

**THE EFFECTIVENESS OF ERROR CORRECTION FEEDBACK  
IN IMPROVING STUDENTS' WRITING SKILL**  
( An Experimental Study at English Department of UIN-Ar-Raniry)

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**ABSTRACT**

Writing is the way of expressing ideas or opinions in written words. Teaching how to write effectively is one of the most important life-long skills educators impart to their students. When teaching writing, educators must be sure to select resources and support materials that not only aid them in teaching how to write, but that will also be the most effective in helping their students learn to write. As the last stage of writing process, revising designed to reexamine and reevaluate the students' error in a piece of writing. In this case, error correction feedback become one of important steps to applied in teaching English Writing in order to improve students' writing proficiency. Therefore, this study attempts to identify the effectiveness of error correction feedback in improving students' writing skill at English Department of UIN Ar-Raniry Banda Aceh. The correction focused on the five aspects of writing; content, organization, grammar, word choice and mechanics. This study employed an experimental design. It is intended to find out any significant difference on the students' writing before and after they are taught by applying error correction feedback. The technique of data analysis is using T-test. Having analyzed the statistical computation, it can be concluded that the difference between the two means is significant. By those facts,  $H_0$  is rejected and  $H_a$  is accepted. Thus, Error Correction Feedback is effective in improving the students' writing ability.

**Keywords:** *Error Correction, Writing Ability.*

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## **INTRODUCTION**

Writing is a process of expressing idea and thought in written language. This skill is very important media in expressing and sharing the ideas, thought, and information to the reader. It is often the most effective way to communicate because by writing the ideas, thoughts and information can be explored, developed, and refined in a way that cannot compare with “doing it in our head”.

However, for some students, it is so complex process, that it commonly becomes the last language skill to be acquired (for native speakers of the language as well as for those learning a foreign/ second language). The students sometimes have troubles in expressing their ideas on a piece of paper. It is not only because they have to try in assessing what they have written objectively by examining about the ideas and evidence in their writing but also they have to consider about the sentences to use and to think out the ways of arranging and combining them before agreeing with its position. It is as stated by Thompsons (2006), “Process of writing is closely tied to the process of thinking”. It means that writing is not an easy or spontaneous activity; it involves of exploring thoughts and ideas by thinking about the information to be collected to use as evidences to put into a piece of paper. Thus, writing requires some conscious mental effort. The piece of writing, either it is a composition or report is never complete; that is, it is always

possible to review and revise, and review and revise again. The students will not produce writing effectively and consistently unless they have a feedback in guiding their writing.

Moreover, error correction feedback is one of steps in writing that help students to produce well-organized written. It is a central aspect in writing that it helps the students to aware about the mistakes they made in composing an essay. Consequently, it is an essential part of writing in helping the students to maximize their potential at different stages of training, raise students’ awareness of their ability to think about what they already written and identify areas for improvement of their writing. Thus, the feedback that is treated to the students’ writing will be effective and help them to improve their writing skill.

As the result, the research focused on error correction feedback toward students’ writing specifically on the five aspects of writing; content, organization, grammar, word choice, and mechanics. In other word, the feedback that was employed to students was aimed to make the students draw on their existing knowledge and expertise them to package and represent their ideas which are then organized into good paragraphs in the right sentences.

Above all, the main targets of this research were to recognize and to find out whether error correction feedback is effective in improving students’ writing and How the third year students of English Department of

UIN Ar-Raniry achievements in learning writing through error correction feedback.

## DISCUSSION

### 1. Error Correccion Feedback in Writing

Error correction feedback can be referred to many names such as peer response, peer review, peer critiquing, and peer editing, depending on what aspects are focused on. In a writing classroom, feedback is providing and making any necessary markings or suggestions as well as receiving the same treatment for students' writing for further improvement. It is a learning strategy in feedback from a reader to a writer in which a teacher evaluates student's work by providing any information about the correctness, criticism, or suggestion. White and Arndt (1991) noted that it is beneficial to students to receive feedback from the teacher in the drafting stage. It offers the students the opportunity to receive feedback on their writing about the strength and the weaknesses of their compositions. What one student cannot correct may be corrected by the teacher. In other words, error correction feedback refers to strengthen the students with the process of sharing and receiving their ideas. Therefore, error correction feedback should be applied for the writing classroom that the students can get any kind of correctness of their writing. Peregoy and Boyle (1997) divided the error correction feedback into two different kinds: editing and revising.

