

STUDENTS' PERCEPTION ON EMPLOYING SELF-DIRECTED FEEDBACK IN WRITING

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Abstract

The gaps in feedback implementation bring this study to unravel students' perception on employing self-directed feedback in writing. As the results of the previous studies on this concern are non-comparable, this study aims is to unravel students' perception on employing self-directed feedback in writing. Employing a descriptive qualitative design, this study involved 23 English Department students of FKIP Universitas Lambung Mangkurat. The results show that students perceive self-directed feedback positively. It is seen from the correction that they make after the implementation of the self-directed feedback. However, students' reflection on the use of self-directed feedback shows various perceptions. Therefore, teacher can wisely design which feedback given to whom. The students who are able to provide self-directed feedback can achieve maximum result of learning, and teacher can focus to assist the other students who need teacher feedback during the writing process. It is suggested to further researchers to investigate students' emotional responses during the feedback in writing process or to investigate other factors that influence feedback.

Keywords: self-directed feedback, writing, student

INTRODUCTION

Feedback is used as a way of responding to students' writing. It is claimed to be an important aspect of any classroom and part of the language learning process (Buckey, 2012; Ellis, 2009; Hyland & Hyland, 2006; Siewert, 2011). More importantly, in a class where process writing approach is employed, feedback functions to assist students on the stages of writing (Eksi, 2010; Ghani, M. & Asgher, 2012; Harran, 2011). It impacts on the students' writing ability. Hyland (2003) mentions 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. In short, the given feedback eventually leads students to improve their writing ability.

In term of responding to students' writing, Ellis (2009) Hyland (2003) and Lewis (2002) address that the practical issues in feedback are generally the teacher, peer, and self-directed feedback. Teacher feedback is a very common feedback given in a writing class. One of the examples is Hidayat (2018) showing that the students could correct their writing based on the teacher's feedback. In addition, teacher feedback is also worth to do to showing that a teacher reads and appreciates students' work (Jannah, 2017). Wahyu & Amelia (2019) state that teacher existence is one of very significant factors. However, teachers are mostly more focus on giving feedback to grammar and mechanics aspects than to content and organization aspects because they have burden and time limitation. As a result, experts continue to question the effectiveness of teacher feedback Long & Doughty (2002) in Amelia & Rusmanayanti (2017).

Considering students' intellectual and capacity as well as giving them responsibility and initiative as the gaps, the self-directed feedback is offered in this study. It is understood that the obtained feedback given by the students themselves will be more effective for them Brinko (1993) in Hyland & Hyland (2006). Ellis (2009) also suggests teachers to give students opportunity to do this feedback. Also, students are responsible for their own success in learning (Sutiono, Saukah, Suharmanto, & Oka 2017). The self-directed feedback is a way of appreciating students' intellectual and capacity as well as giving them responsibility and initiative (Eksi, 2010). Moreover, students preferred to revise independently (Harran, 2011). Self-directed feedback is the feedback that the students discovered with the guidance from the teacher. Students have high awareness ability to spot the mistakes. Soon, as they find their own mistakes, they can correct those mistakes.

Research on the use of self-directed feedback has been done in the educational field. Cahyono & Amrina (2016) conducted a study on writing ability to investigate peer and self-correction based on guideline sheets. The results showed that the students who had self-correction had better writing ability as well than those who got the conventional editing process of writing. The other study was conducted by Hajimohammadi & Mukundan (2011) intended to investigate the impact of self-directed feedback method as an alternative to the traditional teacher-correction method and evaluating the impact of personality traits (extrovert and introvert). It was found that self-directed feedback method showed to be significantly more effective than teacher-correction method and personality type had no significant effect on learners' progress in writing. The next previous study was conducted by Suzuki (2008) who examined L2 learners' assessment of self-and-peer revisions of writing focusing on linguistic features. It was held in two weeks with 24 participants. They were asked to write an essay for TOEFL Test of

Written English for 30 minutes. Despite small number of the participants and time allocation, this study gave a pedagogical contribution in which the results showed that the peer and self-revision in writing is different in quality. It was found that peer revision could be implemented for the improvement on content aspect while self-revision is for language form. It is suggested that peer revision is employed before the self-revision.

