Written Corrective Feedbacks for English Learners with High and Low Anxiety Levels

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Abstrak

Penelitian menunjukkan bahwa umpan balik memainkan peran penting dalam menulis bahasa kedua siswa, seperti mempengaruhi perkembangan bahasa siswa secara signifikan dan memfasilitasi akuisisi bahasa target. Namun efek umpan balik dapat bervariasi dikarenakan karakteristik siswa, gaya mengajar, kelas, dll. Studi ini mencoba meneliti apakah umpan balik tertulis oleh guru atau rekan sebaya berperan penting dalam meningkatkan kemampuan menulis bahasa kedua siswa dengan kecemasan tinggi dan rendah. Studi ini menggunakan metode eksperimen dengan 63 mahasiswa dari dua kelompok yang diberi dua perlakuan yang berbeda: umpan balik tertulis guru dan rekan sebaya. *Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale* digunakan untuk menentukan tingkat kecemasan siswa. Hasil uji ANOVA menunjukkan signifikansi dan efektivitas kedua jenis umpan balik tersebut. Peningkatan yang paling signifikan terjadi pada mereka yang menerima umpan balik guru dengan tingkat kecemasan tinggi. Namun, hasil penelitian menunjukkan tidak ada interaksi antara kecemasan dan umpan balik siswa yang diterima. Sebagai saran, guru harus mempertimbangkan karakter siswa guna meningkatkan kefektifan umpan balik dan meningkatkan belajar siswa.

Kata kunci: teacher feedback, peer feedback, writing, anxiety

A. Introduction

For many years, the existence of feedback in language courses has been an important issue among teachers and researchers. Teachers find feedback as a good way to describe their appreciation and judgment towards their students' works. For instance, they can use it as a means of assessment that can show the students' progress in learning and the students' strengths and weaknesses. Many studies have also found that feedback has become one of significant factors in successful teaching and learning, such as it is used as a resource to revise the students' work (Treglia, 2008), it can be used as a source to revise (Zhao, 2010), it can promote the students' awareness of their language learning experiences (Barnawi, 2010). it can

positively affect the students' interlanguage development (Lyster & Saito, 2010), and it can also facilitate the target language acquisition (Goo, 2012).

The importance of feedback has also been famous in teaching and learning process around the world, especially teacher feedback which is needed in the students' learning and academic progress (Lee, 2008; Siewert, 2011). Also, teacher feedback, whether it is written or spoken, is seen as a very reliable and valuable resource for the students to revise their works in order to produce the better ones (Morra and Asis, 2009; Ciftci and Kocoglu, 2012). Students who are taught with teacher-centered style of teaching will probably trust and use more the teacher feedback than their peers because they see that the teacher has more knowledge than their peers and believe that whatever comes from the teacher is always right (Zacharias, 2007).

However, it is unknown which feedback type is more effective for the students' L2 development, whether it is teacher feedback or peer feedback. A comparative study conducted in China by Miao, Badger and Zhen (2006) found that the students tend to adopt the teacher feedback than peer feedback. A study by Morra and Asis (2009) showed that teacher feedback produced a great deal of input for the students to make revisions. However, a study by Zacharias (2007) taking place in Indonesia showed that the students perceived the teacher feedback very respectfully since they knew that the teacher is the person who controlled their grades.

B. Literature Review

1. Corrective Feedback

Feedback, referring to written feedback, can be defined as input from a reader to a writer with the effect of providing information such as comments, questions, corrections and suggestions to the writer for revision. The significance of feedback in writing process is that it can be a useful tool to improve the writing quality by reviewing what has been written and editing.

There are many kinds of feedback. In terms of corrective feedback, Lightbown and Spada (2011) categorize feedback into several types. (1) Explicit correction indicates that the correct form is provided directly and explicitly. (2) Recasts, involve reformulation of all or part of someone's utterance, minus the error. (3) Clarification requests, indicates to students either that their utterance has been

misunderstood by the teacher or incorrect in some way or that a repetition or a reformulation is required. (4) Metalinguistic feedback contains comments, information, or questions related to the correctness of the student's utterance, without explicitly providing the correct form. Metalinguistic comments usually indicate that there is an error somewhere. Metalinguistic information generally provides either some grammatical terminology that refers to the error. Metalinguistic questions point to the nature of the error but attempt to elicit the information from the student. (5) Elicitation, uses three steps: eliciting completion of the student's utterance, using questions to elicit correct form and occasionally asking the students to reformulate their utterance. (6) Repetition, refers to the teacher's repetition of the student's erroneous utterance. Although the explanation of each type of feedback uses teacher-student relationship, it does not mean that it is always like this. It can also be applied in student-student relationship.

