DIRECT CORRECTIVE FEEDBACK
IN IMPROVING STUDENTS' WRITING ABILITY

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Abstract

The objective of the research was to find out whether or not the use of direct corrective feedback could improve the students' writing ability to the fourth semester students of *Sekolah Tinggi Ilmu Keperawatan* (STIK) Stella Maris Makassar. The researcher applied quasi-experimental method using non-equivalent control class design. The Population of this research was the fourth semester students of *Sekolah Tinggi Ilmu Keperawatan* (STIK) Stella Maris Makassar in academic year 2013/2014. The sample was class A and class B, which consists of 80 students. This research used cluster random sampling. The researcher chose two classes of the fourth semester students of *Sekolah Tinggi Ilmu Keperawatan* (STIK) Stella Maris Makassar randomly, as the experimental class and the control class. The two classes were given treatment. The experimental class was treated by direct corrective feedback while the control class was taught with usual interaction feedback. The data were collected through writing test. The result of the data analysis showed that there was significant difference between the students' score who were taught by using direct feedback and only with usual interaction feedback. It is proved by the mean score of the experimental class is higher than control class in the posttest. Moreover, the result of test of significant analysis indicates that the use of corrective direct feedback significantly improve the students' writing ability. Based on the result, it could be concluded that the use direct of corrective feedback improved the students' writing ability of the fourth semester students of *Sekolah Tinggi Ilmu Keperawatan* (STIK) Stella Maris Makassar in academic year 2013/2014.

Key words: Corrective feedback, writing ability.

Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui apakah penggunaan koreksi langsung umpan balik dapat meningkatkan kemampuan menulis mahasiswa. Peneliti menggunakan metode *kuasi-eksperimental* dengan rancangan *non-equivalent control class*. Populasi penelitian ini adalah mahasiswa semaster 4 Sekolah Tinggi Ilmu Keperawatan (STIK) Stella Maris Makassar tahun akademik 2013/2014. Sampel penelitian ini adalah kelas A dan kelas B, yang terdiri dari 80 mahasiswa. Penelitian ini menggunakan *cluster random sampling*. Peneliti memilih dua kelas secara acak sebagai kelas eksperimen dan kontrol. Kedua kelas diberi perlakuan yang berbeda, Kelas eksperimen diajar dengan menggunakan koreksi langsung dan kelas kontrol hanya diajar dengan menggunakan koreksi yang biasa

digunakan oleh guru kelas tersebut. Data dikumpulkan melalui tes menulis. Hasil analisis data menunjukkan bahwa ada perbedaan signifikan antara skor mahasiswa yang belajar dengan menggunakan koreksi umpan balik secara langsung dan yang menggunakan koreksi yang biasa dipakai oleh guru kelas tersebut. Hal ini dibuktikan dengan nilai rata-rata posttest dari kelas eksperimen lebih tinggi daripada kelas kontrol. Selain itu, hasil uji signifikan menunjukkan bahwa penggunaan koreksi umpan balik meningkatkan kemampuan belajar mahasiswa secara signifikan. Berdasarkan hasil analisis, peneliti menyimpulkan bahwa penggunaan koreksi umpan balik dapat meningkatkan kemampuan belajar mahasiswa kelas A semester 4 sekolah Tinggi Ilmu keperawatan (STIK) Stella Maris Makassar tahun akademik 2013/2014. Oleh karena itu, peneliti menyarankan kepada guru/ dosen Bahasa Inggris untuk menggunakan koreksi umpan balik dalam proses belajar mengajar khususnya dalam menulis. Menggunakan straregi koreksi umpan balik membutuhkan beberapa pertimbangan dalam hal siapa, apa, dimana, dan kapan proses belajar mengajar berlangsung.

Kata Kunci: Korektif feedback, kemampuan penulis.

Introduction

Basically, language is a tool of expressing ideas, minds, opinions, and feelings. In Indonesia, English language is the first foreign language learned by the students from elementary school up to university level. Recently English has been taught at some kindergartens to enable the students write and speak English. It also has been recommended as a compulsory subject to the students in junior high school and senior high school up to university. This means that they have a lot of time and opportunities to study English. In studying English, writing is an essential part of communicating, thinking, and learning. It allows students to express their ideas, to negotiate relationships, to give definition to their thoughts, and to learn about language skills. Therefore, to utilize the language well, students should master all language elements, i.e.: vocabulary, pronunciation, structure, spelling, and the language skills: listening, speaking, writing, and reading. In relation to this matter, the researcher focuses this research on writing as one skill in English.

Regarding the previous explanation, the researcher considers that corrective direct feedback is one of the teaching techniques that can be used in improving students' writing ability. It is an efficient way for writing class in which the students will have corrective feedback in their writing. As described in *Descriptive Feedback* (2010), corrective feedback gives information to students

and teachers about learning. The corrective feedback given can reduce the gap between the student's current level and expected goal. Corrective feedback is a strategy where students are given feedback in their writing. It is intended to complete an academic task and to achieve their accountability individually. Positive corrective feedback affirms that a learner response to an activity is correct. Gulcat & Ozagac (2004) described that the most important aspect while giving feedback is adopting a positive attitude to students writing.