### 1.1 Editing

Editing is the process where a piece of writing have to be revised for its content, and to check it for its accuracy. It includes checking grammar, spelling, punctuation and capitalization. English grammar becomes an important area that cannot be checked for separately. The best way is to concentrate first on verbs (tenses and forms). Meanwhile, editing spelling means that correct the words that do not look right or spelled incorectly. This kind of mistakes happened because of writer's careless or they do writing their second language. It can be checked by using dictionary or ask someone help. Consequently, by doing editing, those grammatical points is frequently reviewed and practiced and finally it produces significant improvement in students' writing. The editing process is an excellent way to reinforce lessons about grammar, spelling and essay format as students are forced to evaluate student's writing for compliance with these standards.

Furthermore, there are two different ways in giving grammatical feedback or corrective feedback: direct feedback and indirect feedback. The direct feedback is the feedback that provides the correct forms of errors and notes of error explanation (Hendrickson, 1984). The indirect feedback can be divided into two kinds: uncoded feedback and coded feedback. "The uncoded feedback is the feedback that indicates errors by underlining or circling them without giving

any correct forms. The coded feedback is also not going to give correct forms to errors but that provides only codes as a clue to errors. Students need to figure out how to correct the errors by themselves” (Penprapa, 2010). In practicing editing, the teachers might permit the students to perform their correction on their peer’s writing by using either direct or indirect feedback. The students can also combine between direct and indirect feedback while correcting the paper. “In this case, students can give the indirect feedback only to the grammatical points that are taught in class. Then they can give the direct feedback to some other grammatical forms that are not taught in class which they know from their own experiences” (Penprapa, 2010). Indeed, to make the students familiar with the feedback practice, they need to be introduced and to trained on how to edit their peers’ writing. The teachers should model the process in the class first by providing checklist as it can direct the students’ attention to the aspects that they need to focus on while giving feedback. Then, the teacher can have students practice giving both direct and indirect corrective feedback to their peer’s writing. Practicing peer feedback activity does not mean that teacher feedback is being substituted. On the contrary, the teachers need to control and to assist students by involving her/himself during the whole process of proofing and the teacher can also decide to intervene by taking the opportunity to comment on the revised version of the draft

to help the students understand each others’ divergent points of view.

Finally, after the teacher finished the whole of feedback process, the teacher might have the student to take the opportunity to show their corrections to the class comparing it with other pairs or groups, and finally, handing it to the teacher. After they are familiar with this practice, they can start doing it by themselves. First, they can work with their own partner when doing editing. Then, teachers can ask them to complete editing in class or at home.

## **1.2 Riving**

Revising means reseeing what the students have written in critical perspective. It is an ongoing process of rethinking the paper: reconsidering the arguments, reviewing the evidence, refining the purpose, reorganizing the presentation. According to the article written by Penpara Charoensuk (2010), there are some important points to summarize related to riving. Revising focuses on the content of writing. In this case, the teachers might have students pay attention to their partners’ paper by reading and providing comments in class or the teacher might allow more time for them to read at home. Moreover, teachers can ask students to read their own paper aloud to their pair or group and get the feedback from the group members, (Calkins 1986). Thus, feedback provided by the students should point out strengths and weaknesses of their partner’s paper as well as

giving suggestions to improve it. Kroll (1991) suggested that giving positive comments should be done first, and after that students can ask questions and add some suggestions to the paper.

As Penprapa (2010) said that to help students in giving feedback to their peers, teachers need to train them first. The whole process of content response should be modeled in class. Teachers can select an anonymous first draft paper for all students to comment on. Students can try to give their comments as individuals, pairs, or by groups. Then they can share their comments to the class. Finally, the teachers will show their own comments to the class.

