TEACHER'S FEEDBACK ON STUDENTS' RECOUNT TEXT COMPOSITIONS

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Abstrak

Balikan akan lebih bermanfaat dan efektif apabila diberikan pada level yang sesuai karena dapat membantu siswa untuk memahami; berpartisipasi; atau mengembangkan strategi yang efektif untuk memproses informasi yang akan dipelajari (Hattie & Timperley, 2007). Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mendeskripsikan macam-macam tipe feedback yang diperoleh siswa pada tulisan teks *recount* mereka dan untuk mencari informasi lebih jauh berkenaan dengan respon siswa terhadap feedback dari guru. Penelitian ini merupakan sebuah penelitian deskriptif kualitatif. Subjek dalam penelitian ini mencakup 12 siswa dari kelas VIII-6 SMP Al-Falah Deltasari. Penelitian ini menggunakan dua instrumen untuk mengumpulkan data yaitu dokumentasi (tulisan siswa) dan wawancara. Dokumentasi atau tulisan siswa digunakan untuk meneliti dan mendeskripsikan macam-macam tipe feedback yang siswa peroleh pada tulisan teks *recount* mereka. Sedangkan wawancara diadakan untuk mengetahui respons siswa berdasarkan cara pandang dan pendapat mereka terhadap feedback dari guru. Dari penelitian ini dapat diketahui bahwa hampir semua siswa, untuk balikan dalam bentuk koreksian, memperoleh *direct feedback* yang diikuti dengan *focused* dan *unfocused feedback* pada tulisan mereka. Selanjutnya, untuk balikan dalam bentuk komentar, hampir semua siswa memperoleh komentar yang berisi masukan secara umum dan pujian atas tulisan dan usaha mereka dalam mengarang sebuah teks *recount* lengkap dengan tepat waktu. Dengan demikian dapat disimpulkan bahwa guru tersebut tidak membedakan tipe balikan dalam bentuk koreksian maupun komentar terhadap tulisan siswa dengan keahlian Bahasa Inggris yang berbeda. Akan tetapi tipe-tipe balikan dalam bentuk koreksian dan komentar tidak dapat meningkatkan kemampuan siswa dalam mengoreksi kesalahan mereka sendiri. Hal ini dikarenakan guru sudah menyedikan jawaban yang benar dari kesalahan mereka dan balikan dari guru tidak dapat mengungkap kelemahan siswa pada konten secara spesifik.

Kata Kunci: balikan dari guru, strategi memberikan feedback, respon siswa, teks *recount*, dan karangan.

Abstract

Feedback will be more beneficial and effective if the feedback is directed at the right level since it can assist students to comprehend, engage, or develop effective strategies to process the information intended to be learned (Hattie & Timperley, 2007). This study focused on its goal to describe the types of feedback that students receive on their recount text compositions and to seek further information dealing with the students' responses toward the teacher feedback which is given to their recount text compositions. This study was qualitative descriptive research which had twelve students of VIII-6 of SMP Al-Falah Deltasari as the participants. This study also employed two instruments to collect the data namely documents (students' writing) and interview. The students' writing were used to investigate and describe the types of feedback that were received by students on their recount text composition. Then, the interviews were conducted with the students to expose their responses concerning to their perspectives and opinions toward the teacher feedback. The result showed that the teacher did only provide corrective feedback but also commentary on the students' writing. For the corrective feedback, the students mostly received direct corrective feedback with focused and unfocused feedback on her first writing. Moreover, for the teacher commentaries, most of students received commentaries that contained of the teacher's general advice and complementary about the students' writing and efforts in composing a complete recount text on time. From this, it could be inferred that the teacher did not differentiate her written corrective feedback and commentary at students with different English level proficiency's writing and the types of corrective feedback that were received by the students did not lead them to improve their self-correcting abilities. It was due to the facts that the teacher gave the correct form of their errors and it did not cover students' weaknesses on the content specifically. In spite of all those things, all the students still had positive point of views on the teacher feedback in written form.