2. Student Characteristics

As mentioned earlier that student characteristics play an important role in learning. It is commonly assumed that high motivated students are more likely excited in their learning than those who are low motivated. Therefore, they would learn more and progress more than those who are not. A study by Seidel (2006) showed that student characteristics have a strong correlation with how the students experience and perceive their learning environment. With the same instructions and taught by the same teachers, struggling and underestimating students tend to find their leaning environment less supportive than smart and overestimating students. This kind of different perception of learning environment can cause problems in their learning and their achievement in the classroom. Therefore, the teachers should pay attention to the student characteristics and find out the best treatment to help the students get the positive sense in their learning environment.

Motivational characteristics, such as self-efficacy belief, self-regulation and achievement goals, are also important factors in determining the students' achievement in learning (Ergul, 2004). He suggested that self-efficacy beliefs have a strong and positive influence on students' academic achievements. Students with higher self-efficacy belief tend to have higher academic achievement in their learning. Therefore, it is strongly advised to acknowledge the students

characteristics and make use of their self-efficacy beliefs to motivate them to learn more.

3. Foreign Language Anxiety

Anxiety is also a part of student characteristics which also influence the student learning and achievement. Especially, as this research took place in EFL setting, foreign language anxiety is a great deal of matter. Foreign language anxiety as Gardner & MacIntyre (1993) discussed is an affective factor in foreign language learning and discussed alongside other individual learner differences. It can affect the communication strategy in employing the language the students learn in the classroom (Howitz, Howitz & Cope, 1986). The higher anxiety the students have, the more reluctant they show their best performance in using their target language. It can also affect the fluency, accuracy and amount of written and spoken language the students produce. Moreover, it can affect the learning evaluation. Studies across the world suggest that students tend to be more anxious when they do language tests.

In terms of performance anxiety in a language classroom, Howitz, Howitz & Cope (1986) conveys there are three kinds of it: 1) communication apprehension, 2) test anxiety, and 3) fear of negative evaluation. Communication apprehension is feeling of shy and anxious when communicating with others especially using foreign language or second language (L2). For instance, it frequently happens in student-teacher interaction in foreign language classroom when teacher tends to use foreign language to communicate with the students to motivate the students to use foreign language more. It also happens when the student is communicating in a group and communicating with the native speakers of target language. And since performance evaluation is an ongoing process in language learning, students often face test anxiety which mostly stems on test failure. Fear of negative evaluation is defined as "apprehension about others' evaluations, avoidance of evaluative situations and the expectations that others would evaluate oneself negatively". Although it is similar with test anxiety but it has broader scope of situation. While test anxiety is limited to test-taking situation, fear of negative evaluation takes place in any social situation such as in an interview.

However, not all studies have confirmed that learning anxiety brings negative influences to a learning process. According to Lightbown & Spada (2011) argued

that learning anxiety can also bring positive effect to the learners and even facilitate learning. For example, when a student is feeling anxious before an oral presentation, he might get motivated and focused to succeed on it. Another example is that when the exam is coming, some students may get really excited in preparing themselves for the exam. They feel really enjoy learning and studying as a preparation before the exam. And when they are doing the exam, they will do it seriously and give their best in achieving perfect scores.

Identifying students with high or low anxiety is intriguing since teachers will be able to adjust their instruction in the classroom to make their students feel comfortable in learning L2. Based on Howitz and Young (1991) as cited by Ohata (2005), there are two approaches in looking at learning anxiety. The first approach looks at learning anxiety as a transfer from other general types of anxiety such as test anxiety in general or communication unwillingness which a leaner is basically not into communicating with other people. The second approach looks at learning anxiety as a response to something unique to language learning experience which the feeling of worry and negative emotional reaction arouse when learning a second language.

Many studies have managed to make tools to identify student's anxiety level. One of them is developed by Howitz, Howitz and Cope (1986) namely Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS). It is a 33-item questionnaire given to the students who are learning L2 or foreign languages. The students are to read each statement and give response whether they strongly agree, agree, disagree, or strongly disagree. Each option has certain score. The overall scores later will be analyzed statistically to show whether the students have high or low level of anxiety.

