

STUDENTS' RESPONSES TOWARD INDIRECT FEEDBACK THROUGH ASYNCHRONOUS ONLINE MEDIA

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Abstract. This study investigated students' responses toward indirect feedback in asynchronous online media. The study aimed to provide evidence that the students gained more interest and confidence after getting indirect feedback from teacher and writing by using technology. The study used qualitative approach. The study involved 20 students whereas students have to write a paragraph. The data were collected by using three types of instruments including writing test, assessment format, and questionnaire. The study resulted in the following findings; students in this study were successful in correcting their errors and improving their writings after the teacher gave indirect feedbacks for their paragraph. However, the students' writing requires improvement since the same problems and even the new problems were still found in students' after getting indirect feedback. Students need to enrich their vocabulary to describe their thought. Students rarely use the punctuation in their sentences.

Keywords: *writing, indirect feedback, asynchronous online.*

INTRODUCTION

Feedback itself is indeed necessary in teaching writing so that students can learn from their mistakes in the writing. This study narrows the feedback into the indirect feedback. The annotation is one of the models used to give feedback. The annotation feedback is basically a model used to deliver an indirect corrective feedback to students' writing. In this case, indirect corrective feedback involves an indication that an error made students by without actually correcting it. (Ellis, 2008, p.100). This type of feedback, in fact, can be found as one of the features in asynchronous online.

Based on the theoretical background that feedback can be one useful method for teachers in teaching writing, the writer is interested in finding out students' responses toward teacher' indirect feedback. Furthermore, based on the fact that the study on social media for teaching and learning

process, especially Asynchronous online, has not been well researched in Indonesia, the writer narrows down the study on the use of indirect feedback in Asynchronous online. Thus, the focus of this study is the effectiveness of annotation feedbacks in Asynchronous online in improving students' writings. What are the students' responses toward the use in asynchronous online media for indirect feedback?

Writing Through Asynchronous Online

Wu & Hua (2008) believe that the integration of such technology has been a trendy feature in the past ten years for higher education institutes all around the world. Teachers see digital technologies such as computer with internet connection, blog, networking site and phones as tools to facilitate students in expressing their creativities in writing (National Writing Project with; DeVoss, Eidman-Aadahl, and Hick, 2010). In another way, it can also be

considered as a challenge for teacher to deploy this technology in order to help students.

The device produces a significant gap from past to present, including in terms of writing activities. Nowadays, people write regularly via instant messages, blog, and perform many of their other daily writing-related tasks at computer (National writing project with DeVoss, Eidman-Aadahl, and Hick, 2010, p.3). The computer is used for seizing of modern style; it fascinates both visual and audio of the students (Shyamlee and Phil, 2012, p.150). The computer offers many options for teaching activities which captive students' attention. The advancing of technologies should be embraced to create an interesting environment in class. Computer has done a good job relating to this matter.

Writing is never an easy task for many students. It involves four stages of activities: planning, composition, editing and publishing (Galloway, 2007). However, there are several hints that can make writing activities using a computer easier for the students (Galloway, 2007, Roblyer & Doering, 2010).

First, the power of the computer is in its capacity to help users form their thoughts by working and reworking them. The students do not always have to do the typing. Second, there are lots to choose from these days but very few that follow the conventions of the letters we teach children in handwriting. This can occasionally lead to confusion, with some of the more decorative ones being positively obscure. Third, spread the work out. Use at least 1.5 spacing. This makes it both easier to read and to edit. Fourth, turn off the spelling and grammar checkers so that the students can concentrate on getting the words correct. The teacher might also want to turn off some of the 'Auto correct' features such as the ones that automatically capitalize new lines. Fifth, do the final editing on a hard copy – the students will be surprised what is missed on screen. The students can also check spellings this way so that the students can get a more accurate

picture of their abilities than when the computer helps them out. Finally, there are times when the students get stuck using computer. Students will need to deal with this situation when it occurs.

Internet provides learners to connect with other through synchronous (real-time) or asynchronous (delayed) computer-mediated communication (CMC) (Warschauer, 1997). CMC has been defined as "synchronous or asynchronous electronic mail and computer conferencing, by which senders encode in text messages that are relayed from senders' computers to receivers (Walther, 1992, in Lane 1994). It is important to guide and help students during the writing process in order to encourage them and to build warm and fun atmosphere in class when they are writing.