Arising from the background above, there should be a certain technique as an effective way of teaching writing which allows the students to know their mistakes or errors in their writing and to improve their writing ability. In this case, the researcher assumed that applying of direct corrective feedback as one of ways to overcome the problem faced by the students of STIK Stella Maris Makassar. In relation to the various issues put forward in the assumption, the researcher formulates the research questions as: How does the direct corrective feedback improve the students' writing ability of the fourth semester students of STIK Stella Maris Makassar?

Review of Related Literature

Definition of writing

Basically, writing means producing or reproducing oral message into written language. It involves an active process to organize, formulate and develop the ideas on the paper so that readers can follow the writer's message. Besides, writing skill requires an accurate and precise grammar, spelling, punctuation, capitalization, and vocabulary (Bram in Imeldi, 2001). Byrne (1990) further described that when students write, they use *graphic symbols* such as letters or combination of letters which relate to the sounds they make when they speak.

Kroma (1988) revealed that writing is a kind of activity where the writer expresses all the ideas in his mind in the paper from words to sentence, sentence to paragraph, and paragraph to essay. Ghaith (2002) also explained that writing is a complete process that allows students to explore Abisamra(2001) stated that a well-written piece can be described as incorporating elements of writing in such a way that a reader can experience the writer's intended meaning, understand the

writer's premise, and accept or reject the writer's point of view. He further presented that an effective writing should cover the following matters:

1) Effective writing is focused on the topic and does not contain extraneous or loosely related information;

2) Effective writing has an organizational pattern that enables the reader to follow the flow of ideas because it contains a beginning, middle, and end and uses transitional devices;

3) Effective writing contains supporting ideas that are developed through the use of details, examples, vivid language, and mature word choice; and

4) Effective writing follows the conventions of standard written English (i.e., punctuation, capitalization, and spelling) and has variation in sentence structure.

Elements of Writing

In writing something based on the pictures, we must focus on the sentence (Jacobs et al., 1981; Heaton, 1991).They concluded that there are five significant elements of writing.

1) Content

Content of the writing must be paid attention well. In order to have a good content of writing, the content should be well unified and completed. The terms are usually known as unity and completeness, this become the characteristics of the good writing. The main idea has to be explained and developed well (Oshima& Hogue, 2006). Completeness is the controlling ideas, which is developed thoroughly by the use of particular information. Unity means that every part of the sentence contributes to one principle, unifying thought (Savage &Shafiei, 2007).

2) Organization

In organization, writing concerns with the way the writers organize the ideas or the message in the writing. The purposes of the organizing the material in writing involves coherence, order of importance, general to specific, specific to general, chronological order and spatial pattern that happened from the beginning to the end.

3) Vocabulary

One of requirement of a good writing always depends on the effective use of words. In personal description, words play an important role: to communicate and to evoke, to let the readers to perceive and feel. Effective use of words also deals with connotative or figurative language. They are all important nearly all form of writing, but particularly in personal description, word rich in association are more effective than those mainly transmit information.

4) Language use

Language use writing involves correct usage endpoints of grammar, such as verbs, nouns and agreement. Specific nouns and strong verbs give a reader a mental image description. These specific nouns can be characterized by using modifier of adjectives, adverbs, and participle form. There are many opportunities for errors in the use of verbs, and mistakes in agreement are very common. Mistakes in written work, and however, are much more serious, and since we have an opportunity to reread and to correct what we have written. We should avoid errors in verbal forms, subject-verb agreement, and pronoun antecedent agreement and in case of noun and pronoun.

5) Mechanics

The use of mechanics is due to capitalization, punctuation, and spelling appropriately. This aspect is very important since it leads readers to understand or recognize immediately what the writer means to express definitely. The use of favorable mechanics in writing will make reader easy to understand the conveying ideas other message stated in the writing.
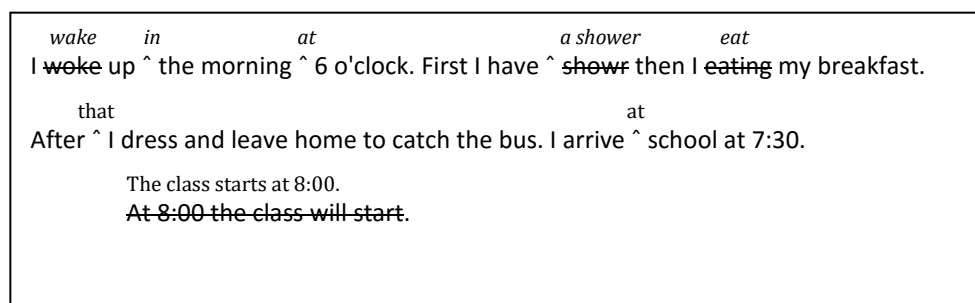
Corrective Feedback

a. Definition of feedback

In general, corrective feedback can be defined as a useful information given to students to respond their writing task in order to improve their writing ability. According to Brookhart (2008) feedback could be described as teacher feedback on students work. She further described that feedback should be part of a classroom assessment environment in which students see constructive criticism as a good thing and understand that learning cannot occur without practice. This indicates that it is useful for teachers to give students more practices and teachers give more corrective feedback to students.

