



USING CORRECTIVE FEEDBACK TOWARDS STUDENTS' WRITINGS ON JOURNAL BOOKS

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ABSTRACT: *Writing skill is considered as a difficult area of English learning, including for college students. Regardless of their proficiency levels, college students make errors in their writings. Thus, English lecturers need to apply appropriate strategies in order to minimize the errors so as to improve students' performance in writing. This study was aimed to discover one of the appropriate tools in English teaching to improve the writing skills of nursing department students of Faletehan University Serang. This is a qualitative descriptive case study. There were three instruments employed in this study, namely writing documentations, questionnaire, and interview. The results showed that students experienced different difficulties in composing their writings, especially writings with health or nursing themes. However, those difficulties didn't hinder them to keep on writing. They made different errors in their writings, including writing aspects and grammatical features. Then, by applying the direct corrective feedbacks to the students' writings, the lecturer had helped them in recognizing the errors they made, so that they were willing to get more feedbacks in the future. Hence, it would be helpful to improve their writing skills later.*

Keywords: *corrective feedbacks, direct corrective feedback, errors, writing*

I. INTRODUCTION

College students are required to be proficient in the four skills of English language, including writing. Writing skill is still considered as a difficult area for students. In fact, regardless of the language learners' levels of proficiency, college students also make errors in their writings. Errors have positive and negative values. From the positive perspective, errors may be viewed as a developmental phenomenon and are consequently unavoidable in the discovery of a new language and as such, they should be treated in a flexible and rational manner. On the other hand, from the negative perspective, errors can also be viewed as a sinful act that should be prevented from occurring. Additionally, there are also two-side of impacts that errors have in a language writing class. On one side, errors put students to be dependent on their language teachers; on the other side, they place teachers in a position that require them to find and apply an effective tool that can help students in their writings (Ellis, 2009).

College students, including nursing department students, must be able to produce and reproduce good writings. A good writing is a piece of written material that is understandable easily by the readers because it uses proper grammar and wide range of vocabulary as well as contains other writing aspects. So that, teachers are required to apply appropriate strategies and



techniques in teaching writing and giving appropriate tools to the students' writings (Lyster, Saito, Sato, 2013). Feedback is considered as one of the teaching tools to improve students' writing skills (Bitchener & Ferris, 2012) as well as to correct the errors they make in their writings.

Further, Xhama (2018) states that corrective feedback (CF) has a general purpose to give a lead to a positive change to the person or group to whom it is aimed at. In the process of learning, CF plays a significant role in students' learning and development. More than often, feedback correction has been used as a tool for correcting students' grammatical errors as well as other errors in writing. In such context, there are different views related to the usefulness and results of CF and to whether the teachers should use tool as a means to improve the students' grammar, spelling, syntax, etc.

Even though it may seem like something positive, the CF is regarded as a controversial issue when it comes to writing in the L2 classroom (Mollestad and Hu, 2016), and when implementing it in a classroom setting, there are questions to be asked and reflected upon. The most obvious question may very well be: is the feedback advantageous or not for the students? When it comes to CF, the answer to that particular question does not come easily. Over the years, researchers have examined the effects of different types of CF on adult L2 writers with results that do not necessarily agree with one another. Some researchers have found it to be both meaningless and harmful, while others have researched the effects of different types of CF and found it to be good for language development in several ways.

The two different types of CF on students' writings are direct and indirect corrective feedbacks. Direct corrective feedback is implemented by showing the correction of the errors; meanwhile, indirect corrective feedback is a situation in which the teacher marks the error without providing the correct form (Ellis, 2009). Based on the observation to the nursing department students of Faletahan University Serang, it could be found that they are still categorized as low proficiency students. Therefore, this study only focused on giving direct corrective feedback to the students' writings so as to improve their abilities in writing.

There were numerous studies conducted in the same field towards English department students. However, there was no research found on nursing department students. Therefore, here in this research, we needed to study the nursing students who were required to reproduce specific texts about health, especially nursing, into good writing ones. Besides that, these days the graduates can apply to work abroad; hence, they need to be able to communicate in English both orally and in the written form.

A. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Based on the problems which were identified above, the problems of the study can be formulated as follow:

1. How is the implementation of corrective feedback towards student's writing on journal books in Faletahan University?
2. What are the problems faced by the teacher in implementing corrective feedback towards student's writing on journal books in Faletahan University?



