

WRITTEN FEEDBACK APPROACH: AN ALTERNATIVE WAY IN IMPROVING LEARNERS' WRITING SKILL

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Abstract: The researchers, teachers and scholars have done many ways to improve learners' writing skill. Some methods, strategies and techniques have implemented in the classroom learning in order to improve learners' writing. Teaching of writing for EFL learners become one of a big challenge for teaching besides three of language skills (speaking, reading and listening). Factually, most of the learners still have difficulties in improving their writing. In this article, the writer recommends and discusses one of an alternative approach to assist learners improving their writing. It is written feedback. The written feedback is a guide to lead learners to the good writing. The writer discussed "the importance of written feedback, how teacher implements written feedback on learners' writing skill and the advantages of written feedback on learners performance".

Keywords: *written feedback, writing skill, teaching of writing, implementing of written feedback.*

INTRODUCTION

The acquisition of four language skills is more emphasized in the teaching and learning English as a foreign language skill. Besides speaking, listening, and reading skills, learners are expected to have writing skill. In fulfillment of academic degree from university, learners are asked to have a final project of academic writing such as thesis. In writing of thesis, learners should consider that their writing is fulfilled the good and academic writing such as mechanics, language use, vocabularies and contents.

Teaching of writing has become the most concern of educators and teachers in the school or university. Because teaching of writing for EFL learners become one of a big challenge for teaching besides three of language skills (speaking, reading and listening). Many research findings showed that learners have problem in writing. Based on the research finding conducted by Klimova, it was showed that learners face difficulties in formal writing such as organizing ideas, mechanics, and grammatical errors. The survey indicated learners lacking practice and experience of formal writing (Klimova, 2013). However, the other study was comparing the writing quality between English as a first language learners (L1) and second language learners (L2). It showed that the writing quality of L2 was lower than L1 writing quality in terms of language use, content and organization (Tillema, 2012). While, learners had problems in mastering vocabularies, organizing ideas, and constructions of grammatical sentence. So that, learners did not know how to write well, particularly writing of descriptive text (Wardani, Basri, & Waris, 2014).

The learners' problems of writing from above finding research indicate the important role of teacher in providing written feedback in order to enhance learners' writing. As Harmer

highlights the important feedback as a valuable aspect in the process approach of teaching writing (Harmer, n.d.). Besides that, teacher's written feedback assists learners to be better motivated during the writing process (Silver & Lee, 2007).

THE IMPORTANCE OF WRITTEN FEEDBACK

The learning outcome will be occurred, if the collaboration between teacher and learners are well. On the contrary, if the collaboration between teacher and learners are not good, the effective leaning outcome will not occur. The giving feedback is one of approach that enhances a good collaboration between teacher and learners. However, feedback is a process of showing learners the connections between what learners did and the results learners obtained (Brookhart, 2008).

A good teacher will provide/show the correct form on learners' error. In addition, effective written corrective feedback provides learners with a record of what have done well, what should be improved and suggested next steps (Hattie & Timperley, 2007). The learners will know which part of their writing is error and should be corrected. In the process of providing the written feedback, the teachers review and then comment the learners' writing (Brookhart, 2008). The providing of written feedback is improving the quality of learners' writing essay (Mubarak & Susanto, 2018)

HOW TEACHER IMPLEMENTS WRITTEN FEEDBACK ON LEARNERS' WRITING?

There are many types of written feedback. The writer discusses two types of written feedback that commonly used and provided by the teacher. Commonly, the written feedback consists of direct and indirect written feedback (Bitchener & Knoch, 2008). The review is started from direct and then indirect written feedback. In which there is a comparison between both direct and indirect written feedback. Both of the explanation will be given below.

a. Direct written feedback

Direct written corrective feedback is providing learners with clear direction about how to correct their error (Ellis, 2009). In line with that, direct corrective feedback is defined as improvement the form or structure of linguistic errors above or near linguistic errors (Bitchener & Knoch, 2008). In this type of written feedback, the teacher provides the correct linguistic form on students writing errors. In the process of providing direct written feedback, the teacher should provide the clear correction which students are able to understand the direction. Such as, crossing/omitting unnecessary words/pharess and the errors word or forms and then providing the correct linguistic form near or above the errors.

b. Indirect written feedback

There are two types of written corrective feedback in providing learners' writing task (Harmer, n.d.). Namely; responding and coding.