Keywords: Teacher's Feedback, Strategies of Providing Feedback, Students' Responses, Recount Text, and Compositions

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INTRODUCTION

Writing which is known as one of productive skills in language learning has become an essential tool for people in today's global community (Weigle, 2002). This is because the ability to write effectively allows individuals from different cultures and background to communicate with others who are actually separated by both time and space distances (Chandler, 2003). The term of communication here means indirect communication which allows people to be able to communicate without meet directly or face to face. Therefore, it requires clearer and more comprehensive message. This is supported by Harmer (2001) who states that, in academic settings, students should also be operating towards the communicative end of the communication continuum when they are working in their language production. In this point, it can be seen that writing is a demanding skill that students must master because it helps them to interact indirectly with society not only in the academic settings but also in the future job settings.

In order for communication to be successful, students have to structure their discourse in such a way that it will be understood by the readers (Harmer, 2001). The discourse has to be cohesive and coherent because cohesive writing makes the sentences link together since it concentrates on the various linguistic ways of connecting ideas across phrases and sentences. Meanwhile, coherent writing makes the readers can follow the sequence of ideas and points easily. Therefore, the students have to make their words, sentences, and paragraphs link together so that their writing will be meaningful or communicative. To do that, obviously, students have to master the lexical and grammatical features of English. Conversely, in actual fact, Chen (2002) found that most of EFL students were unable to use words and grammar properly, short of vocabulary, and they tended to think in their L1 first. As the consequence, the students mostly failed to write the writing task communicatively or in a good sequence and grammar. To overcome those problems, the attempts to improve students' writing have been developed by the education practitioners for a long time and one of the strategies that not only can support the students' writing development but also can help them to meet the goal of writing is by providing feedback.

Feedback itself can be defined as a response that is given by another person such as by a teacher or peer to someone's performance in oral or written form. However, Hyland and Hyland (2006b) claim that teacher written feedback still plays a central role in most ESL and EFL writing classes. Additionally, if it is in an actual classroom, Purnawarman (2011) affirms that the primary feedback is provided by a teacher. The reason that supported his claim is because the teacher feedback has the greatest effect on students' learning and achievement. This is due to the fact that a teacher is the major in-school influence on the students learning and achievement (Hattie & Timperley, 2007) and most students had high confidence in the teacher's knowledge and skill in English (Srichanyachon, 2012). If the students have confidence in their teacher, they will retain information better since they become more responsive to teacher's suggestion. Those two reasons make the students value the teacher's revision higher than other alternative forms.

Despite the advantages of teacher feedback, there are still questions of what would be the most effective strategy to improve students' writing skill and what strategy would fit with the needs of particular students. The available literatures (Brookhart (2008), and Ellis (2009)) show that there are various ways of providing teacher feedback which are commonly practiced by teachers in both L1 and L2 situations. But, Glover and Brown (2006) remark that teachers' preferences for feedback given to the students' performances are depend on the teachers' own experiences and perceptions. From their statements, it can be inferred that there are wide probabilities that different teachers use different strategies on providing feedback as they are influenced by their practices and perspectives of providing feedback. However, the teacher must note that it is really important for them to ensure that feedback is targeted at students at the appropriate level, because some feedback are effective in reducing the discrepancy between current understandings and what is desired, and some are ineffective (Hattie & Timperley, 2007). In this point, each strategy of providing feedback has different effect or outcome at students with different proficiency level. Therefore, the teachers should not provide feedback using one or same strategy to all students in their class.

Furthermore, regardless of what strategies of providing feedback that a teacher will use, Gibbs and Simpson (2004) highlight the importance of feedback being understandable, timely and act upon by the student. In this sense, it can be concluded that students play the most important role in determining whether the teacher feedback were effective and beneficial or not. It is supported by Hyland and Hyland (2006b) who assert that the students can be and should be active and proactive agents in the feedback process. The active agents here mean that the students are the one who construct the terms and conditions of their own learning. Thus, students' reactions, attitudes, or responses toward teacher feedback are definitely crucial matters (Lee, 2008). Moreover, since without understanding how students feel about and respond to teacher feedback, teachers may run the risk of continually using strategies that are having an effect

which is opposite to the one that is intended or wanted by the teachers.