In order to keep student readers on track while giving feedback to their peers Gebhard (1996) suggested that teachers should provide students guidelines or a short list of questions for giving feedback. Here are questions from Gebhard' peer respond guideline:

1. I think the best part of your paper is. . .
2. You could reorganize your ideas by. . .
3. I think you could change or omit. . .
4. I do not understand. . .
5. You could add. . .
6. You are good at. . .

That is, teachers need to include the peer respond checklist/ guideline as a

classroom response process practice. When the teacher are done revising students' writing on the first draft, they can move on to the second draft to give feedback on a different aspect of the draft.

## **2. The Advantage of Error Correction Feedback**

The benefits of having the students to practice error correction feedback activity can be listed as follow. First of all, it stimulates the students to write more and learn to improve their own writing (Lauren, 2005). It can encourage students to be more aware and carefully when they do writing by avoiding any silly mistakes of their paper to impress their friend since their writing is not only read and evaluated by the teacher, but also their classmate. It also offers the students the opportunity to gain more knowledge and to receive several different comments, suggestions, different points of views, even new vocabulary that finally brings significant improvement of their writing. Indeed, peer feedback provides a broad of knowledge for the students due to their partner might be able to find any kind of errors on their writing such as misplaced commas, misspelled words and inconsistencies idea, tenses mistakes before these kinds of problems are seen by the teacher. Consequently, this practice can help to strengthen their writing, reinforcing a good writing, and giving the students the opportunity to evaluate and edit their writing

to be a stronger piece of paper before their final writing submitted to the teacher.

Furthermore, by practicing error correction feedback, the teacher or students play roles as a writer and a reader as well. The students can gain the sense of audience that they can see more clearly about the mistakes done by their partner and they can analyze and expose the strengths and the weaknesses of their partner's writing critically and objectively. White and Arndt (1991) added that the students need to learn on how to evaluate and to write a response to each other writing due to peer feedback practice contributes to develop their capacity for self-assessment and critical thinking skills. In this case, the students will acquire broader information when they are required to read two or more of their peer's drafts than when they only read, evaluate and check their own paper. That is, during the process, the students unconsciously compare their own work with their peer's and automatically they are capable to distinguish what is right or wrong of their paper that finally lead them to be an autonomous writer. Moreover, Hairston (1999) stated that peer feedback can build a leaning community in the classroom. When the students exchange and share the ideas with their partner by negotiating about the comment given that they are free to agree or disagree with the correction given, a mutual trusted among them is build automatically. Thus, the students can gain many benefits by practicing

this activity as they can learn from each other and they can build a higher level of accountability to submit a well-written product to the teacher. Similarly, the purpose of error correction feedback is to help the students become more critical in analyzing and evaluating their own text. By considering the suggestions, comments and criticism given by the teacher or their peer on what they have written, they find the opportunity to revise and reshape their writing, to be better written. It is believe that the students are exploring their ability to detach themselves from their texts and read it with the reader point of view. Additionally, peer feedback reduces the teacher's feedback workload. It can be an alternative way to teacher correction. By having students read and provide feedback on what their peers have written, the teacher can avoid time consuming to encounter troublesome of various errors made by the students on their writing when the compositions are unorganized well. On the contrary, the teacher can focus on giving comments and suggestion on the revised versions of the draft.

In short, the beneficial effects of error correction feedback have been make similar types of comments and are more concerned documented by a number of researchers in ESL writing with language-specific errors and problems. It enhances students awareness and with well written feedback, there was no evidence that it enables the students to see

their error and mistake that finally produce significant improvements in students' writing. Learners can learn more about writing and revision by receiving error correction feedback critically and their awareness of what makes writing successful and effective can be enhanced and, lastly learners eventually become autonomous writers.

## METHOD

This research used experimental design with quantitative approach because it is intended to investigate the effectiveness of using error correction feedback on the students' writing ability. In this study the experimental design used is two-Groups Pretest-Posttest. The two groups design usually involves three steps:

1. Administering a pretest measuring to dependent variable
2. Applying the experimental treatment to the subject
3. Administering a posttest again measuring the dependent variable

This design can be summarize as follow:

Pre-test	Treatment
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Post-test	
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$Y_1$	$X$
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$Y_2$	
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Differences attributed to application of the experimental treatment are then determined by comparing the pre-test and post-test score. In conducting an experiment, the researcher devotes great care to the manipulation and control of variables and to the observation and measurement of results. It is through such a

research method that the researcher can obtain the most convincing evidence of the effect that one variable has another.

