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Teacher's Written Feedback on Students' Descriptive Text Writing and Their Perceptions toward the Written Feedback Given in Senior High School

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Abstract: This study investigated the types of written feedback and students' perceptions toward the written feedback given, especially in the teaching of descriptive text writing in senior high school. Based on the data gained from the English teacher in one of the senior high school in Jember, it was found that the English teacher already used various types of written feedback. Among those written feedback, direct feedback on surface/form of the text was the most frequent given by the teacher. Furthermore, the students' perceptions toward the written feedback given was positive which means that the written feedback helps the students develop their writing ability, especially in descriptive text writing. It is an integral part of the teaching and learning process since it provides many contributions to writing ability.

Keywords: Teacher's written feedback, students' perceptions.

1. Introduction

Feedback can be viewed as an important process for the improvement of writing skills for students (Hyland, 1990; Hyland & Hyland, 2001). It is now seen as crucial ways for encouraging and consolidating learning for learners as well. This is because feedback instead of offering suggestions to facilitate improvement and providing opportunities for interaction between a teacher and a student also becomes motivation for the student to foster improvement in mastering English skills (Hyland & Hyland, 2006).

1039. D. Santoso, B. Suharjito and M..A. Andayani T are an EFL student and lecturers

In Indonesia, English is taught as a foreign language which plays as an obligatory subject for students at junior and senior levels. While English itself has four integrated skills: listening, speaking, reading and writing. Of the four skills, writing is the last skill to consider for students to develop their English proficiency and it is a fundamental skill that requires frequent feedback in EFL (English as a foreign language) contexts. Realising the importance of writing in EFL classrooms in Indonesia, teachers are hoped intensely in giving various strategies in teaching and learning of writing including giving written feedback.

Feedback is particularly important to students because it lies at the heart of the student's learning process. But, little attention has been given to these problems. Therefore it is necessary to conduct this research which focuses on teacher's written feedback and students' perceptions toward the written feedback given in senior high school. This research was aimed to investigate the teacher's written feedback and their perceptions toward the written feedback in depth-analytical description within a class. The problem investigated in this research was the information of the types of written feedback given by the teacher in descriptive text writing and what is the written feedback mostly given by the teacher. This research also investigated the students' perceptions toward the written feedback.

2. Literature review

2.1. Feedback in ELT: the theoretical Framework

Feedback comes in many types, and each of them has its own specialization. Hyland (2006) divides feedback into several types which are written feedback, oral and conference feedback, peer conferencing feedback, and computer mediated feedback. Many scholars believe that among those feedbacks, written feedback is the crucial and the most important for the writing improvement. Since writing skill

is very difficult to master, it is a need for teacher to use various strategies in teaching and learning process of writing. One of the strategies is feedback which aiming to help students improving their writing skill. In accordance with the difficulty in writing, Nunan (1989) argued that writing skill is the most difficult macro skills for all language users regardless the language is a first, second, or foreign language.

In order to assist students achieving their goal in mastering English skill, it is an obligation for teachers to help them acquire writing skill. Teachers should use different types of methods in order to help students in facing the difficulties in writing skill, one of them is through written feedback. Ferris, Pezone, Tade, & Tinti. (1997) further state that written feedback is arguably as the teacher's most crucial task. Written feedback can be defined as writing extensive comments on students' texts to provide a reader response to students' efforts and at the same time helping them improve and learn as writers (Hyland, 2003). The teacher provides effective feedback to enable students to read and understand the problems and use it to improve future writing. Effective written feedback means feedback that is focused, clear, applicable, and encouraging (Lindemann, 2001). When students are provided with this type of feedback, they are able to think critically and self-regulate their own learning (Nicol & Macfarlane-Dick, 2006). Further, Dulay, Burt, & Krashen (1992:34) state that feedback is a response given by the user to the maker about how well the product he/she has made. Along with the development of pedagogical in writing, new feedback modes are increasingly rapid and varied techniques of feedbacks are explored (William, 2012).

Ellis (2008) notes that feedback serves as the motivation in the writing process and students' motivation closely relates to language acquisition. She further states

students might practice writing frequently and practice itself makes perfect, but in writing, practice without feedback gives less improvement compared to those who provide feedback in the teaching and learning process.

.According to Hyland and Hyland (2006), feedback exists in several kinds. They are written feedback, oral feedback, peer-conferencing and computer-mediated feedback. Written feedback refers to the corrections of errors and weakness in content, organization and language through writing. It can be a powerful tool for helping students to move forward in their learning.

