

The Effectiveness of Indirect Corrective Feedback on the Writing Accuracy of English Department Students at Universitas Bhinneka PGRI

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ABSTRACT

This article is a report of a finish piece of research which is intended to find out whether the students who were given the indirect corrective wrote a better writing than those who were given direct corrective feedback as the treatment. This study adopted the quasi-experimental research design. It was conducted at Universitas Bhinneka PGRI with the second semester students as the population. There were 31 students taken as the samples of this study. They were divided into two groups. 17 students who were taken as the experimental group given indirect corrective feedback on their writing while 14 students who were taken as the control group given direct corrective feedback. The findings of this study is that based on the ANCOVA statistical analysis using SPSS 16.0, it was found that the students who were given indirect corrective feedback do not produce a better writing than those who were given direct corrective feedback. Moreover, in this study, the students who were given direct corrective write a writing piece with more accuracy. Some suggestions are offered in relation to the findings English lecturer especially the lecturer of writing skill and further researchers. English lecturers are expected to be able to choose the best method of giving feedback on the students' writing. The two kinds of corrective feedback may serve as alternatives since it is proven that they have significant effects on the students' writing. For the further researcher, it is suggested that they do research in different contexts with different text types. It is also possible to do the research on the students' preferences of what kind of feedback to be given to their writings.

Key words: direct corrective feedback, indirect corrective feedback, writing, argumentative writing, error.

INTRODUCTION

Life in global era demands that people have competence in English as an international language. Graddol (as quoted by Susanto, 2010) stated that English has been and is going to be used as a means of global communication and a means to transfer and exchange knowledge and technology. Moreover, English has been linked to a variety of subjects and therefore constitutes a powerful tool for learning (Giannakopolou, 2007). Everyone in learning something now needs to at least acquire the basic of English. English becomes the foundation to compete in this global world. Therefore, acquiring English is something important.

In Indonesia, the objective of teaching English is that to make them to be able to communicate using English language skills. Moreover, in learning a language, there are two groups of skills: receptive skills and productive skills (Fachrurrazy, 2010). Receptive skills are the listening and reading skills. Those two skills are used to absorb the knowledge. While productive skills consist of speaking and writing skills. The productive skills are used to produce something after we absorb the knowledge.

Writing as one of the productive skills is an important skill to be mastered. Gere (in Salija, 2004) identifies six general reasons why people write: (1) to clarify the understanding of a new concept or idea, (2) to explore their own feeling and experience, (3) to record an experience for future reflection, (4) to share ideas and events with others, (5) to persuade others of their view points, and (6) to get a job or an assignment done. In addition, writing is important to be developed for L2 learners if they need to use the language for academic purposes, or in certain types of service (Savile-Troike, 2006). Moreover, Raimes (as quoted in Wahyuni, 2010) believes that writing can help students who have problems in speaking.

However, according to Cahyono (as quoted by Mukti 2009), the teaching of English in Indonesia is mainly focused on reading. The second reason is that most of teachers in Indonesia still find difficulties in teaching the writing skill to their students (Mukti, 2009). They tend to have difficulties in explaining how to develop ideas into a good writing product. Lopez (as quoted in Mukti 2009) stated that teacher frequently feels that the students' writing is uncreative and poorly organized. This seems to happen also in Indonesia. Teacher will often feel frustrated since the students' compositions do not satisfy her. The writing skill is, moreover, pretty difficult to master. In fact, Abedi, et al. (2010) believe that writing is the most difficult skill to be mastered in L2. In line with them, Naidu (2007) stated that ESL students generally produce texts that contain various degrees of grammatical and rhetorical errors. They commonly have a lot of idea but not enough language to express their idea in comprehensible way.

Somehow, different from the spoken language, which is for a child is acquired naturally, the ability to write has to be consciously learned (Harmer, 2004). According to Brown (2000), the process of writing requires an entirely different set of competencies and is fundamentally different from speaking like walking is entirely different from swimming. Therefore, it is common that students make some errors in writing. According to Naidu (2007), the ability to write is not naturally acquired. It needs a lot of practices to develop the ability to write. In other words, we have to learn more and more to acquire the skill.

Because of that, in helping the students acquire the mastery of writing skill, teacher needs to carefully design the appropriate teaching and learning strategies. Ahmadi (as quoted by Susanto, 2010) claims that in the teaching and learning process, writing is a very complex process which needs careful attention the most. Aridah (2003) believes that in relation to the teaching and learning of writing, feedback is considered an important issue. Students expect feedback or response from the teacher on what they are doing or what they have done. Williams (2003) revealed that written feedback is one important aspect in English language writing course. Students need the second party feedback, especially from the instructor in the process of writing.