At last but not least, in regard to the fact that different teachers use different strategies on providing feedback; each strategy of providing feedback has different effect at each student with different proficiency level; and students' responses toward the feedback is important, the researcher interested to conduct a study that is intended to analysed the types of teacher feedback that students in SMP Al-Falah Deltasari receive on their recount text composition and seek further information dealing with the students' responses toward it. Furthermore, by knowing his/her students' responses toward the feedback given whether it is positive or negative, the teacher will be more careful on choosing the types of feedback that would fit with the needs of particular students in the next writing composition task so that the feedback will be much more useful for each student.

1. What kinds of teacher feedback that SMP Al-Falah Deltasati students receive on their recount text composition?
2. How are the students' responses toward the teacher feedback?

RESEARCH METHOD

This present research was intended to investigate and describe the types of feedback that were received by students in SMP Al-Falah Deltasari on their recount text composition and to seek further information dealing with the students' responses toward the teacher feedback. Thus, this research employed a descriptive research which used qualitative design. As Richards (2003) remarked, in qualitative inquiry, a researcher needs to go deeper, to pursue understanding in all its complex, elusive and shifting forms; and to achieve this, the researcher needed to establish a relationship with people that enabled them to share in their perception of the world. In this case were the students' perceptions of or responses toward the teacher feedback they got on their writing.

Moreover, the researcher chose SMP Al-Falah Deltasari as the place to conduct this present research considering that one of the English teachers has been implemented feedback on her students' written works. The subjects of this study were twelve students of VIII-6 class. The class was chosen based on the teacher's suggestion that this class was most conducive and active in finishing their task. It consisted of 29 female students and they were fairly homogenous according to their mother tongue, language proficiency, and age. According to Ary et al. (2010), qualitative study more typically used non-random or purposive selection techniques based on particular criteria in order to gain the data that were needed. Thus for the interview, this study would only employed 12 students as the sample. These 12 students represented various level of students' English proficiency. They were four students with excellent English proficiency, four students with average English proficiency, and four students with poor English proficiency. The twelve students were classified according to their mid and final tests' scores on semester one. By categorizing the students into three proficient levels, the researcher could gain more information referring to the types of teacher feedback that were received by 12 students at different English proficiency and their responses toward the teacher's feedback.

As already mentioned before that the aim of the first research question was to investigate and describe the types of feedback that students received in their writing. The data were all feedback given by the teacher to students' writing. In order to gain the data, the researcher would collect the sources of the data that were the students' writing. Meanwhile, the aim of the second research question was to investigate and describe the students' responses toward feedback they received. The data were in form of transcription of interview which were covered the students' opinions, reactions, and ideas related to the teacher feedback through interview. The data were collected from the students as the source of the data. The second data were taken from the interview session. The 12 questions on the interview prompt were written and asked in the subjects' first language that is Bahasa Indonesia. It was intended to obtain the real data, emotions, and best understanding from the subjects.

The data in this study were analysed qualitatively. According to Ary et al. (2010), there were three stages in analysing the data collected in qualitative inquiry $-$ (1) familiarizing and organising, (2) coding and reducing, and (3) interpreting and representing.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This present research was intended to investigate and describe the types of feedback that were received by SMP Al-Falah Deltasari students on their recount text composition and to seek further information dealing with the students' responses toward the teacher feedback. To answer those two research questions, the researcher analyzed two forms of data. Those were students' writing and transcriptions of interview. The students' writing were used to investigate and describe the types of feedback that were received by students. Then, the interview transcriptions were used to expose the students' responses concerning to their perspectives and opinions toward the teacher feedback.

The Analysis of Corrective Feedback Types on Students' Recount Text Compositions

For the types of teacher feedback that twelve students received on their recount text compositions, it was found that the teacher gave written feedback in corrective feedback and commentary forms. There were three out of six types of corrective feedback which were proposed by Ellis (2009). Those were direct with focused feedback, direct with unfocused feedback, and indirect feedback. The teacher took a number of different forms on providing the feedback. In direct corrective feedback, the teacher provided the feedback by circling, underlining, and crossing out an unnecessary word, phrase, or morpheme; inserting a missing word or morpheme; and providing the correct form above or below the erroneous form. Meanwhile, in indirect feedback, the teacher just indicated the place where a perceived error occurred by underlining and circling the errors but no correction was made.