Hyland & Hyland (2006) notes on automated feedback provided by a computer through sophisticated software systems that can generate immediate evaluative feedback on students writing. Through computer-mediated students could easily revise their writing in a short time. Further, Mack (2009) defines teacher's written feedback as any comments, questions or error corrections that are written on students' assignments. These feedbacks can be given in many forms including questions, error corrections, praises, critiques and so on. Hyland and Hyland (2006) see teacher written feedback as purely informational with its position as a medium for the teacher to response and advice in assisting students' improvement. In addition, teacher written feedback plays a significant role in providing a reader reaction to students' effort in writing, helping them to be better writers and to justify the grade given to the students (Hyland & Hyland, 2006).

Content feedback focuses on the content of the text such as students' ideas, meaning, purpose, creativity, and organization of the text. This type of feedback usually points out the strengths and weaknesses of students' ideas and provides suggestions on ways to improve the text (Ferris, 2002). Straub (1996) gives some

clear examples of content feedback on the learner's writing text. The purpose of content feedback is to offer guidance on students' written text and at the same time, through both elements of praise and criticism, improve and accelerate the process of learning (Hyland & Hyland, 2001). In general, content feedback is used to encourage students to be empowered to achieve self-regulated learning in the aspects of their thinking, motivation and behaviour during learning (Nicol & Macfarlane-Dick, 2006).

The purpose of form feedback is to highlight language-related mistakes to students. Form feedback is divided into direct feedback and indirect feedback (Ferris, 2003). Direct feedback provides the correct linguistic form or structure based on the linguistic error (Ferris, 2003). This means that the teacher not only presents or locates the mistakes on students' writing but also suggests the correct or appropriate form of it. Further, Ellis (2008:99) briefly states that in the direct feedback, the teachers provide guidance about how to correct their mistakes.

Rob et al, in Hong (2004:18) classify form feedback into several subs-categories, they are coded, non-coded and marginal feedback. Coded feedback is a method in which the teacher provides a coding scheme which indicates the type of students' mistakes. In accordance with the coded feedback, Hyland (1990:280) provides some examples due to the coded feedback. For instances, T is for the mistake in tenses, SP for the mistake in spelling, WO for word order, etc. This method is quite good for the students because they are trained to correct their mistakes with minimal clues. However, between the teacher and the students must have an appointment with the codes provided in the students' writing drafts. The example of coding system is provided by Ferris (2002).

Perception according to Kreitner and Kinicki (1992: 126) is the mental and cognitive process that enables students' to interpret and understand the surroundings. It deals with the way stimuli are selected and grouped so they can be meaningfully interpreted or it can be divined as a person's view of reality (Dobkin and Pace, 2006). It is in line with Mazkowitz and Orgel statements in Pratiwi (2013:25) that perception is a global response to a stimuli or a set of stimuli. Perceptual process begins with attention which is called as selection process (Dobkin and Pace in Pratiwi, 2013). The second stage is called perception, after that it is followed by reaction. Reaction is a form of one's behaviour as a result of the interpretation process. The reaction for each person could be different, it can be positive or negative. Dobkin and Pace (2006) emphasizes that perception is a selection, organization and interpretation of sensory data. Further, Kreitner and Kinicki (1992: 126) add that perception will lead to the change of attitude, motivation and behaviour.

2.2. *Conceptual Framework*

The focus of this research deals with teacher's written feedback in descriptive text writing and students' perception. A descriptive text in this research is a kind of text that describes particular things, animals, persons, or others, for instance: our pets or a person we know well. It differs from Report which describes things, animals, persons, or others in general. The social function of descriptive text is to describe a particular person, place, or thing. (Gerot & Wignel, 1995). Based on the 2013 Curriculum, this research used tourism objects as the topic of descriptive texts for grade ten at senior high schools.

Students' perspectives in this research focus their comments on teacher feedback, through questionnaire and interview. Surveys on students' feedback preferences

whether students like to receive written feedback in combination with other sources, including conferences are also the main concern. This includes their comments on receiving indirect feedback on errors, giving them clues rather than corrections since they recognize that it encourages them to be more active in their use of feedback (Hyland & Hyland, 2006). Students' perceptions toward the lesson might influence their learning as well as their habits. If students' perception toward the lesson is good or the students like it, it is easier for them to learn and achieve the goal in learning process. So, positive perceptions can motivate and stimulate the students to learn new things. It is the teacher's duty to provide methods or technique which gain positive perceptions from the students.

2.3. *Review of previous studies on feedback in ELT*

There are some previous researchers working on teacher's feedback. Examples include Ermawati (2012) who notes that the teacher's feedback plays an important role in teaching and learning process. Another research conducted by Razali and Jupri (2014) indicates that students have high preference for written feedback especially in suggestions while suggestions commonly appears in term of content feedback..