In teaching writing, there is a lot of research on why and how to give response to students' writing. One way to respond to students' writing is by giving feedback. It is believed by Rachmajanti and Sulisty (2008:47) that writing is a process. It has a series of three main stages; that is before writing, during writing and after writing. In each stage, the writer should go through certain processes. Feedback on students' drafts is considered as one of the sub process during writing. Beuningen et al. (2008) stated that commonly the feedback used in classroom is corrective feedback. However, the effectiveness of the use of corrective feedback in helping students with their writing is still in question.

There are two kinds of corrective feedback, namely, direct corrective feedback and indirect corrective feedback. There has been a question about which of those two corrective feedbacks is the most effective to decrease the overall number of errors in students' writing. In recent years, there are so many studies that focused on identifying the more helpful feedback between direct and indirect corrective feedback (Lu, 2010). Yet, the investigations about it (e.g Chandler, 2003; Erel and Bulut, 2007; Beuningen et al., 2008; Abedi et al., 2010; Lu, 2010)

are still inconclusive. Therefore, further research is still needed to find the answer to which corrective feedbacks is a more helpful one.

Beuningen et al. (2008) found that direct corrective feedback is more helpful and bring long-term effect to the students' writing accuracy. Moreover, Chandler (2003) also found that direct feedback is more effective than the indirect one. Yet, other researchers found that indirect is more helpful than the direct one (e.g Erel and Bulut, 2007; Abedi et al, 2010; and Lu, 2010). The studies that they conducted found that students who got indirect corrective perform better in their future writing than they who got direct corrective feedback.

Considering the importance of developing students' writing skill from very early stages and the importance of giving effective feedback to improve the students' writing, this study is conducted to investigate whether indirect corrective feedback bring a significant effect on the students' writing so that those who were given indirect corrective feedback than those who were given direct corrective feedback. According to Gray (2004), by providing the grammar correction, both direct and indirect, will make the students to learn their mistake and avoid making the same mistakes in the future writing. Therefore, the accuracy of their writing in term of the grammatical accuracy will improve.

It is expected that this study can help English lecturers and also English teachers to find the most effective feedback to be given to their students. It is important that English teachers understand what kind of feedback is most effective to their students, so that they can apply the feedback to respond their students' writing. The feedback given is expected to be helpful and bring long term effect for the students so that they can come up with good writing products.

In this study, the researcher used the way of reacting the students' work by correcting it. Therefore, the researcher used the method of corrective feedback. There are two kinds of corrective feedbacks, that is, direct and indirect corrective feedback. Direct corrective feedback itself, according to Lee (as quoted by Erel and Bulut, 2007), is provided in the written form on students' draft while the indirect corrective feedback is provided in the form of underlining, highlighting, circling, or indirectly in the margin of the paper to indicate that errors have been occurred in line but without giving the correct forms.

According to Bueningan et al (2008), indirect corrective feedback /only consists of indication of error in the students' writing, while the direct corrective feedback identifies both the errors and the target form. For example, when the student writes 'The bird breath using the lung and air pocket,' the indirect corrective feedback will indicate that there is error in term of word formation by writing the symbol WF above the word 'breath', while the direct corrective will indicate that there is an error by directly crossing out the word 'breath' and change it into 'breathe'.

Error types according to Erel and Bulut (2007) are categorized into 18 error types, that is, punctuation, capitalization, spelling, word formation, singular-plural form, subject-verb agreement, tense, missing, article usage, connector, preposition, pronoun, possessive, extra wording, inappropriate word, redundancy of ideas, unclear expression, word order.

The symbols used to show the errors in students' drafts, as adapted from Erel and Bulut (2007) were shown in Table 1. The symbols are used to indicate the errors on the students' writing when the teacher gives the indirect corrective feedback. After the errors are indicated by giving the symbols, the students have to self-correct the errors.

Table 1. Error Types and the Symbols

Error types	Symbols
1. Punctuation	Pun
2. Capitalization	Cap
3. Spelling	Sp
4. Word formation	Wf
5. Singular/plural form	Sing/plural S≠V
6. Subject-verb agreement	T Missing article/
7. Tense	missing verb
8. Missing	Art. (article)
9. Article usage	Con. (connector)
10. Connector	Prep. (preposition)
11. Preposition	Pron. (pronoun)
12. Pronoun	Pos. (possessive 's)
13. Possessive 's	[] extra wording
14. Extra wording	Inapp. (inappropriate)
15. Inappropriate word	Re. (Redundancy)
16. Redundancy	? (unclear)
17. Unclear expression	Ordering
18. Word order	

Based on the background of the study above, this study was conducted to answer the following question: Does the students who were given indirect corrective feedback produce a better writing than those who were given direct corrective feedback?