By examining all the twelve students' writing, it was found that the teacher preferred providing direct with unfocused feedback and focused feedback to providing indirect feedback. According to Ellis (2009), by giving such direct feedback, it was hoped that the students would notice every type of the pointed errors and would understand what the right forms of it. This was because direct feedback provided students with explicit guidance about how to correct their errors and this was clearly desirable if students did not know what the correct form was (i.e. are not capable of self-correcting the error). Then, in unfocused feedback, teacher corrected all errors that students made. So, normally, there was a wide range of errors that were pointed by teacher in the students' writing. Additionally, for students, it was hoped that they would notice every type of the errors and would understand what the right forms of it.

In fact, it was found in this study that such direct and unfocused feedback did not give any impact on students' writing development especially on students with poor English proficiency. It could be seen by comparing the students' first writing to their revisions. Most of the students who received such direct feedback and unfocused feedback were not capable to correct another error that did not point out by the teacher or at least the same types of errors that already pointed out by the teacher on their writing. It seemed that the students just simply copied the correct forms which were already given by the teacher without any effort trying to understand their errors. Indeed, just giving this kind of feedback was very ineffective in improving the students' self-correcting abilities.

It was in line with William (2003) who stated that when direct corrective feedback was given, students for the most part simply copied the corrections into their final copies and they did not record nor study the mistakes noted in the feedback. Shute (2008) added that feedback could inhibit learning if it encourages mindlessness, as when the answers were made available before students began their memory search, or if the feedback did not match students' cognitive needs (e.g. too easy, too complex, too vague). Thus, direct feedback might not contribute to long term learning since it required minimal processing on the part of the learner. But, those feedback had different effect on students' with high English proficiency. They students could correct some errors or mistakes that were not pointed by the teacher. This finding supported Hattie and Timperley's (2007) argument which said that each strategy of providing feedback had different effect or outcome at students with different proficiency level.

Moreover, there were only two students who got indirect feedback. Those were S7 and S9. By looking at their revision, S7 could correct four out five indirect feedback and S9 only could correct five out of six indirect feedback that the teacher gave on their first writing. Indeed, those two students only failed in correcting one error which was indicated using indirect feedback. The misunderstanding that occurred between the teacher and the students over the meaning of a circled punctuation and crossed word might be the factor why they could not make it right. To lessen student confusion, William (2003) suggested that the teacher should consistently used a standard set of symbols to indicate place and type of error and train students in what kinds of corrections to make based on each symbol. In other words, teacher should familiarize students with the system so they will not be surprised when new symbol occur.

Then, it was also found that the teacher did give any corrective feedback on three students' writing (S1, S4, and S10). It was probably because S1 and S4 could not write a complete recount text and S10 student only committed three errors. S1 and S4 only could write until the orientation part of recount text and since S10 did not commit serious grammatical errors on her writing, it probably did not catch the teacher's attention. To give response toward their writing, the teacher only provided commentary in the end of the students' writing.

The Analysis of Commentary Types on Students' Recount Text Compositions

For the commentary, the teacher used six out of eight types of commentaries which were proposed by Ferris (2007) namely direction in statement form, direction in imperative form, information in statement form, positive comment in statement or exclamation form, and grammar in statement form. In the practice, the teacher had already differentiated the types of her commentaries to each

proficient level of the subject in this study. Firstly, the teacher commentaries on four students with poor English proficiency were long and located in the end of students' writing. It did not only diagnosed students' weaknesses but also presented some suggestions for how the student could improve the content and writing. However, only two students (S1 and S4) who revised their writing based on the teacher's commentary they perceived on their writing since it was related to their contents.

Secondly, the teacher's commentaries on four students with average English proficiency were average and located in the end of students' writing. All the commentaries were begun with teacher's compliments for the four students since they could compose a complete recount text. However, surprisingly, no one of the four students who revised their writing based on the commentary they perceived on their writing. It probably caused by the teacher's commentary itself in which it did not correct any specific error or too general.