However, research on students' perception on the use of this feedback needs to be uncovered to see how they feel and point of view toward its implementation. Therefore, this study aims to unravel students' perception on the use of self-directed feedback in writing. This study focuses on students' perception on the use of self-directed feedback in writing; therefore, the research question to be answered in this study is how is the English Department students' perceptions on the use of self-directed feedback in writing.

METHOD

This study delves closely into the students' perceptions on employing self-directed feedback in writing. This study employed a descriptive qualitative design by gathering information from a sample by using a questionnaire and an interview that illustrate various aspects of the population. This study uncovered the foci of English Department students' view of using self-directed feedback in writing. The trustworthiness was established by being clear about the perspective, providing adequate information, and using examples to support the results. Each of these techniques has been attempted to be done in this study.

Participants and Setting

This current study focuses on the English Department students' perception on employing self-directed feedback in writing. The English Department of Universitas Lambung Mangkurat, which has an A accreditation, is chosen as the setting of the study. The participants of this study are 23 English Department students of Faculty of Teacher Training and Education, Universitas Lambung Mangkurat, Banjarmasin, Indonesia. These students have taken Guided Writing course and are believed to have intermediate skill level. The length of this study is one semester.

Instrument

The instruments used in this study are a questionnaire and an interview guide of the use of self-directed feedback in writing. All of these instruments function to gather information on the English Department students perception on employing self-directed feedback in writing. The instruments

were adapted from Montgomery & Baker (2007) and Dowden, Pittaway, Yost, & McCarthy (2013).

Data Collection Procedure

Data were collected using a written questionnaire and interview. Participants would be given a copy of the written questionnaire. The questionnaire was completed and collected by the students during the meetings. The questionnaire used in this study is adjusted to the need of this study. Then, it was distributed to the participants of this study. There were 23 students involved voluntarily to fill in the questionnaire, and there are some students who were willing to give further information during the interview.

Data Analysis

As the data of this study was collected, they were processed to the data reduction. In this step, the data was edited, coded, and tabulated (Bungin, 2003). All of the participants' responses given on the questionnaires were recorded. The responses were coded and tabulated. These steps were also applied to the focus group discussion and interview responses. Then, all of the data was displayed and verified, and finally, conclusions were drawn based on the available data and supporting data of this study.

FINDINGS

Students' Understanding about Feedback

The first question given on the questionnaire aims to obtain students' understanding on the definition of feedback. Students responses are satisfying. All of the students got the main point of the feedback definition even though the researcher never told the students the definition of feedback directly during the implementation of the self-directed feedback in writing class. Some of the students reflected:

Feedback is when you get new input, either from yourself or others about something you are writing or making in order to revise your work so you can do better in the future.

Feedback is a piece of paper containing questions about paragraph. Its benefit to remind writers to check about the paragraph and revise it.

It is seen that the students broadly see feedback as a positive thing in the process of their writing. The rest of this section unravels the findings related to the two major foci namely the correction and the reflection based on the self-directed feedback in their writing.

Students’ Perceptions on the Correction based on Self-directed Feedback

Most of the students finished their own paragraph in one sitting. They understand that writing has a cycle to follow as it is a process. However, most of them admitted that they merely jotted down the ideas in the sentences and submitted the work to the lecturer. After they are given the self-directed feedback sheet, they follow the process of writing. As many as 48% of the students read over again when they have finished writing, and 52% of the students think about or revise their paragraph carefully based on their own comments and corrections. Table 1 shows complete results for correction based on the Self-directed Feedback.

Table 1: Students’ Perception on Correction based on the Self-directed Feedback
N = 23

No	Question	All of it	Most of it	Some of it	None of it
1.	How much of each paragraph do you read over again after you have finished working on the self-directed feedback?	13%	48%	35%	4%
2.	How many of your own comments and corrections do you think about/ revise carefully?	4%	52%	43%	0%
3.	How many of your own comments on your paragraph are about				
	Organization	26%	48%	22%	4%
	Content	17%	70%	13%	0%
	Grammar	26%	35%	39%	0%
	Vocabulary	4%	48%	48%	0%
	Mechanics	22%	61%	17%	0%

Students’ Perceptions on the Reflection of Self-directed Feedback

The second focus of this study is related to students’ reflection. Table 2 summarizes students’ reflection on the self-directed feedback.