B. OBJECTIVE OF THE RESEARCH

Based on the formulated research questions above, the objectives of the research come as follow:

1. To explain clearly how implementing corrective feedback towards student’s writing on journal books in Faletahan University
2. To know the problems faced by the teacher in implementing corrective feedback towards student’s writing on journal books in Faletahan University.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Corrective Feedback (CF) is considered as a key feature in teaching and learning writing. According to Hashemnezhed and Mohammadnejad (2012), error treatment is considered as an inseparable part of writing skill. The contribution of written feedback helps learners have more chances to revise their writing in class immediately after they have received written CF on their texts. It is as a useful technique for the learners to become more independent and more responsible for the linguistic quality of their writing. Further, it can help students to become more capable and self-employed writers.

CF covers several grammatical features and writing aspects such as punctuation, spelling, content, organization, etc. It aims at providing information as to the correctness or incorrectness of what is written versus well-established language conventions. Thus, it could be concluded that written corrective feedback is the written form of information provided by an agent (teacher, parent, self) in order to develop students’ competence or to monitor their progress. Then, students would be more motivated after receiving positive feedback from the teachers and the classroom atmosphere will be more interesting, too. In addition, Ellis (2009) argues that corrective feedback has a vital role in L2 leaning and language pedagogy. In other words, CF is considered as a medium to encourage the learners to acquire profound linguistic accuracy. Besides that, with the support of CF, teachers are able to acknowledge the method and the suitable time to correct the learners’ written texts. With regards to the effect of CF, providing CF will prompt the learners to organize, structure, and modify knowledge. Furthermore, CF is a useful way to preserve the knowledge about grammatical features in a long term memory (Maleki & Eslami, 2013, Blannin et al., 2020)

The detail of corrective feedback could be seen in this following table which is adopted from Ellis:

Table 1. Written Corrective Feedback Strategies

Corrective Feedback Strategies	Description
Direct Corrective Feedback	The teacher provides the student with the correct form.
Indirect Corrective Feedback Indicating + locating the error	The teacher indicates that an error exists but does not provide the correction. This takes the form of underlining and use of cursors to show omissions in the student’s text.



Indication only	This takes the form of an indication in the margin that an error or errors have taken place in a line of text.
Metalinguistic Feedback	The teacher provides some kind of metalinguistic clues as to the nature of the error.
Use of error code	The teacher writes codes in the margin
Brief grammatical description	Teacher numbers errors in text and writes a grammatical description for each numbered error at the bottom of the text.
Electronic Feedback	The teacher indicates an error and provides a hyperlink to a concordance file that provides examples of correct usage.
Reformulation	This consists of a native speaker's reworking of the student's entire text to make the language seems a native-like as possible while keeping the content of the original intact.

Source: Ellis, R. (2009). The effects of focused and unfocused written corrective feedback in English as a foreign language context. *System* 36(3), 353–371.

Kinds of Corrective Feedback

Velic (2009) divided written feedback into indirect and direct ones. Indirect corrective feedback is a situation in which the teacher marks the error without providing the correct form, so those errors should be diagnosed and corrected by the students themselves. On the other hand, direct corrective feedback refers to overt correction of students' errors, locating and correcting errors for the students' writing. It is considered as a strategy to help learners correct their errors by providing the correct form of the target language. The teachers normally put the symbols, codes or comments right above, below, or next to the errors which is underlined or circled. In this study, the researchers only focused on direct corrective feedbacks.

Direct Corrective Feedback

There have been many debates about the effectiveness of implementing direct feedback to the students' writing. In this part, it will be shown some advantages of direct feedback to improve students' writing adopted by some studies. The advantages of direct corrective feedback come as follow:

- ✓ Direct feedback is easy to correct and takes less time. By knowing the correct form directly, automatically the students will be faster in rewriting their draft.
- ✓ Direct feedback provides learners with explicit guidance. Referring to the definition of direct feedback, it can be seen that direct feedback will give the correct form of the errors



or the explicit guidance. It is suggested that direct feedback is good for low proficiency level students.

- ✓ Direct feedback can be effective in promoting acquisition of specific grammatical features.
- ✓ Direct feedback has positive effect on target language accuracy. Hashemnezhad (2012) found that direct feedback is beneficial for the students' writing. The students can reduce their errors time to time especially in the aspect of grammatical features such as verb tenses, preposition and relative pronoun. It means that direct feedback keeps improved time to time.