The population of this research was the third year students of English Department of UIN Ar-Raniry Banda Aceh. It consisted of 75 students and divided into three classes, those are class-A, class-B, and class-C. The class-A and class-C were taken as the sample of the research since the subject of Writing was taught in that semester.

In this study, quantitative data was used that taken from the students' writing score on pre-test and post-test. Then the result of score both classes were compared by using t-test to find out if there is significant difference of the students' performance after they were taught through error correctionfeedback. Pre-test was taken before doing the experimental study or before teaching by using a story telling technique. The second was post-test; it was taken after doing an experimental study or after error correction feedback applied. Technique of data analysis was the way data were analysis by the research. The technique of data analysis in this research was quantitative data analysis and will analyze statistically by using t-test. The formula of pre-test and post-test one group design t-test as follows: (Arikunto, 2002:275)

## RESULT

Having calculated a mean score of the pre-test result for both the experimental and control groups, the difference between these

mean scores was compared by employing an independent sample t-test. According to the means of the pre-test scores for each group, it was found that the mean of the pre-test scores of experimental group is 55,14 while the mean of pre-test scores of the control group is 54,96. After the mean score of these two groups are compared through an independent sample t-test, the result of t-test is 0,49 while the result of t- table at a confidence level of 0,05 is 1,68. It means that the result of t-test is lower than the result of t-table. It can be inferred that the differences between two means are not significant since the t-table exceed the t-test. This result indicates that there is no significance difference between the data both of group. In other words, it implies that the experimental and control groups were similar in term of their initial ability in writing on the pre-test.

Furthermore, the same procedure was followed by the post-test scores. For each group, a mean score of the post-test results was calculated. The difference between these mean scores of the experimental and control groups was compared by employing an independent sample t-test. Based on the means of the post-test scores for each group presented in the table 4.3, it can be seen that the mean of the post-test scores of the experimental group is 85,33 while the mean of the post-test scores of the control group is 61,70. When the two means are compared through the independent sample t-test as shown in the table 4.3, it is

shown that the result of t-test is 11,6 while the result of t-table at a confidence level of 0,05 is 1,68. It can be assumed that the differences between two means are significant since the t-test exceed the t-table. Therefore, the null hypothesis ( $H_0$ ) is rejected and consequently the hypothesis alternative ( $H_a$ ) is accepted by means the students who were taught by using error correction feedback achieve a better performance in writing compared to those who were not. In fact, the error correction feedback has encouraged the students to get better achievement because it fulfills the students' mistakes during the lesson. Before feedback gave to the students' writing there is always a mistake either in the organization or in the grammar or the choice/ form of the vocabulary. However, the research has shown that when feedback was given on the students' writing, their writing more improve since they find the opportunity to correct their mistake by writing again.

## CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

Based on the theories, findings, and discussion explored in the previous section, the conclusion can be drawn as the  $t_{count}$  exceeds  $t_{table}$  the alternative hypothesis ( $H_a$ ) is accepted and the null hypothesis is rejected, it means that there is different writing score of the third year student of English department UIN Ar-Raniry. It is clear that the error correction feedback is effective in improving students' writing skill. The students' ability in writing had improved through error correction



feedback. It is also showed by the achievement of the third year students of UIN Ar-Raniry in learning writing through error correction feedback that increases gradually.

There are some suggestions proposed both for further research and for practical purposes. The suggestions are intended to enhance and find the best technique in teaching writing. The lecturers of writing subject should improve their teachings methods and manage good atmosphere class in order to stimulate and motivate the students in learning English writing more seriously. The lecturers of writing should give much attention to the students' writing; they should return all assignment, homework, and written exercises that have been corrected to the students. The students should get immediate feedbacks about what is correct and what is incorrect on their writing. They can learn through their error.

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