

PATTERNS OF INTERACTION IN PEER FEEDBACK PROVISION TO THE STUDENTS' EXPOSITORY WRITINGS

Ali Mufiz[✉], Sri Wuli Fitriati, Alim Sukrisno

English Language Education Postgraduate Semarang State Univesity, Indonesia

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Abstract

This study investigated students' nature in pair interaction due to its vital role in learning. Therefore this study was aimed to describe and to explain patterns of interaction in peer feedback, the aspects of writing the students were concerned within peer feedback, influences of pair interactions to the students' writings, and the students' perceptions and attitudes on peer feedback. This study mostly employed qualitative approach and a case study method. The result showed that five patterns emerged in pair interaction i.e. collaborative pairs, dominant/dominant pair, dominant/passive pairs, expert/novice pairs, and passive/passive pair. However, feedback provided by collaborative and expert learners contributed to the revision changes of their partner's writings so that the development of writing aspects under these two patterns was better. Besides, other factors which contributed to the students' writings were confounding variables such as student's proficiency, writing capability, and teacher feedback. Thus these results endorsed the former studies e.g. Storch's (2002b) study, Iris' (2014) study, and Roberson's (2014) study. Another result was that whole students had good perceptions and good attitudes on peer feedback provision. However, the bottom line of this study was that collaborative pairs and expert/novice pairs had better second writings.

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[✉]Correspondence Address:
Kampus Pascasarjana Unnes, Jalan Kelud Utara III Semarang 50237
E-mail: alimufiz@gmail.com

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INTRODUCTION

Writing is a skill that needs exceptional attention. It is generally taught and integrated with three other skills of language. It is considered to be a difficult activity because students must organize their ideas into the system of a language in order to be understood. In some cases, there are some students who are able to do that but they are sometimes up to their ears in completing or submitting many regular assignments. Consequently, the results of the compositions are still not adequate enough to be published in board bulletin. To be published, their writings need to be revised. The revisions absolutely need audiences so that expectation of audiences can be fulfilled.

Concerning with the expectation of audiences, the student writers should accommodate audiences' opinions so that audiences feel satisfied with their composition. The audiences expect that their suggestions are applied in their revised composition. In this case, the audiences are none other than the writers themselves, their peers, and their teacher.

Students as audience can be described as follows. As they have completed their first draft, they can go back and review the draft. Before submitting the draft to second or third parties, they usually interact with their own writings in the process of proofreading or editing. They are serving as audience of their own writings. However, when the students do not have good writing ability, they can mislead themselves. They are unable to identify their own mistakes, let alone, improve their writings. In other words, reviewing their own writings is not effective because their writing competence is not enough to justify their writing product. Therefore, the presence of their peers is required.

Their peers as the next audience are expected to have a significant contribution to the writing they review. Some peers may significantly contribute to the development of their peer's writings. When they interact with their peers' writings, they may be able to identify mistakes. They may be capable of telling their peers what should be revised. They may provide

appropriate feedback. However, there are many peers who do not give significant help for the improvement of their peer's writings. This thing occurs because they have more or less the same writing proficiency as the writers have. In other words, due to inadequate capability, they do not know how to provide feedback to revise their peer's composition. Nevertheless, there are some advantages which can be taken from the interaction between students. By interacting with each other, they will learn together how to revise writing and they will have social skill.

Apart from these peer interactions, shortcoming of the students' writings can be improved by getting feedback from teacher. Teacher as the next audience will show them which part of their writings that should be revised. The teacher will provide feedback in the form of correction of mistakes or reinforcement. Occasionally, teacher's corrections are orally performed in front of class. There may be some students who feel less comfortable when receiving individual correction in front of their peers. As a result, they may also feel embarrassed and awkward when their peers hear deficiency in speaking delivery. They will be considered incapable by other students. Thus, interaction between teacher and students do not run well. In addition, the interaction between them will take much time if the teacher must provide feedback to each student.

After all, interaction between student writers and peers as second audience, and interaction between student writers and teacher as third audience are valuable things to improve their writings. However, student-to-peer interaction is considered more valuable than teacher-to-student interaction because of their proximity and their equal capability. This circumstance is a brief observation in casual experience. This circumstance has either positive or negative effect relationship. To prove that interaction between students has positive and negative relationship, the research needs to be conducted.

However, not entire problems occurring in pair interaction are discussed. This study only takes four main research problems i.e. patterns

of interaction in peer feedback, aspects of writing the students are concerned within peer feedback, influences of pair interaction to the student's writing, and the students' perceptions and attitudes on peer feedback. Therefore, this study is aimed to describe and to explain patterns of interaction in peer feedback, aspects of writing the students are concerned within peer feedback, influences of pair interaction to the student's writing, and the students' perceptions and attitudes on peer feedback.