To summarize, the most effective aspect of writing to be improved through direct feedback is the grammatical features. It is appropriate to be implemented for low level proficiency students because this technique provides the correct forms of the errors in the students' writing.

There were numerous studies conducted in terms of the effects of corrective feedback on the learners' grammatical accuracy and writing quality. Heift (2010) demonstrated that CF errors such as grammar or spelling contribute to the improvement of short-term and long-term writing accuracy. Other study was conducted by Van Beuningeun, De Jong, and Kuiken (2012) who found that direct correction is better suited for grammatical errors, while indirect correction is better suited for ungrammatical errors. Also, only direct CF has the potential to yield long-term grammatical gains. Hashemnezhad & Mohammadnejad (2012) also conducted a survey on the effects of direct and indirect CF on the learners' writing products. The findings showed that the learners in the direct CF group were able to acquire the knowledge of grammatical points profoundly. Particularly, the direct CF ensures the learners have more accuracy when employing the past simple tense, relative pronouns, and the prepositions in new writing tasks. In Zareil & Rahnama's study (2013), in terms of grammatical accuracy, the participants were able to achieve better performance with the support of direct CF. Similarly, Kao (2013) (Raiker, 2020) ensured that learners got a significant improvement in employing English articles correctly when direct CF was given. In other words, in terms of accuracy in learners' writing, direct corrective treatment is actually a valuable means. Thao and Le Hai (2017) (Irawan, Nasiatin et al., 2020; Lusiani et al., 2020) revealed that correction with comments and teacher correction was considered as the most useful strategy when giving feedback in the learner's performance. The outcomes of the study suggested a widespread employment of corrective feedback in teaching writing at universities and colleges in the region.

III. METHOD

This is a qualitative approach study with the design is descriptive case study. It belongs to descriptive research because it is one line with Shomamy (2009: 117) who states that a descriptive research is a study which investigates the utilization of existing data or a non-experimental research with a preconceived hypothesis.

There were two reasons why this research belonged to descriptive case study. First, the problem in this research took place in the classroom setting which was about the students' writing skills on reproducing texts about nursing. Also, this study tried to describe the teaching and learning process combined with students' attitudes and the problems faced by the lecturer in that process.



Participants

The participants of this research were the third semester students of bachelor degree of nursing department in Faletahan University Serang, Banten Province. There were thirty participants who participated in this research. Further, the role of the writers in this research was as the researchers.

The Research Instruments

In conducting the study, the researchers employed the students' writing texts, questionnaires, and interview as the research instruments. The students' writing texts were analyzed to find out the grammatical errors and all items related to writing on students' journal books. The researchers used document analysis as the content analysis. The students' writings were related to health, especially nursing.

The second instrument was the questionnaires that were adapted from Thao and Duy (2017). The questionnaires were arranged by paying attention on the principles of writing the questionnaires, such as the contents and purposes of the questions, the language used, types and forms of the questions, the length of the questions, the order of the questions, and physical appearance of the questionnaires. They included 14 questions designed in a five-point *Likert* scales from strongly agree, agree, don't know, disagree, and strongly disagree (5, 4, 3, 2, 1). They were used to get data about students' attitudes towards English writing, English lecturer, and corrective feedback. The last instrument was interview. The researchers used the interview to get more data about the problems faced by the students in writing the journal books and their hopes on the corrective feedback.

Data Collection Procedures

The data of the research was collected qualitatively to answer the research questions. Qualitative belonged to the data related to the analysis of the written texts of the third semester of bachelor degree of nursing department students in Faletahan University Serang, Banten Province to unpack the writing components in journal books and how the researchers gave the questionnaires to the students to reveal their responses and problems during the teaching and learning process in the classroom.

Furthermore, the researchers carried out some procedures in this research. They were (1) collecting the data related to the grammatical items and writing components in the journal books, giving questionnaires about students' attitudes towards English writing and corrective feedback, and conducting interviews to get more data about the problems faced by the students in writing the journal books and their hopes on the corrective feedback; (2) identifying students' writings through corrective feedback; (3) analyzing the errors found from students' writings through corrective feedback; and (4) explaining the errors found within the evaluation about them using corrective feedback among the students' writings.

Data Analysis Technique

In qualitative research, data analysis was carried out before, during, and after the study was completed. However, in fact, data analysis is an ongoing activity occurring throughout the investigative process rather than after process. The techniques for analyzing data used by the researchers were reducing the data, displaying the data, and drawing conclusions (Sugiyono, 2016). Analyzing data was done to simplify data to be readable and interpretable which later used to draw conclusion. In analyzing the data, the researchers performed these following steps:



1. Assembling the data

Assembling data was the first step to analyze the data. The researchers gathered all the data obtained from written texts and questionnaires. After gathering the data, the researchers compared and constructed the data.