In fact, the use of written feedback optimally helps students in their teaching and learning process especially in their writing development. It is shown by the students' attitudes toward the written feedback given in both research are positive. However, the above researchers only focus on so many types of feedback as the research object and they do not measure the specific feedback which affect the students' writing. Hopefully, by specifying the object of the research in conducting research on written feedback only as proposed by Hyland & Hyland (2006) and

Ferris (2002), it might provide accurate information dealing with the use of feedback in teaching and learning process, especially in writing skill.

3. The Study
3.1. Research Context

This research was conducted in the context of EFL (English as a foreign language) rather than EAL (English as an additional language). English as the TL (target language) in this research was used as a subject at the SMAN Ambulu senior high school. In other words, it was not used as a means of daily communication at the school.

3.2.   Reseach Design

The research design was descriptive qualitative method. Mc Millan (1992:144) states that descriptive study simply describes phenomenon, and the description commonly find in a form of statistics. This research used qualitative method because of its relation with the objectives of the research which were to provide detailed types of written feedback and the students' perceptions toward the written feedback in senior high school.

3.3.   Research Participants

 Analyzing the teacher's written feedback and the students' perceptions toward the written feedback given was the main focus on this research. Therefore the participants of the research was the English teacher together with all the total number of 36 students in the X MIPA 4.

3.4. Research data and analysis

The data in this research were collected by documentation, interview and questionnaire. In this research, the data from documentation was gained from the result of the product on writing descriptive text. After marking and providing

feedback to the students' descriptive text writing, the drafts were copied and analyzed to identify the types of feedback given by the teacher in revising the students' descriptive text writing. The written feedback was then classified based on the types of feedback proposes by expert which written in theoretical review like content feedback, form feedback, coded feedback, non-coded feedback or marginal feedback.

The amount of each feedback then counted in order to find the percentage. From the percentage of each feedback, the researcher knew what type of written feedback was given by the teacher most. In this research the researcher used questionnaire as well. The usage of questionnaire deals with the information about students' perceptions toward the written feedback given by the teacher especially on students' descriptive text writing.

Interview in this research was free guided interview with 13 questions as the interview guide. The interview was done twice: before and after the findings. Interviewing the English teacher before the finding was intended to find certain information dealing with the usage of written feedback in the teaching and learning process of descriptive text writing, while interview after the finding was aimed to cross check the research results and the teacher's view dealing with the feedback she has given to the students.

The data about student's writing compositions were coded and classified the written feedback existed in the texts into different categories of written feedback based on Hyland and Hyland's (2001) and Ferries' (2001) theories. This acts as a model to facilitate the coding process in this study. The total number of written feedback given counted, and the number of each feedback in the different categories was

presented in form of percentage. The types of the teacher's written feedback were calculated by descriptive statistics. The analysed data was classified into three subtopics based on the research questions. The subtopics were what types of written feedback used in descriptive text writing and the second what was the most written feedback used by the teacher and how the students perceptions toward the written feedback given by the teacher in their descriptive text writing.

4. Research results and Discussion

4.1. Research results

The research started form 12th September 2017 by following and observing the English teacher while teaching descriptive text in the class. At the end of the lesson, the writing results were collected, and the teacher gave written feedback to the students' mistakes and errors in content or structure on their descriptive text productions.

The results of content feedback given by the teacher on overall students' writing results counted as 31 times from the total 286 times of written feedback given to the students. It means that the percentage of content feedback was 10, 8 %. This content feedback usually point out the students' weaknesses in composing a paragraph. Direct feedback provides the correct linguistic form or structure based on the linguistic error (Ferris, 2003). It shows the students what is actually wrong and how it should be written in the correct form. Based on the results of this research, direct feedback on the surface/form of the text appeared 160 times from the total 286 written feedback existed. The percentage of the direct feedback was 55, 9 % which means that the frequency of the teacher in giving direct feedback was quite massive compared to the others feedback. This feedback mostly appeared to revise students' text dealing with the use of tenses, the word order, the use of

articles, mechanics and preposition, the usage of punctuation like comas, dots, capitalization and so forth.

The results of this research showed that the teacher intensively gave direct feedback on the students' texts. She also provided coded feedback more often rather than content feedback, non-coded feedback and marginal feedback. The frequency of coded feedback given by the teacher on the students' descriptive text writing was overall counted as 41 times or 14, 3 %. This means that coded feedback was the second written feedback mostly intense given by the teacher after the direct feedback on the form or surface of the text. The teacher's part was quite simple since she did not specify the mistakes types of the current form (Ellis, 2008:100). Based on the research calculation on the teacher's non-coded feedback, it was found that the frequency of this feedback appeared in the students' text counted as 34 or 11, 8 % from the total feedback given by the teacher. In addition, the English teacher in this school used several marks to locate the students' mistakes such as circle, cross and underline on a certain word.