METHOD

This study adopted a quasi-experimental design to find out whether students who were given indirect corrective feedback produce a better writing than those who were given direct corrective feedback. Ross and Morrison (2005) stated that quasi-experimental research design can be used when it is not feasible or practical to assign random subjects like in school based research. In school, classes are formed in the start of the year, so it will not be feasible to assign random subjects. Therefore, two classes, which were taken from a particular school, were used for this experimental study. One class was assigned as the experimental group and the other class was assigned as the control group.

In quasi-experimental research design, the researcher assigned two groups to be given different treatments. In this study, one class assigned as the experimental group was given indirect corrective feedback while the other class assigned as the control group was given the direct corrective feedback.

The quasi-experimental design in this study was the nonequivalent pretest-posttest control group design that can be illustrated as follows:

Table 2. Design of the Study

Group	Pretest	Treatment	Posttest
Experimental	O1	X1	O1
Control	O2	X2	O2

O1: pretest before giving treatment to experimental group

O2: pretest before giving treatment to control group

X1: treatment for experimental group, giving indirect corrective feedback to students' drafts

X2: treatment for control group, giving direct corrective feedback to students' drafts
O1: posttest to test the students' improvement after given indirect corrective feedback
O2: posttest to test the students' improvement after given direct corrective feedback

In order to measure the students' English proficiency before the treatment is given, a pretest was given to the two groups at the beginning of the study. Pretest is one important thing in the quasi-experimental research design to know the equivalence of the two groups (Ross and Morison, 2005). At the end of the treatment, both groups were given a posttest to see the effect of the treatment given. Their means scores of the pretest were compared to the means scores of the posttest to find out the effect of the use of two different corrective feedbacks.

After the researcher found out whether there was significant decrease of the number of errors in the students' writing after the given treatment, the researcher compared the two different corrective feedbacks to find out which of the feedbacks had more significant effects on the students' writing.

Population and Sample

In this study, the population was 119 students of English Education Department students. Here, the researcher worked second semester students of Universitas Bhinneka PGRI. There were 31 students who were taken as the sample of this study. From the two classes that were taken, one class which consisted of 17 students was taken as the experimental group while the other class which also consisted of 14 students was taken as the control group. The two classes were given different feedback as the treatment. The experimental group was given indirect corrective feedback as the treatment while the control group was given direct corrective feedback as the treatment. Since the researcher was also the lecturer of the class taken, the researcher assumed that the two classes were on the same level of English Proficiency. They also have similar characteristics in terms of their active participation in learning and how they give response to teacher's explanation. In this case, the influence of factors other than the treatments given could be minimized and it did not really matter which classes that the researcher took as the samples.

Research Procedure

The researcher chose two classes and assigned the first class to be experimental group and the second class to be control group. The lesson plan for both groups was almost the same. The difference was merely on the treatment given. To answer the research question of this study, the pretest and posttest were conducted to the two groups with exactly the same material. Each group was asked to write three argumentative essays. The first argumentative essay was used as the pretest. After the researcher noted the error made by the students, the drafts were given feedback as the treatment process and the students revised their drafts based on the feedback given. The experimental group was given indirect corrective feedback while the control group was given direct corrective feedback. After the students revised their drafts, they got the second topic to be written and they were given the second treatment. After given the second treatment, the students had to revise their drafts. After given two treatments, the students were asked to make one argumentative essay with the same topic as the posttest. The third argumentative essay to be written was the posttest to check whether the students who were given indirect corrective feedback as the treatment produced better writing than those who were given direct corrective feedback.

Data Analysis Procedure

The data analysis of this study was conducted by organizing the collected data systematically and analyzing the organized data using statistical method. First, the writing of

the students in the pretest and posttest will be assessed using scoring rubric. Moreover, in order to make it more reliable and valid, the researcher asked the other lecturers to be the inter raters. The scores obtained than were averaged and further the researcher conducted statistical analysis of the data using ANCOVA in SPSS 16.0.

RESEARCH FINDINGS

The pretest results of the experimental and the control group were one of the main data in this research. The pretest results were in the form of score of the writing accuracy obtained from the writing test which was assigned to both the experimental and the control groups. The test was administered before the experimental group got the indirect corrective feedback and the control group got the direct corrective feedback. Table 3 showed the summary of the pretest results between the experimental and the control groups.

