



## Teachers' Practice of Form-Focused Feedback in Writing Classroom Teaching Writing At SMK N 1 Blado, Batang.

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### Article Info

#### Article History:

Accepted 18 February 2022

Approved 30 May 2022

Published 20 June 2022

#### Keywords:

Teachers' Practice, Form-Focused Feedback (FFF), Teaching Writing

### Abstract

This study focused on the description of the teachers' perception, plan, implementation, and evaluation of Form-Focused Feedback (FFF) in teaching writing. It employed a descriptive qualitative study that applied interviews, questionnaires, and classroom observations in obtaining the research data. The research took place in a vocational high school in Central Java and involved two teachers as well as the twelfth-grade students as the research participants. The results of the study show that the teachers mostly have the same perceptions of Form-Focused Feedback as the experts and researchers of previous related studies. The teachers' lesson plans show that the teachers included almost all the categories to implement FFF. However, an assessment category which is essential in teaching and learning process was not covered in the lesson plan. The implementation of FFF in teaching writing show that there was only in one out of four meetings the teachers implemented the FFF. Both teachers integrated the FFF and Project Based Learning methods through group discussion. The evaluation of the FFF show that the students made good progress in the form context. It affects the text's coherence and cohesion and helps students write more accurately. Teachers' perceptions, planning, and implementation of the FFF have a positive relation to each other. In addition, it suggests that Form-Focused Feedback be used in writing classroom. Also, teachers need to anticipate the facts that the FFF implementation may occur along with the challenges and problems.

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**p-ISSN 2087-0108**

**e-ISSN 2502-4566**

## INTRODUCTION

English as a lingua franca is used in official events world-wide. In Indonesian education context, English is taught as a foreign language and a compulsory course given to primary up to university students. The implication is to offer the scholars practical competencies allowing students to use the English language for communication.

English contains four primary skills: speaking, listening, writing, and reading. The students have to master those skills equally to give a good result of teaching English because one skill interconnects with others. In vocational high schools, writing is one of the language skills that should be taught. According to Caroline (2003), writing means creating something in written form so people can read, execute, and use it. Therefore, the teacher has an essential role in reinforcing students to produce written form so that it can be readable by people.

In writing class, students should produce meaningful written texts. However, the pre-research of twelve-grade students of SMKN 1 Blado (one of the vocational high schools in Central Java) showed that most of them still produce errors, especially in grammatical forms. Therefore, the teacher has a vital role in giving input and correcting the students' writing errors, and use better ways to instruct writing, including feedback. Hyland (2006) stated that feedback seen as crucial for encouraging and consolidating learning. This significance has also been recognized by those working in the field of second language (L2) writing. Moreover, according to Najmaddin (2004), giving feedback is one of the most appropriate ways of instruction in second language writing. For this reason, teachers should provide a relevant feedback to encourage students in writing. Furthermore, casual observation of English teachers' practices in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) suggests that most teachers' written feedback tends to focus more on a form (i.e., correctness of grammatical structures and mechanics)

rather than on content (i.e., ideas, coherence, and organization). Therefore, form-focused feedback is recommended to be used in correcting the students' errors.

Ellis (2001) stated that form-focused instruction is any planned or incidental instructional activity aimed to induce language learners to focus on linguistic form. It is a generic term for analytic teaching, focusing on structures, corrective feedback/error correction, and negotiation of form. Consequently, it is believed that teachers' form-focused feedback can regard as input for the students to improve their writing skills. Also, it will help students clarify their understanding of the meaning of the language. It is supported by Oksana (2015) that the use of various focuses on form strategies could promote language acquisition.

According to Montgomery and Baker (2007), teachers perceived to give less feedback on local issues (grammar, mechanics) and more feedback on global topics (ideas, content, organization, vocabulary) than they did. Regarding the statements above, it is crucial to explore teachers' perceptions towards the implementation and evaluation of feedback to explore what they think and students' needs towards feedback.

Lindsay and Norman (1972) stated perception interprets as the process which individuals experience their environment both person and the stimuli. Teachers have their perspectives on the teaching and learning process, and it is very imperative to build attitude and behavior in improving their language learning strategy so that harmonious views contribute to facilitating the teaching-learning process and help them achieve optimal learning outcomes.

The preliminary research result of twelfth-grade students of SMKN 1 Blado, showed that most of them still produced errors, especially in grammatical forms. Therefore, the teacher has a vital role in giving input and also correcting on the students' writing errors, and use better ways to instruct writing, including feedback.

From the statements above, it seems that the effectiveness of feedback in students' writing also depends on the teachers' ability to perceive the students' needs and preferences. Regarding the statements above, the present study explored the teachers' practice of form-focused feedback for vocational high school students in Indonesia, along with the problems that occurred during the form-focused feedback implementation and the evaluation strategies used by the teachers to assess the students' work.