Phinney (1996) realized the importance of technology in writing and recognized the following paradigm shift: "As part of the changing culture of composition instruction, there is a new emphasis on de-centering authority, coupled with a recognition of the importance of collaborative learning, and a realization of the need for new models of writing and rhetoric" (p. 140). A gradual shift from word processing to collaborative writing in the late 1980s to mid-1990s necessitated the development of tools to accommodate this shift in pedagogy. As an internet-based platform that can be used to facilitate nowadays students' writing activities, Asynchronous online is of the tools that can be used to accommodate the shift.

Feedback

As we all known that a teacher has a complex job when teaching. Sometimes teachers use many metaphors to describe what they do. Sometimes they say they are like actors because they are always on the stage. Others think they are like orchestral conductors because they direct conversation and set the pace and tone. Yet others feel like gardener because they plant the seeds and then watch the students grow (Harmer: 2007).

Some kinds of the teacher's metaphors above can occur because views are somewhat mixed as to what teachers are. Based on the real condition in the classroom, everybody must agree that teachers are keys to any successful teaching program. Teachers have to support and guide the students' activities in the classroom. Therefore, an English teacher has an important role in the success of teaching and learning English.

One of the things that the students expect from their teachers is an indication of whether or not they are getting their English right. There is the moment where the teachers have to act as an assessor, offering feedback, correcting, and grading students in various ways. Students need to know how and what for they are being assessed (Rust, 2002). Teachers should tell them what they are looking for and what success looks like so that the students can measure themselves against this (Ramsden, 2003).

Yang, Badger, and Yu (2006) suggested that teacher feedback is more valued than peer feedback and that, while many students believe peer feedback can be of use, attitudes are variable. When considering the literature on the impact of teacher and peer feedback, the introduction of peer feedback to writing classes seems to be a reasonable course of action, however, the most effective implementation regarding it needs to be assured.

In this study, the teacher uses formative feedback. Formative comments are intended to help students revise their work while summative comments, and evaluate the quality of a "finished" product. Thus, formative comments usually include recommendations for revision and questions that might help students rethink weaker elements in their papers, along with comments about things that are currently working well that a student might build on. Formative assessments, continuously embedded in the teaching and learning process of a curriculum, attempt to improve learning achievements by offering feedback in the process. The objective of formative assessments is to provide feedback to students rather than to evaluate them for course grades. Such feedback used in educational contexts is generally regarded as crucial for improving learner knowledge and skill acquisition (Pridemore & Klein, 1991 in Lin & Lai, 2013 p.263)

Indirect Feedback

Indirect Feedback involves an indication that the student has made an error without actually correcting it. This can be done by underlining the errors or using cursors to show omissions in the student's text (as in figure 1 below) or by placing a cross in the margin next to the line containing the error. In effect, this involves deciding whether or not to show the precise location of the error.

<p>A dog stole X bone from X butcher. He escaped with XhavingX X bone. When the dog was going X ehavio X bridge over XtheX river he found X dog in the river. X missing word X__X wrong word</p>
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Figure 1. Indirect Feedback Taken from Ellis (2008)

Beside what Ellis shows in the figure above, Microsoft Office offers a way in giving feedback which is applicable and sophisticated. 'Insert comment' is a term that the Microsoft Office employed. Inserting

comment can be done by clicking a 'review' on the top of tabs line. Next, the text which needs to be given a feedback can be established by clicking 'new comment' feature. Instantly, on the right side, a balloon

where comments are typed appears. It is merely an alternative way of that Ellis offers on the figure above. The essential point is unchanged. In the Microsoft Office program, highlight replaces the X mark to show an exact location of the error on the text.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study employed qualitative approach. In analyzing students’ paragraph, Five Aspect Scale from Heaton (1988) was used. In this study, 20 students in a University in Banjarmasin are treated as subjects. The students are first year of English students who had taken writing class. Therefore, it was expected that the students would have basic knowledge about writing a paragraph. It was

also hoped that by using asynchronous online as media, the students were able to write better since they have a useful media that guides and helps them in writing.