Table 3. Pretest Score Summary of the Experimental Group and the Control Group

	Descriptive Statistics				
	N	Min	Max	Mean	Std. Deviation
Exp_pretest	17	34.67	47.00	41.45	3.57449
Cont_pretest	14	35.00	47.33	41.86	3.39863
Valid N (listwise)	14				

Table 3 shows that among 17 students of the experimental group, the maximum score was 47.00 and the minimum score was 34.67; while among 15 students of the control group, the maximum score 47.33 and the minimum score was 35.00. The mean for pretest score of the experimental group was 41.45, while the mean for the pretest score of the control group was 41.85. This means that there is a slight difference between the pretest score of the experimental and the control groups. Here, the control group got .40 points higher than the experimental group.

The final scores were recapitulated from the three raters who rated the students' writing of the pretest. There were three components of writing accuracy to be rated based on the scoring rubric namely grammar, vocabulary and mechanic. The total scores were obtained by summing up the three components from each of the raters. The average from the three raters was calculated and made as the final score for students' writing achievement of the pretest. Table 3.2 presents the mean differences among the writing components in pretest.

Table 4. The Mean Differences among the Components of Writing Accuracy in the Pretest

Group	Components of Writing Accuracy		
	Grammar	Vocabulary	Mechanics
Experimental	19.02	10.75	11.69
Control	18.98	11.24	11.64

Table 4 above, it can be seen that there is a slight difference on the students' writing accuracy among the components. The experimental group got higher points on the grammar and the mechanics components while the control group had higher points on the vocabulary component.

The Posttest Results

The posttest results of the experimental and the control group were also the main data in this research. The posttest results were in the form of score of the writing accuracy obtained

from the writing test which was assigned to both of the experimental and the control group. The test was administered after the experimental group accomplished the treatment and the control group had the same meetings as the experimental group. Table 3.5 showed the summary of the posttest score results between the experimental and the control group.

Table 5. Posttest Score Summary of the Experimental Group and the Control Group

Descriptive Statistics					
	N	Min	Max	Mean	Std. Deviation
Exp_	17	38.33	52.33	46.02	4.50997
Cont_	14	37.33	51.67	44.79	3.77036
Valid N (listwise)	14				

Table 5 demonstrated that among 17 students of the experimental group, the maximum score was 52.33 and the minimum score was 38.33, while among 14 students of the control group, the maximum score was 51.67 and the minimum score was 37.33. The mean score of the posttest of the experimental group was 46.02, while the mean score of the posttest of the control group was 44.79. It means that there was also a slight difference between the mean of the posttest of the experimental group and the mean of the posttest of the control group which was only 1.23 points.

The final scores were also recapitulated from the three raters who rated the students' writing of the posttest. The total scores were obtained by summing up the three components from each of the raters. The average from the three raters was calculated and made as the final score for students' writing achievement of the the posttest. Table 3.6 presents the mean differences among the writing components in posttest.

Table 6. The Mean Differences among the Components of Writing Accuracy in the Pretest

Group	Components of Writing Accuracy		
	Grammar	Vocabulary	Mechanics
Experimental	20.84	12.49	12.69
Control	20.17	12.24	12.38

The Fulfillment of the Statistical Assumptions

Statistical assumptions needed to be fulfilled before deciding the statistical analysis used for the data analysis. Test of normality and homogeneity were needed to be conducted to fulfill these assumptions. If these assumptions were fulfilled, then a parametric statistics was used to test the hypotheses. If these assumptions were not fulfilled, then a non-parametric statistics was used to test the hypotheses.

Normality Testing

The data were normally distributed if the significant value of normality test was greater than the level of significant $\alpha = .05$. Table 7 demonstrates the result of Kolmogorov-Smirnov and Shapiro-Wilk tests by using SPSS 16.0.

Table 7. The Computation for Normality Testing

Tests of Normality							
		Kolmogorov-Smirnov ^a			Shapiro-Wilk		
	Group	Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
Post	Exp	.203	17	.061	.901	17	.071
	Con	.080	14	.200*	.993	14	1.000
a. Lilliefors Significance Correction							
*. This is a lower bound of the true significance.							

Based on the table above, the significant values for the normality test of Kolmogorov-Smirnov and Shapiro Wilk for the posttest result of both classes were greater than the level of significance $\alpha = .05$. It means that there was not enough evidence to reject H_0 . Therefore, the data was normally distributed.