Table 2. Students’ Reflection on the Self-directed Feedback
N = 23

No.	Statement	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
4.	I am generally satisfied with the quality of written feedback on my assignments	9%	78%	13%	0%
5.	I reflect on the self-directed feedback	17%	78%	4%	0%
6.	I generally have an emotional response to the feedback I receive	22%	43%	35%	0%

No.	Statement	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
7.	The quantity of the written feedback is generally adequate	13%	85%	4%	0%
8.	The written feedback is generally helpful	48%	52%	0%	0%
9.	The written feedback enhances my learning	30%	70%	0%	0%
10.	Overall, I am confident in my ability to interpret criteria for each task	17%	52%	30%	0%

All in all, the findings of self-directed feedback bring us to the point that students' preferences toward the feedback given to them are varied. The students were asked to rank the feedback they prefer from the most to the least, and the results can be seen in Table 3.

Table 3. Students' Preference on the Types of Feedback (n= 23)

Statement	Teacher Feedback	Peer Feedback	Self-directed Feedback	Total
Preference on the types of feedback	57%	13%	30%	100%

DISCUSSION

This finding shows a promising result. Overall, all responses on the correction are in "the most of it" response. It indicates that neither the students completely choose self-directed feedback nor they ignore its use. This finding infer the self-directed feedback is beneficial for the students as they revise their writing based on their feedback reflected on the feedback sheet. In regard to the components of writing, the students received the benefit of self-directed feedback on organization as many as 48%, content 70%, grammar 35%, vocabulary 48%, and mechanics 22%.

The finding of this study supports Cahyono & Amrina's (2016) study that the students conducting self-correction based on a guideline sheet have better ability in writing than those who did not conduct self-correction. It is also in line with Hajimohammadi & Mukundan's (2011) that self-directed feedback helps students improve their writing quality. One important thing that should be noted is that feedback sheet plays a prominent role. Its presence guides students to give feedback for their own writing. In other words, the students are directed to follow every point that should be checked and to locate where the revisions should be done. Brookhart (2008) states that rubric cover sheets is one of the ways to deliver written feedback

besides comments directly on the work or combination of both direct comment and feedback sheets.

Based on the findings of this study, the students for the most part perceived self-directed feedback positively. Most of them, the least 43% and the most 85%, responded agree to the following statements: generally satisfied with the quality of written feedback on my assignments, reflect on the self-directed feedback, generally have an emotional response to the feedback they receive, adequate quantity of the written feedback, the written feedback generally helpful, the written feedback enhances their learning, and confident in their ability to interpret criteria for each task.

As much as 78% of the students think that their own feedback is good. Most of them stated that the feedback sheet is complete and helps them a lot during the writing. They can use this sheet both before and after finished writing the paragraph. According to Brookhart (2008), having criteria for good work (criterion-referenced) for giving information about the work itself is one of the recommendations for good feedback. The feedback sheet gives students the picture for good work. It helps them crosscheck their writing. More importantly, the students know what to do with the feedback sheets. When they follow the feedback sheet as the guideline, they automatically can reflect their work by checking each point. Therefore, the next point of the questionnaire that is "I reflect on the self-directed feedback" also obtained 78%. This result shows the proof that the students responses are consistent.

The next one is related to emotional response to the feedback the students receive. Fourty three students admitted that they generally have an emotional response to the feedback I receive. Dowden, T., Pittaway, S., Yost, H., & McCarthy (2013) believe that emotions interplay with decision making. Therefore, it influences whether they will revise the writing based on the given feedback or not. When students construe feedback as positive to their sense, the students will perceive it positively. Hence, it helps students to improve. Brookhart (2008) states that feedback should use positive comments that what is well done. In reality, so far, most of the feedback given focusing on students' weaknesses. The aim is tell the students what they need to revise. However, the involvement of valence, positive and negative ways, is more recommended.

The positive emotion on the self-directed feedback is also seen on the next statement of the questionnaire that they are confident in their ability to interpret criteria for each task (52%). The next two statements are also related to emotions that overall 85% of the students responded that the quantity of the written feedback is generally adequate, 70% of them stated that the written feedback enhances their learning.