4. Written Feedback in Teaching Writing

It has been stated in previous sections that feedback is beneficial for students to make progress in their L2 learning and also for teachers who can monitor their students' L2 development. The question now is what kind of benefits the students get from feedback and the effects to students' written works in particular.

Studies have shown that feedback mostly addresses errors in the students' written work which later get revised through the process of revision. A study by Armhein and Nassaji (2010) reported that written feedback on the students' written

woks which mostly address form-focused (also known as surface structure) errors such as grammar, vocabulary, punctuation and spelling is useful. Similarly, studies by Ferris (1997) and Morra and Asis (2009) found that mostly the feedback given by the teacher covers the micro aspect (also known as form-focused or surface structure) of the students' written works such as grammar, mechanic and vocabulary. But still there is an improvement made by the students after receiving the feedback. After doing the revision, both students and teacher felt that their works was satisfying and improved in terms of the quality.

However, some studies have also found that written feedback on the students' written work is not always about errors. Ferris (1997) reported that beside pointing out errors, written feedback on the students' written works were also consisted of questions asking the students to provide further information, requests, and comments giving information to the students. Also, meaning-level of the text is addressed by written feedback and the students made revisions based on the feedback they received from their peers and teacher to make their works better (Paulus, 1999). In a study by Treglia (2008) it is found that the feedback given by the teacher is used as a resource to revise the students' work which includes offering suggestions or giving choices.

5. Implementation of Peer Feedback

As mentioned before, the fact that feedback is not a common practice in Indonesian classroom becomes a challenge for this research to conduct. Teacher feedback may be easy to implement in English classroom since the teacher has its authority and knows what part of the students' L2 written works should be concerned and paid attention to. But peer feedback is something else. That is why this section introduces and discusses how to make the students able to give feedback to their peers. The teacher should give the students opportunities to practice how to give feedback to their peers.

The procedure of training the students to be able to give feedback for their peers acccording to Rollinson (2005) can start with giving pre-training activities. The pre-training includes some activities which lead to the application of feedback. The first step is propaganda phase in which the teacher introduces the importance and benefits of feedback in general. It gives the students understanding and initial

perspective about feedback. The teacher can also compare teacher versus peer feedback and explains why one kind of feedback can be more suitable than the other one and how it can be like that. And as a closing step, the teacher gives real samples of peer feedback and demonstrates how to give the feedback. The next step is class discussion in which the teacher and the students discuss how to respond the feedback received from their peers. The teacher can also lead the discussion to the importance of being collaborator than corrector when the students give feedback to their peers.

The next step in pre-training activities of peer feedback is non-threatening practice in which the teacher discusses and models adequate and inadequate comments by showing samples of authentic comments on a paragraph and then analyzing and discussing possible improvements or suggestions with the students. After the students understand the principles of giving the peer feedback, the teacher makes small group work in which the students are grouped and given a task to collaborate and write a short text and then respond by giving feedback to other group's text. This activity is followed with self-evaluation and discussion of their experience in giving comments. The last step is a discussion on effective feedback in which the teacher and the students brainstorm and discuss how to make the feedback is effective for the revision. If this activity works and the students are able to give feedback appropriately, the students will be able to offer valuable constructive critiques to each other and lighten the load of the teacher (Chappuis, 2009) and finally teacher can make the students become independent learners by sharing the responsibility.

What is new on this current study compared to other related studies is that it presents the consideration of students' characteristics influencing the effect of feedback on the improvement of the students' skills. A study by Seidel (2006) showed that student characteristics have a strong correlation with how the students experience and perceive their learning environment. Motivational characteristics, such as self-efficacy belief, self-regulation and achievement goals, are also important factors in determining the students' achievement in learning (Ergul, 2004). Foreign language anxiety as Gardner & MacIntyre (1993) discussed is an affective factor in foreign language learning and discussed alongside other

individual learner differences. It can affect the communication strategy in employing the language the students learn in the classroom in terms of communication apprehension, test anxiety, and fear of negative evaluation (Howitz, Howitz & Cope, 1986). However, not all studies have confirmed that learning anxiety brings negative influences to a learning process. According to Lightbown & Spada (2011) argued that learning anxiety can also bring positive effect to the learners and even facilitate learning. That is why this research is important to answer the question of which feedback is more effective to be given to certain level of student anxiety and to examine how anxiety influences the students processing the feedback on their essays.