Data Analysis

Here, the result shows that the data were in normal distribution. It means that the normality assumption was fulfilled. Therefore, parametric statistic, ANCOVA is used to analyze the data. Ross and Morrison (2005) state that ANCOVA replicates ANOVA or MANOVA but it employs an additional variable to control for treatment group differences in aptitude and/or to reduce error variance in the dependent variable(s). Table 10 shows the result of the statistical computation of the ANCOVA test for the main hypothesis.

Table 8. Summary of Analysis of Covariance for the Main Hypothesis

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Group	17.137	1	17.137	1.326	.259

The data obtained in posttest was computed by using ANCOVA by means of SPSS 16.0. H_0 is accepted if p -value (.sig) is greater than .05. Based on the data presented in Table 3.12, the p -value is .259. Therefore, there was enough evidence to accept H_0 .

Hypothesis Testing

Before testing the hypotheses based on the result of the analysis of covariance, the researcher needed to state the null hypotheses. The null hypothesis was $H_{01}: \mu A_1 = \mu B_1$. The criteria of acceptance or rejection of H_0 was if the significant value was lesser than the level of significance $\alpha = .05$ (p -value $\leq .05$), then H_0 can be rejected or vice versa (Peer, 1996).

To test the first hypothesis, $H_{01}: \mu A_1 = \mu B_1$, the researcher employs the result of the analysis of covariance from the students' writing. The result demonstrates that p -value (.259) was greater than the level of significance $\alpha = .05$ (.259 > .05). It means that H_{01} cannot be rejected. It can be concluded that the students who were given indirect corrective feedback did not have significantly better writing accuracy than those who were given direct corrective feedback.

DISCUSSIONS

The finding of this study was supported by some other studies such as the ones done by Chandler (2003), Beuningen et al. (2008), and Erel and Bulut (2007).

There are a number of possible reasons why the feedbacks give significant effects on the students' writing. First of all, it was much easier for the students to identify the errors since they have already known the errors from the symbols given and also from the correct form that the teacher provides. Secondly, the feedback helps remind the students to avoid making the mistakes. In line with that, Lee (in Erel and Bulut, 2007) said that a comprehensive-complete feedback will help the students to improve their writing since they will not only revise some of the errors but also the whole errors found in their draft. After all, the students will learn from their mistakes in the past. The third, the students will motivate to be aware of their writing accuracy. Truscott (in Beuningen et al., 2008) stated that the goal of giving corrective feedbacks to the students is to make them aware of errors they committed. The awareness of the writing accuracy will help students not to do the errors over and over.

Another finding of this study was that even though both kinds of feedback significantly improve the students' writing, the mean difference of the control group in the pretest and posttest was greater than the experimental group. In other words, the control group which received direct corrective feedback shows a better improvement in their writing in terms of the number of errors made. It has been also statistically proven by the ANCOVA analysis. Therefore, it can be concluded that the students performed better after directly shown the errors than shown the errors through certain symbols.

The possible reason why the direct corrective feedback is more effective than the indirect corrective feedback is that the students who were given indirect corrective feedback still have to correct the errors by themselves. Ferris (as quoted by Erel and Bulut, 2007) stated that indirect corrective feedback requires the students to self correct the errors while when the students given direct corrective feedback, they can directly transcribe the correct form to their writing. Moreover, direct corrective feedback according to Ohta (2001), gives chance to the students to compare their writing and the given feedbacks. Therefore, from comparing their mistakes with the correct forms, they will learn more and tend to avoid the same mistakes.

Overall, this study further proves that feedback has a good influence in the students' writing. Harmer (2004) stated that students expect feedback on what they have done and what they have written. Therefore, it can be concluded that feedback is one of the most important elements in the teaching and learning of writing.

CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

There are several conclusions that can be taken from this study as the answer of the research problems. The conclusions are as follows: from the data analysis using ANCOVA, it is statistically proven that the students who were given indirect corrective feedback do not produce a better writing than those who were given direct corrective feedback. In other words, the students who were given direct corrective feedback performed better than the students who were given indirect corrective feedback.

A number of suggestions are to be offered to English teachers and also further researchers. English teachers are expected to be able to choose the best method of giving feedback on the

students' writing. The corrective feedbacks may be the alternatives of feedbacks to be given to the students since it is proven that corrective feedbacks have significant effects on the students' writing.

Further researchers are needed to investigate further the effectiveness of direct and indirect corrective feedback in different contexts and/or with different text types. They might also consider analyzing the improvement in terms of content and organization. Furthermore, the data may include the data on the students' preferences of the corrective feedback to be given to their writing.

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