1. Responding

One way of teacher's feedback is responding to learners' writing what they have done. In responding learners writing, teacher gives comment to learners' writing such as how learners' progress in writing and how learners were being improved

drafting a writing. Responding to learners' writing, teachers do not assess and evaluate what learners have done. Yet, teachers only provide comment and give point of view on learners' writing. In order to make learners review their writing before doing a new writing task.

2. Coding

Harmer (n.d) said some teachers use codes, and then put these codes in the body of the writing itself, or in a corresponding margin. This makes correction much neater, less threatening, and considerably more helpful with random marks and comments.

From the above explanation, written feedback is given at the end of learning or after the learners did a task. Providing indirect written feedback tends to suggest learners whether they have done well or not and asking the improvement of learners in their performance for the next task. Meanwhile, direct written feedback tends to correct the error linguistic structure on students' writing. Commonly, two types of written feedback used by teacher both are direct and indirect written corrective feedback. The teachers provide both of the types of written feedback based on the purpose and learning condition.

THE ADVANTAGES OF WRITTEN FEEDBACK ON LEARNERS' PERFORMANCE

Feedback is not only provided in an oral form by the teachers. But also written feedback is another important assessment which is provided to the learners in order to convey the linguistic errors. Written feedback is leading the learners to correct the error form after the teacher underlined the errors (Park, Song, & Shin, 2015). Beside that written feedback is one of a way to create a communicative teaching between teacher and learners. Then, the mutual dialogue is occurring between teacher and learners during the learning process (Cohen-sayag, 2016).

A study about "The impact of three types of written feedback on the motivation and writing skill of English major learners at Hebron University" has three positive results for improving learners' writing performance and motivation (Farrah, Zahida, & Zaru, 2013). Namely: learners are able to express their thoughts in writing easily, learners are encouraged in writing of English text (Mubarak & Susanto, 2018) and learners receive detailed and constructive feedback from the teacher, it increases their motivation and creativity to write.

The other study about "The effect of indirect written corrective feedback on students' writing accuracy" conducted by Shirotha showed that indirect written corrective feedback elicits students' autonomous learning (Shirotha, 2016). In the other hand, direct written feedback provides learners with explicit guidance about how to correct their errors (Ellis, 2009). Below is the formulation of the advantages of written feedback on learners' writing performance.

Table 1. The advantages of written feedback on learners' writing performance.

No.	Scholars	Advantages of Written feedback
1.	Ellis (2009)	Provides learners with explicit guidance about how to correct their errors.

2. Mubarak & Susanto (2018)	Learners are encouraged in writing of English text.
3. Farrah, Zahida, & Zaru (2013)	- Learners are able to express their thoughts in writing easily. - Learners are encouraged in writing of English text. - Learners receive detailed and constructive feedback from the teacher. It increases their motivation and creativity to write.
4. Cohen-sayag (2016)	One of a way to create a communicative teaching between teacher and learners.
5. Park, Song and Shin (2015)	Leading the learners to correct the error form after the teacher underlined the errors.
6. Shirotha (2016)	Indirect written corrective feedback elicits students' autonomous learning

CONCLUSION

Since this article is focused on improving learners' writing skill. Written feedback is one of alternative way in assisting learners to improve their writing skill. Written feedback is given at the end of learning or after the learners did a task. Providing written feedback tends to suggest learners whether they have done well or not and asking the improvement of learners in their performance for the next task. Commonly, two types of written feedback used by teacher both are direct and indirect written corrective feedback. The teachers provide both of the types of written feedback based on the purpose. In the process teaching of writing, the teachers should consider which type of written feedback that would be used before implementing on learners' writing. The output of learning writing will be good, if the collaboration between teacher and learners occur in the classroom.

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