One essential requirement in choosing the sample by purposive was each student should have a particular device such as computer, smart phone or any devices which enable to connect to the internet.

Assessment Format

The assessment format used in this research assessed the content, organization, vocabulary, language use, and mechanics of the texts. The scale was taken from Heaton (1988, p, 146). There are five aspects in this scale profiles listed in figure 2.

Aspects	Descriptions
Content	When the writing is knowledgeable, substantive and relevant to assigned topic.
Organization	When the writing contains about fluent expression, the idea clearly stated/supported, succinct, well-organized and cohesive.
Good vocabulary	Consists of effective word, the word from mastery and appropriate register.
Language use	When the writing consists of agreement, tense, number and has word order/function.
Mechanics	When the writing consists of good spelling, punctuation, capitalization, paragraphing and handwriting.

Figure 2. Five aspect scale for writing’ assessment

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Finding of this study obtained through two stages of test. Students wrote first paragraph and fix their previous paragraph. The scoring was done on the basis of content, organization, vocabulary, language use, and mechanic features.

Figure 3 illustrates that in general the message stated in the text can be understood easily. However, the student who wrote the

text made contradictive sentences at the end of the text. ‘If the car still off, calling nearest service station. So, if the machine in the car off. Try to repair it self.’ is considered contradictive because the sentences suggest two different ways for fixing the car. The two suggestions – call the nearest service station and try to repair the car ourselves – can confuse readers. However, despite this contradiction, as shown in the figure above the content of the text is clear. In other words, to

some extents, the text written by student shows a good control in terms of content. Heaton (1988) mentioned that writing with knowledgeable and substantive of subject was

categorized as excellent which is good in the content. Thus, in terms of content, this writing was categorized high in score.

The figure displays a student's writing titled "How to repair the car is being strike". The text is annotated with several comments:

- Comment [n7]:** vocabularies
- Comment [n8]:** missing verb
- Comment [n9]:** wrong punctuation
- Comment [n10]:** not punctuation. use to + verb to explain the action
- Comment [D11]:** Tense?
- Comment [D12]:** incomplete sentence
- Comment [D13]:** Subject? and find another word?
- Comment [n14]:** missing verb
- Comment [n15]:** action verb
- Comment [n16]:** missing article
- Comment [n17]:** missing verb
- Comment [n18]:** wrong punctuation
- Comment [D19]:** Check it again, look at blue line

Figure 3. Indirect Feedback through asynchronous online

In terms of organization, as can be shown in the figure above, the text produced by student has a good organization. The student of the text applied signal words such as 'first' and 'after that' which are common signal words used for procedure text. The correct use of these signal words makes the text cohesive. Therefore, like the content, the organization of the text above is also categorized high in score.

Though the content and organization are good, the student still faces problems in vocabularies, mechanics and language uses (see figure above). The annotation highlighted in the text above outlined errors made by the student in those three aspects.

In terms of vocabularies and grammars, the student's choice of words and students control of grammars is considered good in general. However, several errors are still. It is noticeable from the text. For example, the title used by the student is still unclear. The title can confuse readers. "How to repair the car is being strike" is problematic in terms of both vocabularies and grammar. In terms of vocabularies, 'being strike' is not suitable for the text. It is because the sense of the phrase

and its intended meaning to describe the text do not match. Another phrase should be used to replace 'is not suitable for the text. It is because the sense of the phrase and its intended meaning to describe the text do not match. Another phrase should be used to replace 'being strike'. In terms of grammars, the title is also problematic since it misses the conjunction 'which' or 'that', as well as an adjective clause connector 'which' or 'that' to describe the noun 'car'.

Another example of problematic vocabulary and grammar can be seen from the choice of word 'enter' in line 3. The word 'enter' is not suitable for the sentence in line 3. Semantically, 'enter enough water to the battery' is not accepted in English. Furthermore, in line 4 of the text above, the word 'calling' as in 'calling nearest service station' is not semantically wrong, but it is not proper grammatically for the sentence. In procedure text, the student should have used the action verb 'call' instead of gerund 'calling' to make the sentence accepted.