METHODS

This study employed qualitative design which emphasized on cases in the course of peer feedback activity as well as in the students' pre-revised writings and revised writings. I brought this study to use qualitative case study. I qualitatively collected the data through observing the research site and qualitatively analyzed the data in phase one concerning with research objectives numbers one to three. Although there were numerical statistics, they were used to be explained in order to give clear explanation to those cases. And, although I quantitatively collected the data through the instrument and quantitatively analyzed them in phase two regarding research objective number four, I attempted to explain and interpret them. In short, qualitative approach had larger portion.

Then to give me understanding about implementation of peer feedback in writing process, SMA N 1 Pecangaan was selected because the school used 2013 curriculum which suggested to apply peer feedback in teaching learning process especially in teaching expository writing. More specifically, twenty eleventh grade students of the language study program were selected. They were chosen because they learned much more language than those who came from other majors. In this study, their real names were replaced with pseudonyms because they felt being shy when they did not fluently speak English in their talks. Some of them were also shy when their writings were under class average. Accordingly, their

names were replaced with pseudonyms to save such an embarrassment.

Afterwards, object of study or characteristics which adhered to subject of study was determined. The object of this study was the patterns of interaction the students exhibited in peer feedback provision.

To collect the data, I used five techniques. They were observing classroom activities, recording pair talks, interviewing the students in pairs, distributing questionnaire, and documenting students' writings. Based on the techniques, I was an observer, an interviewer, and second rater.

In analyzing the data, this study mainly employed Storch's (2002b) conceptual framework about patterns of interaction. It was used to accomplish the research objective number one. To accomplish other research objectives, I made record for each student in pair; I employed Faigley's and Witte's (1981) and Brown's (2003) points of views; and, I used SPSS program. To make data valid, I triangulated the data through comparing data of observation with archival data such as syllabus and lesson plans. I also compared data of audio-taped conversations, data of the students' writing revisions, and data of interview. As well, data of questionnaire was linked to data of assessment of students' writing. They supported each other.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Based on the research objectives, there were four findings i.e. patterns of interaction in peer feedback provision, aspects of writing the students were concerned within peer feedback, the influences of pair interaction to the student's writing, and the students' perceptions and attitude on peer feedback.

Patterns of Interaction in Peer Feedback Provision

Four patterns of interaction classified by Storch (2002b) were present in this current study. Patterns which commonly emerged in pair interaction were collaborative pairs (30 %

students or 3 pairs) and dominant/passive pairs (30 % students or 3 pairs). They were followed with expert/novice pairs (20% students or 2 pairs) and dominant/dominant pair (10% students or one pair). In addition, another pattern which had ever been identified by Iris (2014) was encountered. The pattern was passive/passive pair (10% students or one pair). In case of collaborative pairs, the learners engaged each other to deliberate certain aspects of writing. Their engagement was marked with the presence of corrective feedback, positive and negative feedback, provision of information, recasting, some requests, some repairs, reinforcement, and resolution. They contributed each other to writings they reviewed but their contributions were relatively equal. Therefore, those who were under this pattern had characteristics whose interactions were high in equality and mutuality. In case of dominant/dominant pair, the learners contributed to writings they reviewed but their contributions were very little. There were few requests, few problem solving, and unwillingness to reach consensus. Even, one dominant learner talked the partner down. Therefore, interaction between the learners in this pattern was characterized with moderate-to-high equality and moderate-to-low mutuality. In case of dominant/passive pairs, the dominant learners controlled the discussion throughout the session, contributed more in talk and obliged their intentions. Meanwhile, the passive learners had little involvement in discussion. Although the passive learners proposed some arguments, they did not help much the dominant learners' writings. This case was still related to the next finding regarding characteristics of aspects of writing the students concerned. And, the dominant learners' helps seemed hardly understood by the passive learners. Accordingly, there was little assistance offered in this pattern. This thing caused interactions between learners under this pattern low in equality and low in mutuality. In case of expert/novice pairs, the expert learners controlled the discussion and they did not urge their intentions. They were respected by the novice learners because

they provided feedback without humiliating the partners. Even, they invited the novice learners to take a part in the discussion. Their interactions therefore were characterized with high equality and mutuality. In case of passive/passive learners, they did not know how to provide appropriate feedback. It did not mean that they were just quiet in the course of peer feedback session. They just seemed reading the guidance of writing response and answering based on their written response without comprehending what the partner said. As occurred in dominant/passive pairs, interaction between passive learners was characterized with low equality and mutuality.

Aspects of Writing the Students were concerned within Peer Feedback

In collaborative pairs, the aspects of writing the students were concerned within peer feedback were categorized as local ones (i.e. grammar, mechanic, and style of expression). Besides, they mostly had characteristics of revision oriented. It meant that the students tended to revise those aspects. In dominant/dominant pair, the aspects of writing the students concerned were content and whole work. The amount of the aspects whose characteristics were revision oriented with those who were non-revision oriented was same. In dominant/passive pairs, the aspects the students concerned were aspects which were categorized as global ones (i.e. organization and development of ideas). The amount of the aspects whose characteristics were revision oriented was fewer. In expert/novice pairs, the aspects the students concerned were aspects which were categorized as global ones (i.e. organization and development of ideas). However, the amount of the aspects whose characteristics were revision oriented was more than non-revision oriented. In passive/passive pair, the aspects the students concerned had similar category and characteristics with the aspects the dominant/passive pairs concerned.