This current research filled important needs of both theoretical and practical knowledge on feedback in Indonesian context by achieving the followed objectives. First, it tried to find out the effect of written teacher feedback and peer feedback on English writing skill for students with high and low anxiety level. The results described then the effect of teacher written feedback compared to peer written feedback on the students' English writing skill. And finally, it described how anxiety level affects the teacher and peer written feedback the students get on their English writing skill.

Based on the background and the objectives described above, the research questions were formulated as follows:

a. How significant is the effect of written teacher feedback on English writing skill for students with high and low anxiety level?

b. How significant is the effect of written peer feedback on English writing skill for students with high and low anxiety level?

c. Which is more effective: teacher feedback or peer feedback in improving the students' English writing skills?

d. How does anxiety level affect the teacher and peer written feedback the students get on their English writing skill?

C. Methods

This research used quantitative research approach. Factorial design was applied in this experiment since there were two independent variables (one treatment

variable and one moderator variable) observed in the experiment (Tuckman, 1978) proposed a model of factorial design with the explanation how each effect of variables involved is compared to another.

The subjects of this research were 63 college students of University of Pekalongan. These students were all in the major of English Language Education at the Faculty of Teacher Training and Education. The research was carried out when they were enrolled in Paragraph-based Writing class. They were from 2 classes of two experiment groups, A and B. The students were in the same level, in the second semester and taught by the same lecturer.

This research used two kinds of instrument to collect the data, the students' texts (pretest and posttest) and questionnaires by Howitz, Howitz and Cope (1986) named Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS). This Likert questionnaire has 33 questions with 5 responses: strongly agree (SA), agree (A), neither agree nor disagree (N), disagree (D), and strongly disagree (SD). This questionnaire categorizes the students into high and low anxiety level. In analyzing the pretest and posttest scores, the lecturer used the writing assessment rubric in assessing the students' texts. The scores of pretest and posttest were then taken into a calculation to see the significance using ANOVA test. In analyzing the FLCAS questionnaire, each response of 33 items of questionnaire from every student in both classes was summarized. It values of 5 to 1 for each question. Based on the authors, questions number 2, 5, 8, 11, 14, 18, 22, 28, and 32 are valued reversely with values of 1 to 5. The total score of each student is then divided by the number of items. To determine whether a student has a high or low level of anxiety is by the means of scores of the students. If a student gets a score lower than 3.00, it means the student has a low level of anxiety (Howitz, Howitz and Cope, 1986),

D. Results and Discussion

After being statistically calculated, it is found that each variable (feedback and anxiety level) has valid result as shown in the table below.

Tests of Between-Subjects Effects

Dependent Variable:Gain Score

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Intercept	4.204	1	4.204	121.095	.053
Feedback	.001	1	.001	.041	.035
Anxiety	.036	1	.036	1.024	.031
Feedback * Anxiety	.000	1	.000	.009	.924
Error	2.048	59	.035		
Total	7.384	63			
Corrected Total	2.087	62			

a. R Squared = .018 (Adjusted R Squared = -.031)

Interestingly, the intersection between feedback and anxiety turns out to have a higher than significant value to make it valid. Therefore, there is no intersection between feedback and anxiety. Further and more detailed discussion is explained to address as well as answer the research questions:

a. How significant is the effect of written teacher feedback on English writing skill for students with high and low anxiety level?

Feedback	Anxiety Level	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Teacher Feedback	Low	.0314	.17170	6
	High	.0264	.17508	28
	Total	.0286	.17297	34

As we see from the table above that for teacher feedback affecting the writing skills of the students, the total value is 0.0286 which means it is significant since the value < 0.05. For the details, the effect of teacher feedback on writing skills of the students with low anxiety level, the significant value is 0.3301 and it is significant. Meanwhile, for teacher feedback affecting the writing skills of the students with high anxiety level, the significant value is 0.2802, and using the same parameter, thus it is also significant. Therefore, teacher feedback is effective in improving English writing skill of students with high and low anxiety level.

b. How significant is the effect of peer written feedback on English writing skill for students with high and low anxiety level?

Feedback	Anxiety Level	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Peer Feedback	Low	.0340	.19483	13
	High	.0280	.20294	16
	Total	.0294	.19815	29

Based on the results from table above, for peer written feedback affecting the writing skills of the student, the total number is 0.0294 which means it is significant since it is < alpha value of 0.05. For the details, the effect of peer feedback on writing skills of the students with low anxiety level, the significant value is 0.340. Using the parameter of it is said to be significant if the value < alpha value of 0.05, therefore it is significant. Meanwhile, for peer written feedback affecting the writing skills of the students with high anxiety level, the significant value is 0.0280, and using the same parameter, it is also significant. Therefore, it is claimed that peer written feedback is effective in improving English writing skill of students with high and low anxiety level.

c. Which is more effective: teacher feedback or peer feedback in improving the students' English writing skills?