There are numerous studies related to the topic of the present study. The previous studies were functioned to find any gaps and help show the current research's novelty. Regarding perception concept, Erkkila (2013) in her study showed that the teachers involved do not offer feedback other than error corrections. Moreover, Rauda (2013) stated that most teachers focused on meaning and content errors. In line with this study, Riyadh and Faridi (2017) also said that congruent perspectives facilitate the teaching-learning process and help achieve optimal learning outcomes. Pohan (2016) emphasized that the teacher, as the leading actor in the successfully implementing learning instruction, needs to have a good perception of it conceptually. Here, sufficient knowledge about the instructional framework concerning its plan, procedure, and assessment is very fundamental. Also, the teachers' perception play an essential role, for different perceptions may affect the teachers' behavior based on their judgments (Wayan, 2017). It means that the teachers' perception is important in teaching and learning.

In the case of considering feedback in general, Asnawi et al. (2017) presented that feedback can enhance language learning and make the students realize the way they express the target language has been mistaken in it. In other words, feedback is given as a response to the students' errors when using the target language. It strengthens Bookhart's study (2008) that providing students with feedback motivates them and gives them control over their learning. Also, Nahadi et al. (2015) stated

that the application of feedback in formative assessment has a positive impact toward students' learning process activity. Students became more enthusiastic, motivated, and more active in learning processes. In line with those statements, Michael (2010) revealed that student feedback as an appraisal tool has a positive impact when thoughtfully implemented. Moreover, Noriah et al. (2014) and Farrah (2012) said that feedback given to students was helpful and provided a platform for the students to do self-revision. It is one of the most effective lifelong learning process and peer feedback offered an opportunity for social interaction and improved students' writing skills. Moreover, it enhanced students' critical thinking, confidence, creativity, and motivation. Feedback also has a significance role. Implementating the written feedback to improve the learning competence in grammar practice in writing was working well. It could enhance the students' writing skills in grammar practice and improve the students' interest in learning grammar. They will be more careful in writing, especially in punctuation and spelling (Wijayanti, 2015). From this study, it seems that feedback is one way to solve students' errors especially in form context. It is compatible with Astrid's study (2015) that the implementation of writing feedback techniques affected students' writing ability. Similarly, Isnawati (2019) emphasized that corrective feedback can facilitate students' revision, especially in terms of students' language accuracy. From the researchers above, it can be inferred that feedback has a positive impact on the teaching and learning and also supports students' achievement.

Regarding form-focused feedback, there are some previous studies conducted. Peloghitis (2010), in his study tried to investigate the impact of FFF on improving overall essay scores and on the use of three types of grammatical forms between students who receive-focused feedback and students who do not receive form-focused feedback. The result showed that the control group made a significant level of improvement in

organization and in the overall score of their essays. Moreover, the form-focused feedback significantly improved grammar and performance in accuracy in two grammatical areas. As stated by Zohrabi and Rezaie (2012), the students who received form-focused feedback improved considerably. In line with the statement above, they investigate the effect of focused feedback on the students' revision and explore the relationship between correction and text improvement. The result showed that focused feedback appears to hold promise as a means of facilitating negotiation and problem solving, enhancing efforts, and potentially affecting the quality of writing.

From the research results presented, it can be observed that using form-focused feedback refine the students' grammatical errors and improve their writing skills. Related to some studies that presented benefits of applying form-focused feedback to teach students in writing class, this study explored how teachers used form-focused feedback to refine the students' errors in writing style. Furthermore, some differences exist between some studies mentioned early and this research. The studies mentioned do not consider the teachers' perception, plan, implementation, and evaluation of form-focused feedback.

There are five objectives of this present study: to investigate the teachers' perception of form-focused feedback in teaching writing; to examine the teachers' planning to implement form-focused feedback in teaching writing; to describe the teachers' implementation of form-focused feedback in teaching writing; to describe how the teachers evaluate form-focused feedback in teaching writing; to analyze the relationships between teachers' perception and practice of form-focused feedback in teaching writing.

## METHODS

The design of this study was descriptive qualitative research to investigate the teachers' perceptions, plan, implementation, and evaluation of form-focused feedback in

teaching writing. The research was held in SMKN 1 Blado and involved two teachers and twelve-grade students as the research participants. The data were gathered through questionnaires, interviews guidelines, document analysis guidelines, and observation checklists. Furthermore, the research process was based on Creswell (2014).

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

This section presents the research results and interpretations based on the data obtained through questionnaires, interviews, document analyses, and observations.

