Limitation of the study

1. The time period is three months, which consist of a-ninety-minute-meeting per week. Additionally, for the group with video-based corrective feedback, they have to access the online class for at least 30 minutes for each video-based corrective feedback.

2. A test given after the three-month period was limited to writing a short passage.

3. Although the evaluation of the students' writing was based on a rubric for writing (See table 2), the data used in the analysis was taken from the overall writing score. Therefore, the analysis cannot look at each individual item from the rubric.

Result and Discussion

The influence of corrective feedbacks

This test is intended to reveal whether or not there is any influence of corrective feedback towards students' academic writing performance. The result of ANOVA, as presented in Table 3, shows that the value of F statistic is 12.148, and the value of F Table is 3.0178. The value of F table was obtained from the F distribution Table, in which the value of DF1 is 2 and the value of DF2 is 117. Because in the F Distribution table there is no F Table value for DF2 117, so the closest value for DF2 is 120. The rule stated that if F statistic is greater than F table, then H0 is rejected.

Therefore, in this study HO is rejected because F statistic (12.148) is greater than F Table (3.0178). Thus, the result of ANOVA revealed that there is a significant difference of the corrective feedback towards the students' academic writing performance. In addition, the rejection of H0 can also be seen from the P value (Sig.) which value is .000 which is smaller than the Alpha value which is .05.

Table 2

Analysis of Variance for Academic Writing Test

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	1232.467	2	616.233	12.148	.000*
Within Groups	5935.000	117	50.726		
Total	7167.467	119			

Drawing from the result above, it is obvious that Corrective feedback does play important roles in developing students' academic writing (Ferris, 1999). Regardless of the types of the corrective feedback, students benefitted from obtaining feedbacks be it from their peers or their teachers. Encouragement, positive comment and critique are still needed by the students throughout the writing course (Lee, 2009).

The significant differences among the three types of corrective feedbacks.

Table 4 shows the result of Post Hoc Tukey's HSD test. This test is intended to investigate which corrective feedback is significantly different from each other. The mean difference is significant at the level of

However, when looking at the Sig. value of the comparison between the teacher-written corrective feedback and the video-based corrective feedback, the Sig. value is .322 which is greater than 0.05.

0.05. The statistical significant differences will occur when the Sig value is greater than 0.05. Looking at the Sig. column in Table 4, it can be seen that the Sig. value for the comparison of peer corrective feedback and teacher-written corrective feedback is .000. The Sig. value for the comparison of peer corrective feedback and video-based feedback is .003. Both Sig. values are smaller than 0.05. Thus, from the comparison, it can be concluded that there is a statistical significant difference between peer corrective feedback and teacher-written corrective feedback. In addition, there is also a statistical significant difference between peer corrective feedback and video-based corrective feedback. From this result, it can be concluded that there is no statistical significant difference between teacher-written feedback and video-based written feedback.

The result of the study obviously shows that teacher still play an important role for students learning. Constructive comments from teachers When involving peers to give comments on other students' writing, teachers are supposed to give training in order to develop students' confidence and skills for peer review (Lee, 2009).

Table 4
Result of Post Hoc Tukey's HSD Test

(I) feedback	(J) feedback	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Peer	TWritten	-7.650[*]	1.593	.000	-11.43	-3.87
	Vbased	-5.350[*]	1.593	.003	-9.13	-1.57
Twritten	Peer	7.650[*]	1.593	.000	3.87	11.43
	Vbased	2.300	1.593	.322	-1.48	6.08
Vbased	Peer	5.350[*]	1.593	.003	1.57	9.13
	Twritten	-2.300	1.593	.322	-6.08	1.48

*The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level

Table 5 also shows the result of Post Hoc Tukey's HSD Test. This table shows which corrective feedback is regarded to be the best one of all corrective feedbacks being compare in this study. The value for peer corrective feedback is 74.60, the value for video-based feedback is 79, 95 and the value for teacher-written feedback is 82.25. Thus it can be concluded that the best corrective feedback is the teacher-written feedback.

Table 3.
Result of Post Hoc Tukey's HSD Test 2

Corrective Feedback	N	Subset for alpha = 0.05	
		1	2
Peer	40	74.60	
VBased	40		79.95
TWritten	40		82.25
Sig.		1.000	.322

Conclusion

The results of the study indicate that corrective feedback, regardless of the types, plays an important role in assisting EFL learners in writing academic English. Students experiencing peer correction do not show significant improvement compare

to those experiencing video-based and teacher-written feedback. The teacher prompted, video-based and teacher-written feedbacks have assisted learners in improving their writing performance. The study also indicates that scaffolding provided by teachers outperformed the one provided through peer interaction. In addition, it can be drawn from this study that the sophisticated technology (Video-feedback) still cannot exceed the potential value of traditional teacher-written feedback. However, further study still need to be conducted to investigate which components of writing provided in the Writing Evaluation Rubric have been developed most by certain types of corrective feedback.

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