In terms of mechanics, the student who wrote the text above only applied period and coma in the text. However, the student still

made errors in the use of punctuations. In the text above, there are two cases where the student applied period when coma is needed. One of the cases can be found the first line of the text. ‘If the machine in the car off.’ should be ended with a coma (,) instead of a period (.). Thus, in conclusion, the student’s control of punctuation still needs to be improved

because to some extents, the student has difficulties in punctuations area.

In the following paragraphs, the example of analyses on one of students’ texts is presented. The text was taken from the work of the same student who wrote the figure 1 previously discussed.

“How to repair the car is being strike”

If the machine in the car is off, First, check the machine to see the machine is broken or not. After that, try to turn on the car. If the car is still off, check again other components like battery acid, water battery is still there or not. If there is no water, input enough water to the battery. Then, try to turn on the car. If the car is still off, calling nearest service station. So, if the machine in the car is off. Try to repair it.

Figure 4. Students’ work after getting indirect feedback

In terms of content, as can be seen in figure 4, the student does a good job by writing a procedure text that is easily to understand. However, the same contradictive sentences by the end of the paragraph are still found. This is most likely to happen because the contradiction is not commented through the annotation feedback by the teacher.

In terms of organization, there is no noticeable change found. The texts written by the student in pretest and posttest are both cohesive and coherent. Thus, no problem occurs in terms of organization of the text. In the annotation feedbacks, the teacher makes no comment on the signal words used by the student. This is because the student uses the correct signal words in the text student wrote. Thus, the student made no change in terms of signal words because student recognizes that how student uses the correct signal words to connect the sentences in procedure text. The signal words used by the student are enough to link the sentences to be coherent.

In terms of vocabularies, the student makes no significant improvement. The incorrect vocabulary student used in the title is not corrected. Thus, the title is still unclear. Furthermore, the student tries to correct his error in line 3 by replacing ‘enter’ in the pretest to ‘input’ in the posttest. Unfortunately, the student choice of word to replace ‘enter’ is still not suitable for the sentence. ‘Input enough water’ is not acceptable semantically in English.

In terms of grammars, the student makes a good improvement. The missing auxiliary ‘is’ is successfully added by the student to make the sentences meaningful. However, it is unfortunate that the student makes the same error in line 4-5. Student still uses the gerund ‘calling’ instead of an action verb ‘call’. This may happen due to student’s failure in understanding annotation feedback given by the teacher. It might also happen because the student was not careful in rechecking his product of writing.

In terms of mechanics, as seen in the text above that student make a good effort by replacing period with coma in two sentences where student previously misuses the punctuation. However, a new problem occurs because of this replacement. In the first line 'If the machine in the car is off, First, check the machine...', the student has already made a correct choice by putting coma instead of period after the word 'off'. Unfortunately, the student forgets to change the capital letter 'F' in 'First' into the lower case. The lower case should be used instead of capital letter because the word 'first' in 'first, check the machine...' is no longer the initial word of the sentence. The initial word of the sentence is 'If'. Thus, only 'I' in the word 'If' should be capitalized in that sentence. In this case, there is only one capital word problem occurs in the text.

From Questionnaire, students generally had positive attitudes towards the use of asynchronous media for getting indirect feedback. Students' attitudes indicate the advantages of the use asynchronous online. The advantage was that the media could create enjoyment in the classroom. Students was motivated to write. Students also was easy to get ideas, and interested in assisting them improving the writing. Students, then, feel comfortable in writing, know how to organize sentences or paragraphs, and provide the exposure in increasing learners' vocabulary.

CONCLUSION

This study indicates that teacher written indirect feedback can be provided by using asynchronous online in delivering students' works and word processing software as editing and revising tools as electronic delivery medium, in addition to the traditional pen-and-paper approach. This study suggests that teacher written indirect feedback can be applicable in different learning environments, not only in face-to-face but also in blended-learning and distance learning environments.

However, it should be advised that providing teacher written indirect feedback is a laborious process, especially in large classes, demanding teacher's dedication and passion for the success of student learning. When deciding to provide teacher written indirect feedback using technology at a distance, careful planning should be made far in advance accompanied with backup strategies in case the process does not go as it is planned. This provides an opportunity and a challenge for instructional designers and instructional technologists to come up with sound and reasonable solutions to accommodate student's need for teacher's indirect feedback and to facilitate teachers in providing indirect feedback.

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