### Teachers' Perceptions of Form-Focused Feedback (FFF) in Teaching Writing

Gained the findings of teachers' perceptions of FFF in teaching writing from an interviews with two teachers as the respondents: Teacher #1 and Teacher #2. They responded to 13 questions about the concept of feedback and the implementation of FFF. The first discussion was about how teachers perceive the idea of FFF and what the teachers know about FFF. Both teachers stated that Form-Focused Feedback is feedback that focused on form context: vocabulary, grammatical errors, and structure. The teachers' perceptions are primarily similar to the experts' perceptions. That definition is in line with Ellis (2001) that FFF serves as a generic term for analytic teaching, focusing on form, error correction, and negotiation of form.

The first aspect of teachers' perceptions is that Feedback can motivate the students' writing. This perception is similar to the experts. For example, Nahadi et al. (2015) stated that the application of feedback encourages the students and gives them control over their learning.

The second perception is about the purpose of Form-Focused Feedback. Both teachers perceive that the goal of FFF is to improve and give corrections in writing, especially to revise the students' grammatical errors. This statement supports Zohrabi (2007)

that Form-Focused Feedback appears to hold promise as a means of facilitating negotiation and problem solving, enhancing efforts and potentially affecting the quality of writing.

The third perception is about the procedure of Form-Focused Feedback, which can be done in various ways. It can be given through direct or indirect, written and oral feedback, and in manual ways or through technology.

The fourth perception is about the benefit of Form-Focused Feedback. Both teachers perceive that the use of FFF made students understand and aware of vocabulary, grammar, and structure to produce good writing. The teachers' perceptions are in line with Peloghtis's study (2010) showing that the FFF made a significant gain in grammar and performance in accuracy in two grammatical areas.

Lastly, it is about the teachers' perceptions about the evaluation of Form-Focused feedback. To evaluate the implementation of FFF, both teachers thought that it could be done by giving the students assignment with a different topic to know their progress in writing.

#### **The teachers' Lesson Plan for FFF implementation**

The data analysis of the teachers' lesson plans is shown in the table below.

**Table1.** The Summary and Result of Aspects Found in the Teachers' Planning

Category	Mentioned	Not Mentioned
Learning Goal	V	
Time allotment	V	
Teaching materials	V	
Classroom activities	V	
Assessment		V
Source of Learning	V	
Teaching media	V	

Table 1 shows that the teachers include almost all the categories such as learning goals, time allotment, teaching materials, and classroom activities to implement FFF. The two teachers make the lesson plans with their creativity and needs. However, one category was not included in the lesson plan, such as assessment which is essential in the teaching and learning. All in all, the lesson plan is simple but straightforward

In four meetings, there is only one evaluation using form-focused feedback in the fourth meeting. In the first meeting, there is only feedback without specific information. Moreover, in the lesson plan, the teacher integrated Form-Focused Feedback through Project Based Learning using the group discussion method.

#### **The Implementation of Form-Focused Feedback in Teaching Writing**

The data for this section were mainly obtained from the class observations. The observation was conducted 4 times for each teacher. During the observation, they did observation checklist field notes to collect some data. Aspects in the observation checklist became guidelines to know what kind of action the teachers did. The aim of employing the observation checklist was to point out and highlight the teachers' efforts and the classroom situation during their teaching. The result of the observation checklist can see as follows:

**Table 2.** Observation Checklist result

No	Checklist	Teacher #1		Teacher #2	
		Ye	N	Ye	N
		s	o	s	o
	Does the teacher make an introductory section (showing media to the today's topic)	V		v	
	Does the teacher tell and share the previous writing test result and students' main problem in writing	V		v	
	Does the teacher explain the material or topic for today's writing activities?	V		v	
	Does the teacher give changes for any students' opinion or interruption	V		v	
	Does the teacher give feedback and motivation in any occasion?	V		v	
	Does the teacher organize the student in some groups/pairs to complete	V		v	

today's writing activities?

Does the teacher state the instruction clearly to students? V v

Does the teacher observe the groups/pairs while taking some notes? V v

Does the teacher check the groups/pairs to make sure that students are doing well? V v

Does the teacher motivate the students in learning process? v v

Does the teacher have difficulty in managing the class during the Form-Focused implementation? v v

Does the teacher tend to take students' writing score and provide feedback from their writing performances? v v

Does The teacher makes a self-reflection after teaching which is used V v

for the next  
meeting?