2. Coding

Coding was used as a process of attempting to reduce the large amount of data that might be collected to more manageable categories of concepts, themes or types. It means that by applying coding, the researchers would find it easier to classify the data. After scanning the data, the researchers coded the data to identify it more specifically. These codes which were shown in this research would be obtained based on the writing text analysis. The followings are the detail coding in this research:

Table 2. Coding

No	Coding	Description
1.	PT	Punctuation
2.	WO	Word missing
3.	CP	Capitalization
4.	VT	Verb Tense
5.	SP	Spelling
6.	PL	Plural
7.	SI	Singular
8.	WW	Wrong Words
9.	UW	Unnecessary Words
10.	IS	Incorrect Structures
11.	UcW	Unclear Words

3. Comparing the data

After the researchers coded the data, they compared the data before and after the action. The aim of the comparing data is to see whether the data are repeated or developed across different data collection techniques. This process had not interpreted yet but it merely displayed and described the data.

4. Interpreting

After the researchers performed the description, coding, and comparing the data, they tried to think deeply about the data. It is highly important to have good interpreting about the materials related to the analysis about students' writings.

5. Reporting

The final stage of this process was reporting the findings of the data in the form of research report.



IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

From the writing documentations, it could be revealed that there were 202 points of errors made by students in their writing with nursing or health themes. All the errors were then coded into this following table:

Table 3. Errors in Students' Writings

No	Coding	Description	Percentage (%)
1.	PT	Punctuation	10,9
2.	WO	Word missing	8,4
3.	CP	Capitalization	10,4
4.	VT	Verb Tense	12,9
5.	SP	Spelling	14,9
6.	PL	Plural	5
7.	SI	Singular	2,5
8.	WW	Wrong Words	13,4
9.	UW	Unnecessary Words	11,4
10.	IS	Incorrect Structures	7,9
11.	UcW	Unclear Words	2,5

From the table above, it could be seen that most of the students' errors were on spelling (14,9%). This might be because they didn't know how to write the correct spellings of the words. The second mostly made errors were the use of wrong words (13,4%) that were not appropriate with the contexts of their writing, and it was followed by the verb tense (12,9%). As for this case, students still found difficulties in determining the appropriate verbs in sentences they composed. The next errors made were unnecessary words (11,4%). Several words were not needed to be compiled into their writings. Then, it was followed by the errors in punctuation (10,9%) and capitalization (10,4%). These conditions might be because the students were a little bit careless in writing so that they didn't pay much attention on both cases. They also left important words out of their writings (8,4%) and constructed incorrect sentence structures (7,9%). Further, they found difficulties in determining the pluralities and singularities. Sometimes they use pluralities for singular nouns (5%) with fewer cases occurred when they used singularities for plural nouns (2,5%). Same amount of errors were made when they used unclear words into their writings (2,5%). All the errors students made were parts of grammatical features and writing aspects.



As for the results of the questionnaires, they could be seen in this following table:

Table 4. Students’ Responses on the Questionnaires

No	Questions	Students’ Responses				
		Strongly Agree (%)	Agree (%)	Don’t Know (%)	Disagree (%)	Strongly Disagree (%)
1.	English is difficult subject.	3,3	30	3,3	60	3,3
2.	I like writing in English.	10	80	0	10	0
3.	As a nursing student, I often write English texts in nursing or health themes.	26,7	50	0	23,3	0
4.	I find difficulties in writing English texts in nursing or health themes.	6,7	60	0	33,3	0
5.	My English lecturer assigned me to write English texts in the journal books.	50	46,7	3,3	0	0
6.	My English lecturer returned my writing.	46,7	53,3	0	0	0
7.	My English lecturer gave feedbacks on my writing.	93,3	0	6,7	0	0
8.	My English lecturer discussed the errors in my writing when she returned it.	73,3	20	6,7	0	0
9.	I need guidance from my English lecturer to improve my writing performance.	60	40	0	0	0
10.	The most helpful guidance is the direct feedback from the lecturer.	60	40	0	0	0
11.	I prefer feedback on my writing.	53,3	40	3,3	3,3	0
12.	The feedback from my lecturer makes me reluctant in doing other assignments in the future.	0	10	3,3	66,7	20
13.	The feedback from my lecturer helps me to improve my writing skill.	50	36,7	13,3	0	0
14.	In the future, I’d like to get more feedbacks from the lecturer.	53,3	46,7	0	0	0