Thirdly, the teacher tended to give short commentaries but full of compliments to students with high English proficiency. Thus, the students obviously did not make any changes based on teacher commentary since it was not such feedback that related either to grammar or content. This kind of commentaries has beneficial effects on students' self-esteem, motivation, and performance. Indeed, even though the teacher already varied her commentary on students' writing, the teacher's commentary still did not lead the students to do revision. This was completely caused by its content. The teacher merely gave commentary that did not point out specific error or content (too general).

Glover and Brown (2006) affirmed that some students were not acted upon the feedback because it lacked relevance to future assignments. In this point, teacher feedback did not only have to be able to close the gap between the desired goal and present state, but also provide the information needed to close the gap with sufficient explanation to enable students to use the information (feed forward) because the lack of sufficient explanation of feedback does not help the learner to take action to close that gap. Then, in return, Hattie and Timperley (2007) proposed a model of feedback as a framework to understand why particular kinds of feedback promoted learning effectively and why some others do not. They believed that if feedback is directed at the right level, it can assist students to comprehend, engage, or develop effective strategies to process the information intended to be learned. To be effective, feedback needs to be clear, purposeful, meaningful, and compatible with students' prior knowledge and to provide logical connections. It also needs to prompt active information processing on the part of learners, have low task complexity, relate to specific and clear goals, and provide little threat to the person at the self level. Thus, the teacher was supposed to give feedback that was appropriate with the task level and each of the student's cognitive level since there is no magic bullet that will be just the right thing for all students, all the time (Bookhart, 2010).

That theory contradicted with the teacher feedback that were found in this study. The teacher did not differentiate the types of feedback on each group of students with different cognitive level and the feedback in this study was simply all about the mechanics of writing. This obviously did not match with the purpose of writing a text in academic setting, which was to make a communicative writing by structuring their discourse in such a way that it will be understood by the readers. It was because the meanings of corrective feedback and commentaries in this study seemed to be that the only thing students need to do was to fix those errors. However, the teacher had already fixed the errors for them. Thus, all the things that students had to do were recopied it.

Students' Responses Toward Teachers' Feedback

The last issue was about student responses toward the teacher feedback they had received on their writing. The results of interviews showed that the students responded to the ten questions in interview variously. But, irrespective of students' English proficiency levels, almost all the twelve students responded the feedback given to their recount text composition positively. They did not feel frustrated and get difficulties when the teacher gave such written feedback on her recount text composition and highly respected it. It could be seen from their enthusiasm when the teacher asked them to revise her writing in 20 minutes and, surprisingly, all of the students could revise their writing less than 20 minutes. Moreover, most of the twelve students agreed that it was necessary for the teacher to always give such feedback on their writing task. They also highly appreciated the teacher feedback in written corrective feedback form rather than in commentary form. The students reasoned that it could specifically show them where their wrongdoings are; it helped them to write better instead of demotivating them to write; and they also could reread the teacher feedback when they needed and wanted to recall it someday. Meanwhile, according to them, commentary was not really impactful for them since it did not cover their lacks either on grammar or content specifically.

CONCLUSIONS

Based on the analysis of the result and discussion, three conclusions can be drawn from this study. Firstly, the teacher did not differentiate her written corrective

feedback at students with different English level proficiency's writing and the types of corrective feedback that were received by the students did not lead them to improve their self-correcting abilities. Mostly students received direct feedback. Secondly, the teacher already gave various or different commentaries on her students' writing but it still could not lead the students to revise their writing based on it. It was due to the fact that the teacher's commentaries did not specifically identify the students' weaknesses of composing a recount text. In spite of all those things or thirdly, all the students still had positive point of views on the teacher written feedback. Most of the students preferred receiving corrective feedback to receiving commentaries on their next writing because it could specifically show them where their wrongdoings are.

SUGGESTION

Concerning to the result of the study, the teacher should re-evaluate her written feedback since it was ineffective for the students. It was ineffective because her feedback did not either improve or build the students' abilities in noticing and correcting their own errors. In this case, the teacher is strongly suggested differentiating the types of feedback on each student's next writing. To be noted, the teacher must consider the needs of particular students when providing the written feedback since each feedback has different impact at each student's proficiency level.

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