Feedback	Mean	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval	
			Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Teacher Feedback	.0286	.042	.221	.389
Peer Feedback	.0294	.035	.225	.364

The table above shows the significant value for each treatment, teacher feedback and peer feedback, on the students' writing skills. For the teacher feedback, the mean significant value is 0.0286. Meanwhile, for the peer feedback, the mean significant value shows 0.0294. The difference of the significant values from teacher feedback and peer feedback is 0.055. Using the parameter of it is said to be significant if the value < alpha value of 0.05, the effect of teacher written feedback is more significant compared to peer written feedback. Therefore, teacher written feedback is more effective than peer written feedback in improving English writing skill of students with high and low anxiety level.

d. How does anxiety level affect the teacher and peer written feedback the students get on their English writing skill?

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Feedback * Anxiety	.000	1	.000	.009	.924

The significance value of students' anxiety level sows the value of 0.924 which is they exceed alpha value (0.05). Therefore, it can be said that the anxiety did not significantly affect the teacher and peer written feedback the students received on their English writings. It implies that regardless the students' anxiety level, the feedback given to the students in improving their writing skills is not significant. And it results in the absence of interaction observed, as shown in the following graphic:

Estimated Marginal Means of Gain Score
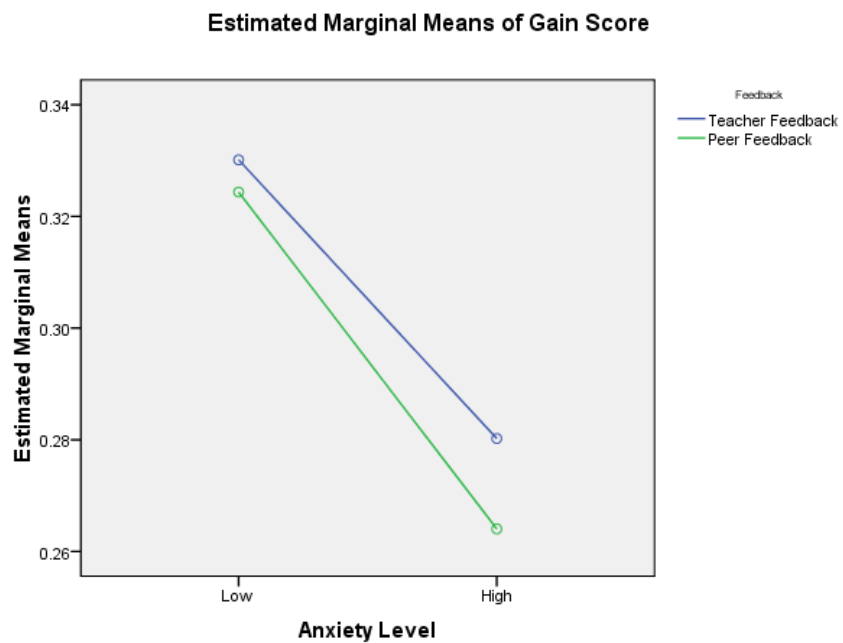
E. Conclusion and Suggestions

Based on the results, it is found that teacher and peer written feedback can improve English writing skill of students with high and low anxiety level. However, based on their different significant values, teacher feedback is more significant in improving the writing skills of the students with high anxiety than peer feedback. It confirms previous studies that students who have high anxiety level feel more comfortable and trusted their teacher feedback in revising their texts. Therefore,

they all employed all feedback given by their teacher as a source to revise their text. The results from this study do not discourage the use of peer feedback in English writing activities. With a careful preparation and opportunities for practice, peer feedback can be valuable resource for writing improvement.

There are some suggestions that can be offered based on the results. Future research might consider having self-feedback as additional variable to the available ones. Students might find it useful and effective in improving their English skills and autonomous learning. Also, it is possible to see a higher number of significance. Having more subjects is also encouraged to make the data more valid and reliable. Giving different types of feedback other than feedback occurring in this research is also a good option in order to know the effectiveness of feedback, spoken feedback for instance. Lastly, selecting a good instrument to observe a particular skill is very important. This research might use a too easy instrument for too competent students. Therefore, the actual competence of the student may not show.

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