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Table 2 depicts that the teachers mostly had met the observation checklist, only three question checklist items having the different and absence of practices which are the participation of teacher in group discussion and self- reflection. Then, in using technology, both teachers used it well. They used PowerPoint to explain the material and took voice notes to make it clear. Both teachers gave the material before the FFF activities at the end of the meeting to test the students' understanding of the previously delivered material. The observation gained many facts about how the teachers implement FFF in online classes. The teachers produced the materials using the same media. Both of them used PowerPoint media. #Teacher1 implemented FFF in the fourth meeting. After the teacher checked the students' work by underlying and headlining the error part, he gave it again to the students and asked them to pay attention to revision. The teacher explained more about the correct Vocabulary and Grammar used in a short formal report. After that, he asked the students to read aloud voice note for each part. Here, the FFF was done well because there was input from the students, and they learned a better way to write the next assignment. Also, teacher #2 implemented FFF in the third meeting. She explained the students' errors in the writing projects and presented them through voice notes to make them clear. Then, she asked them to revise it still in a group discussion. Moreover, from the interview, it gained information that limited time is a central problem. It relates to the topic that needed extra time to be explained and discussed. Therefore, both teachers could not provide feedback effectively. Also, after giving feedback, some students were still confused and did not notice their errors, so they made the same mistake in the next project. To overcome it, the teachers explained their errors in detail after the meeting.

### **The Evaluation of Form-Focused Feedback**

At the end of meeting, the teachers instructed the students: "Write again a simple report using a better vocabulary, grammar, and structure" still in group discussion. The result showed that the students made good progress in the form context. Also, it affects the coherence and cohesion of the text. As Teacher #2 stated, "I can say there is an improvement after FFF implementation, although it cannot be said perfect". By knowing their errors, the students can make a better version of their work. Moreover, it helps students to write more accurately.

Sometimes students only focused on composing a good writing through its' content, but after FFF was implemented, they could learn how to compose writing concerning its form. It is the same light Hyland (2003) in Amelia (2020, pp. 4) stating that providing feedback to students allows them to see how others respond to their work, how they learn from responses, and finally get a range of messages. Also, the students are more aware of the form context during writing. In the same light, Sujito (2018) stated that feedback gave the students get new knowledge to improve their writing quality product. From the questionnaire that the teachers have fulfilled, there are some discussions related to the evaluation of FFF, such as: FFF is easy to implement in class. Moreover, it effectively refines the students' errors and encourages students to produce a better writing project. Also, FFF helps teachers to refine their teaching way in the future. In addition, FFF is practical to be implemented in teaching writing. It is in line with Zahida's study (2014) that feedback plays a pivotal role in EFL classroom for both learners and teachers. Moreover, to gather the data, questionnaires were also given to the students to know their opinion about the FFF implementation. From 60 students, 19 students said that grammar is the most challenging thing in writing, 21 students voted on structure, and 20 on vocabulary. It means that those three aspects become the main difficulties in writing. Also, they are afraid of

making mistakes. After getting feedback and revising their work, they feel that their writing skill is improving for the next project. They learned not to make the same mistake and have a better mastery of vocab, grammar, and structure. From those statements, it can be concluded that FFF is suitable to be implemented and can fulfill the students' need, especially in writing class.

### **The Relation of Teachers' Perceptions, Planning, and Implementation of FFF in Teaching Writing**

This study has three concerns: teachers' perceptions, planning, and implementation of FFF. Based on the findings, those have relation to each other. Firstly, teachers' perceptions influence the way the teachers implement FFF. Borg (2003) stated that perception becomes a guide to thought and behavior that lead to action, for instance, in selecting the procedure of FFF. Teachers perceived that FFF is associated with Project-Based Learning with the group discussion. In FFF implementation, it was observed that the teacher integrated those learning models effectively by dividing the students into groups, giving the assignment, and letting them discuss to produce writing. The teachers also perceived that in FFF, the teachers could provide it through various ways: direct, indirect, traditional, and used technology during giving FFF. It seems when the teacher asked students to revise their work and asked them to read loudly via voice note.

Teachers' perceptions of the FFF implementation, such as the actual practice and the benefits, also influence the teachers to set the goals of FFF implementation and the concept of FFF. For instance, the teachers believe that FFF can improve grammar, vocabulary, and structure. In real practice, the teachers focus on their product and pay attention to the form context.

The second relation is teaching planning affects the GBL implementation. The case of FFF implementation in the present study showed that when the teachers give feedback to students, they make a scenario for running FFF

although not in detail. Apart from the things that might happen differently from what planned in the procedure, the teachers could successfully run FFF.

### **CONCLUSIONS**

The current study showed that teachers' perceptions, planning, and implementation of FFF have a relation and affection each other. Also, it showed that FFF is appropriate to be implemented in writing class, for it affects the coherence and cohesion of the text and helps students to write more accurately.

It suggests that Form-Focused Feedback is supposed to be used in teaching writing, for it encourages students to improve their writing skills. It also advises that teachers know the facts of FFF implementation and the challenges and problems that may occur. A good understanding of those things will be helpful in preparing the teaching strategies and the appropriate feedback for students so that they can achieve the teaching goals.

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