The Influences of Pair Interactions to the Student's writing

The influences of pair interaction to the student's writing included two terms that were sort of revisions and development of writing aspects. In the first term, feedback provided by collaborative learners and expert learners in pair interaction contributed to the revision changes of their partners' writings. Feedback provided by dominant learner had little contribution to revision changes of writing of another dominant learner. Meanwhile, feedback provided by other learners who were under other patterns did not contribute to the revision changes of their partners' writings. In the second term, collaborative pairs and expert/novice pairs had better revised writing than other pairs who were under other patterns. Although the novice learners' second writings were still under class average, this thing did not mean that the novice learners did not succeed to make a progress. In this case, their second writings showed significant progress if they were compared with their first writing.

The Students' Perceptions and Attitudes on Peer Feedback

The students' perceptions on peer feedback were moderate and positive. This thing occurred because the indices of questionnaire datum were 64% up to 72 %. Besides, peer feedback was useful. As evidence, for examples, item 3 of questionnaire datum (peer feedback was more useful in organizing content of writing) and item 7 (peer feedback provides information about errors or mistakes in spelling) were appreciated by 72% students.

Meanwhile, the students' attitudes on feedback were low and moderate because the indices were 52% up to 72%. The item which showed low level, for example, was item 5 (I am willing to engage with my peer's idea). It was in accordance with their interaction in which fifty per cent participants were not collaborative and expert/novice learners. And, the remaining (16 items) showed moderate level.

However, one thing which was notable was that the students' perceptions and attitudes

did not significantly contribute to the students' writings (R square of determination analysis = 0.04). They just influenced 4 % toward their writing scores. Or, their variance explained 4% of the development of writing. The remaining (96%) were influenced or explained by other things. They might be, for example, proficiency, writing capability, teacher feedback, strategies used by the students and so on and on.

Discussion

Feedback provided by the collaborative and expert learners contributed to the revision changes of their partners' writings. This thing indicated that feedback provision worked. With regard to Storch's (2011) study, those who were under these two patterns indeed transferred knowledge. In this case, they adequately transferred knowledge of writing aspects because the number of feedback used in their writings was greatest. This kind of transferability came about because they engaged each other's ideas and they could reach consensus to the areas of comments given. The aspects of writing they were concerned within peer feedback were not only categorized as global ones but also belonged to local ones. Specifically, both categories of writing aspects had characteristics of revision oriented. They suggested the students to revise either aspects e.g. organization and development of ideas or aspects e.g. grammar, mechanic, style of expression.

Furthermore, varied concerns in both kinds of patterns were often attached with provision of information. As Vygotsky's notions (in Haywood and Karpov, 1998) and Storch's (2002b) notion, the pairs in collaborative patterns could scaffold each other's performance. Likewise, the students who were novice could pool some resources provided by those who were experts.

With regard to sort of revision, as one learner did not concern writing aspects which were categorized as local ones for his or her partner, the partner attempted to revise aspects of writing especially grammar and mechanic based on what he or she had known. In this case, self-feedback or self-proficiency acted as its

roles. As a result, some learners (those who were generally dominants) succeeded to make surface changes, as well as, text-based changes. Meanwhile, those who were collaborative and novice were assisted by their partners. As a result, the development of their writing aspects was better than other students' writings which were under other patterns.

Dealing with the students' perceptions and attitude, although whole students had different attitudes to their partners while they were interacting, they entirely had positive perceptions and good attitudes on peer feedback itself. The students' perceptions and attitudes might directly or indirectly affect to the next peer feedback activity.

CONCLUSION

Most common patterns encountered in this study are collaborative pairs (3 pairs) and dominant/passive pairs (3 pairs). They are then followed with expert/novice pairs (2 pairs), a dominant/dominant pair and a passive/passive pair. Collaborative pairs are extensively concerned within local aspects of writing (organization, generic structure and development of ideas) rather than global aspects of writing (grammar, mechanic, and style of expression). Meanwhile, other pairs were broadly concerned with global aspects of writing rather than local ones. I also note that whole writings which are under all patterns were revised in term of surface changes. It means that all revised texts were focused on grammar, mechanic, adding some sentences, removing some words, substituting certain words with other ones, distributing and consolidating sentences. However, this should be remembered that collaborative pairs, dominant/dominant pair, and expert/novice pairs showed that their revision changes are better than revision changes from other patterns. Apart from peer feedback, confounding variables e.g. student's proficiency, writing ability, and teacher feedback, also influenced their writings. With regard to the students' perceptions and attitude, peer feedback

provision was useful. Hence, it should be preserved in learning process.

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