Students also responded that the written feedback is generally helpful (52%). Since they are given the self-directed feedback sheet, they know how to write a good paragraph for each task because the feedback sheet is different one another depending on the types of the paragraph. One of the students affirms that he/she likes the last part of the feedback sheet because he/she can write all his/her feeling about the writing in that column. Principally, it activates students metacognitive competence to evaluate their work. It also motivates them to be more autonomous in writing as they know on which part that they should revise. The students conveyed their positive attitude.

I like the last part of the feedback sheet, providing me a space to write good point about my paragraphs.

*I can reflect my paragraph writing strengths and weaknesses.
I am accustomed with it. But, I still need someone who is better than me to give me constructive feedback.*

Meanwhile, some of the established problems are sometimes the students do not know how to give comments to their paragraph. They states that they need teacher guidance. Few of them know that their problem is still on mechanics and grammar during the writing. Then, some of the students admit that they like the self-directed feedback and the availability of feedback sheet. However, they sometimes have a hard time to write comments on the feedback. So, they just wrote a check and leave the comment column blank.

The findings of this study show that self-directed feedback can be the alternative to teacher feedback. This finding is in line with some previous studies, for instance, Cahyono & Amrina's (2016) study that found peer feedback and self-directed feedback or in their study it was called self-correction are beneficial for students. Similarities in this study and theirs were found in terms of the approach that we used which was the process writing approach, involvement of all aspects of writing in the feedback, and the employment of guideline sheets or peer and self-directed feedback sheets.

As it was mentioned that self-directed feedback was given on the writing stages, it was concluded that self-directed feedback successfully worked on the process writing approach. This finding supported Seow (2002) and Sokolik (2003) statement on the employment of process writing approach. In the planning stage, the self-directed feedback concerned to topic selection and gathered related ideas. Then, the ideas organization was

also provided to get the feedback. In the editing stage, more specific concern on topic sentence, and clearance of the topic sentence. Since writing mostly does not enough for 1 draft only, the students were asked to continue writing draft 2 of their essay.

The next, involving feedback is beneficial for students (Ellis, 2009; Hyland, 2003; Hyland & Hyland, 2006; Lewis, 2002), but teachers should understand what types of feedback works on which group and how to design the feedback (Guenette, 2007). In designing the feedback, for instance, this study used the self-directed feedback. Even though the use of peer feedback was also possible, the notion of creating autonomous student was taken into account by involving the self-directed feedback after the peer feedback. Then, a specific set of self-directed feedback sheets focusing on every type of paragraph was designed in order to ensure that the feedback was appropriate and clear.

This result suggests a good alternative since providing teacher feedback only to all students is burdensome for teachers (Lewis, 2002). In addition, giving teacher feedback only to all students in a class makes the feedback is not throughout (Ghani & Asgher, 2012) because the students get very little opportunity to produce language in class (Lightbown & Spada, 2013). As a result, employing appropriate feedback to appropriate students should be considered by teachers. One important point that should be noted is the presence of feedback sheets. The self-directed feedback is possible to implement because the students can easily follow it, and they realize that the feedback sheet successfully reminds them to check and double-check their writing.

It is impossible that a study is perfect. As the nature of a descriptive study is to get saturated data, information obtained from this study is tried to be elaborated. However, there might appear be a weakness of this study that is the number of limited participants. Regardless this weakness, it is expected that the obtained data and discussion is rich.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

The findings of this study lead to the following conclusions. First, students' perception on the use of self-directed feedback in writing class is positive. After the students did the self-directed feedback, they made correction based on the provided feedback sheet on each paragraph.

Second, students' reflection on the use of self-directed feedback shows various perceptions. Some students perceived self-directed feedback as the ideal tool to assist them during the writing process. However, most of the students view teacher feedback is still the best feedback for them because of their inability to provide feedback for themselves. Therefore, teacher can wisely design which feedback given to whom. The more appropriate the

feedback given, the better result that the students and teacher get. Those students who are able to provide self-directed feedback can achieve maximum result of learning, and teacher can focus to assist the other students who need teacher feedback during the writing process.

The established conclusion above is along with the suggestion for teachers and further researchers. Teachers are suggested to treat certain students with appropriate feedback. The high proficient students are given the self-directed feedback while the low proficient students are given teacher feedback in writing class. Then, research studies particularly on the involvement of students' emotional responses during the feedback in writing process are suggested to be investigated.

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