From the table above, it could be seen that for more than half of the participants (63,3%), English was not such a difficult subject. Ninety percent of them (strongly agree and agree) liked writing activity, especially in English. They wrote various themes of English texts, with 76,7%



of them often wrote texts about nursing or other health themes. In the process of writing such themes, 66,7% of them found difficulties in composing their ideas. However, it didn't hinder them to do the writing activity. They kept on writing even though they faced different obstructions in the completion of their writings. It showed that they were struggling students. Of course they needed their lecturer's guidance to improve their writing performance and all students had the same thought about this. In addition, direct feedback was considered as the most helpful guidance for all students, and 93,3% of them preferred feedbacks on their writings.

From the table, it could also be indicated that lecturer's responsibilities in teaching were expressed clearly. It could be seen from the fact that 96,7% students paid full attention when the lecturer requested them to write English texts in their journal books. All students got their writings on the journal books back after finishing the tasks. Most of them (93,3%) checked their writings after receiving their journal books back to find out the lecturer's feedbacks on their writings. Same numbers of students also found that the lecturer discussed the errors in their writings when they received their journal books back. These condition show that the lecturer respected students' writings on the journal books. Her effort actually had a great help in making students have a profound knowledge about the errors in their writings.

Further, through the corrective feedbacks, the lecturer had encouraged the students to write more so as to improve their performance in writing skills. It could be proven from the table that only 10% (agree) of the students became reluctant in doing other assignments in the future after they received feedbacks on their writings and only 3,3% students claimed that they didn't have any idea about this. It means that most students were willing to compose their following writings in the future. Further, 86,7% (strongly agree and agree) claimed that the feedbacks they received had made them able to improve their skills in writing and all students claimed that they would like to receive more feedbacks in the future.

In addition to the results above, from the interview conducted to the students as the participants, it could be discovered that students experienced different difficulties in writing health or nursing themes, such as constructing the ideas, grammar, structuring the sentences, vocabulary (especially medical terms), and spelling. These were in lines with the errors found in their writings as discussed previously. Only one of them claimed that he didn't experience any significant difficulties when writing. Additionally, most of them preferred having all the errors marked in their writing so as to make them easier in recognizing the errors and improving their following writing activities. Only two students claimed that the lecturer should mark no errors and respond only to their ideas and writing contents.

As with the direct corrective feedbacks given by the lecturer, the students hoped to be better in the process of learning English, especially in their writing performance. The feedbacks were useful as one of the evaluation sources for them in learning the language. They were eager to learn from the mistakes and errors they made, so that they would be more cautious in the process of writing to minimize the errors and apply the appropriate grammatical features and writing aspects. Hence, their English skills would improve gradually in the future.

V. CONCLUSION

According to the research findings discussed previously, corrections with comments and lecturer's corrections are considered as direct feedbacks. This is considered as an effective way to give feedbacks to the students' writings. By applying this strategy, students are helped not



only to improve the accuracy in their writings but also to let them have a profound knowledge about grammatical features. These findings correspond to the studies conducted by Hashemnezhad & Mohammadnejad (2012); Zareil & Rahnama (2013); and Thao and Le Hai (2017) (Saqipi & Vogrinc, 2020). These researchers emphasize the important role of direct corrective feedbacks in the students' writings.

In addition, students have positive attitudes towards the direct corrective feedbacks. Both the lecturer and the students are willing to provide and receive corrective feedbacks in the students' writings. In the lecturer side, it shows that she really puts great concern on the students' performance in English learning, especially writing. As a result, it could create an active and enjoyable environment in the classroom setting so as to make the students have more interests in the learning process. In the students' sides, they will be more cautious and independent in searching for the appropriate data in order to correct their own errors. Hence, they will have great understanding about the errors and their errors will not happen in the next writing tasks. Gradually, they will make an improvement in their writing performance.

Suggestions

As an English teacher or lecturer, we should provide helpful and effective strategies in teaching the language to the students. One of the ways is by providing corrective feedbacks into the students' writing. By doing so, we hope that their writing performance would improve time by time. Other researchers are encouraged to conduct other studies in the similar fields so as to get better insights on this theme.

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