The last sub-categories from indirect feedback is marginal feedback. This kind of feedback signals the number of mistakes per line by writing lines in the margin without giving the specific clues about the mistakes. So, the students' parts are discovering and correcting the mistakes. It is quite simple feedback because the teacher only marked the sentences and sometimes wrote simple comment or marks on students' works. The marginal feedback from all written feedback given only counted as 20 times or 6, 9 % from total feedback. This data showed that marginal feedback was the lowest frequent feedback given by the English teacher.

From the total number of the 36 students in the X MIPA 4, it was known that the total score of the questionnaire form the calculation of the formula were 1176. The questionnaire was counted to determine the students' perceptions toward the written feedback on the students' descriptive text writing as can be seen in the following table.

Table: The Classification of the Students' Perceptions

Score Level	Students' Questionnaire score	Category
360 s/d 630		strongly negative
> 630 up to < 900		negative
> 900 up to < 1170		positive
> 1170	1176	strongly positive

(Adopted from Atmodjo, 2006:41)

The above table showed that the students' questionnaire score was higher than 1170 . This means that the students' perceptions toward the teacher's written feedback on their descriptive text writing was categorized strongly positive or gained students' positive perceptions. This means the written feedback given by the teacher in their descriptive text writing contributed to the students' development of their ability in writing descriptive texts.

4.2. Discussion

The result of the teacher's written feedback showed that there were five types of written feedback: content feedback, direct feedback on the form/surface of the text, coded feedback, non-coded feedback and marginal feedback. It was found that the frequency of content feedback given were 31 times or 10,8 % from the total feedback given. The most frequent written feedback given were direct feedback. This feedback located the students' mistakes and errors and provide them with the

appropriate form. The percentage of direct feedback was 55, 9 % or 160 times from the total written feedback given by the teacher. The second most numerous feedback after direct feedback was coded feedback which counted as 14, 3 %. The frequency of non-coded feedback was 11, 8% or 34 times on overall students' descriptive text writing results. This feedback only appeared 20 times or 6, 9 % from the total written feedback existed.

By looking at the results of the data, the teacher's written feedback portion were not equal in each types. This was because there is no exact pattern in giving the feedback. The written feedback given was based on the students' mistake and need. The students' mistakes were mostly on grammar or structure. Furthermore, direct feedback on the form or surface of the text become the most frequent feedback given among others. It can be concluded that the teacher prefers to help students' finding their mistakes and giving the appropriate form rather than challenges them to find the correct form. Actually there are several disadvantages of this kind of feedback. It only requires minimal processing and effort on the students' part since the teacher already provides students with the appropriate form. It also may not contribute to students' long term learning. It is because the students do not have an opportunity to reflect and correct the mistake by themselves (Ellis, 2008; 99). But, as the teacher stated on the interview process, it is common to provide them with the appropriate form since their level still low. Furthermore, the other types of written feedback also existed. It is indicated that the teacher already use various written feedback in their teaching and learning process.

Beside, this study also investigated the students' perceptions toward the teacher's written feedback. The perceptions dealt with the students' reaction and perception toward the written feedback given by the teacher. Based on the data analysis in the

questionnaire, the students' perceptions toward the teacher's written feedback was positive. It was shown by the calculation of questionnaire score which counted as 1176 in which based on the score level it is categorized as strongly positive (Atmodjo, 2006). It can be concluded that the teacher's written feedback given by the teacher to the students' descriptive text writing gave many contribution to students' development to the students' descriptive text writing ability. Furthermore, since the students' perceptions toward the written feedback was positive. It means that the usage of various written feedback in the teaching and learning process, especially in descriptive text writing, is highly recommended for other teachers who do not use this method yet.

5. Conclusion

Based on the research results and data analysis that has been discussed and interpreted in the previous chapter, it can be concluded that the English teacher used various types of written feedback in her teaching and learning process. The written feedback consisted of content feedback, direct feedback on surface or form of the text, coded feedback, non-coded feedback and marginal feedback. The direct feedback was the most frequent written feedback given by the teacher which counted as 55, 9 % of all the total feedback, and the less frequent written feedback was marginal feedback with only 6,9 % from the total 286 times feedback. In other words, the teacher's direct feedback was strongly positive toward the students' performance.

Therefore, the teacher should consider the students' need and the level as well. In addition, the results of questionnaire showed positive perceptions from the students. It means the usage of various written feedback in the teaching and learning process of writing especially descriptive text writing is highly recommended to use by those

who have not implemented this method yet since it helps students' develop their writing ability.

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