Shute (2007) described that feedback tells the students what needs to be fixed or revised. He also explained that there two main function of feedback: directive and facilitative. Directive feedback guides student concerning what they need to be fixed or revised. In facilitative feedback, teachers give comments and suggestions in order to help students make revision. Corrective feedback is not disapproval, criticism or a personal attack, but it is given to students so that they can improve their work. Furthermore, when corrective feedback is constructive and consistent and is given by someone in an informed position it is very useful.

b. Direct feedback

According to Bitchener & Ferris (2012) direct feedback provides some form of explicit correction of linguistic form or structure above or near the linguistic error and usually involves the crossing out of unnecessary word/ phrase/ morpheme. Type of correction takes a variety of forms such as a) cross-outs: when the teacher omits any wrong addition from students' original texts, b) rewrites: when the teacher rewrites a word, phrase or a sentence, providing the correct spelling, structure or form on students' original texts and c) additions: when the teacher adds any missing items on students' original texts (*e.g.* prefix,

> *wake*   *in*   *at*   *a shower*   *eat*
> I ~~woke~~ up ˆ the morning ˆ 6 o'clock. First I have ˆ ~~showr~~ then I ~~eating~~ my breakfast.
>
>   *that*   *at*
> After ˆ I dress and leave home to catch the bus. I arrive ˆ school at 7:30.
>
>   The class starts at 8:00.
>   ~~At 8:00 the class will start~~.

suffix, article, preposition, word, etc). The figure below shows the three forms of direct correction:

Figure 2.1. The example of corrective direct feedback

Ferris (2002) argues that it is useful in treating errors of prepositions and other issues of idiomatic lexis. She also claims that it is useful in the final stages of the writing process to help students focus on the remaining errors in their texts and refer to them in future tasks. Students' linguistic proficiency is important to

determine the amount of direct corrective feedback they receive as advanced learners are more likely to benefit from it.

Research Design

In this research, the researcher applied quasi experimental method by using direct corrective feedback. The experiment involved two classes, an experimental class and a control class. The experimental class received treatment by using direct corrective feedback while the control class received treatment by using usual interaction feedback. Students were given some common topics or texts related to nursing and ask them to write based on the topics given. The control class was needed for comparison purposes to see whether direct corrective feedback was effective to improve students' writing ability. Gay (2006:254) stated that the control group is needed for comparison purpose to prove if the new treatment is more effective than other.

Findings and Discussion

1. Corrective feedback improved the students' writing skill

a. The results of writing test in experimental class

As stated previously that after scoring the students' writing skills, then the results were classified into four classification by referring to the scoring system introduced by Heaton (1991) namely excellent to very good, good to average, fair to poor, and very poor. The following table presented on the next page showed the frequency and the rate percentage of the students' pretest and posttest on writing skill in experimental class.

The results showed that in pretest, 36 students (90%) were classified as very poor, 4 students (10%) were fair to poor classification, and none of them were grouped in excellent to average classifications. On the other hand, in posttest, 7 students (17.5%) were successful to be classified in excellent to very good classification, 32 (80%) were good to average classification, only 1 student (2.5%) were grouped as fair to poor classification, and none of them were very poor classification.

Thus, the mean score in pretest was 45.27 which was categorized as very poor classification and in posttest, it was 79.20 which was categorized as good to average. This indicated that the mean score of students' writing skill in posttest was higher than that of the pretest.

The statistical summary showed that the total number of subjects was 40 students. The scores achieved by the students tended to get increased from pretest to posttest. The students did better in posttest. As the result, the mean scores in pretest was classified as very poor (45.47), while in posttest the mean scores increased to be good to average (79.20).

b.   The results of data analysis of writing test in control class

In pretest, there were 38 students (95%) were grouped in very poor classification, 2 students (5%) were fair to poor classification, and none of them were scored in good to average classifications. In posttest, there were only 6 students (15%) were classified as good to average, 34 (85%) were fair to poor classification. None of the students was in excellent to very good. Thus, the mean score in pretest was 44.50 categorized as very poor classification and in posttest it was 64.25 which was categorized as fair to poor classification. This indicated that the mean score in posttest was higher than the pretest.

The result showed the statistical summary of the students pretest and posttest in control class. It showed that the total number of subjects was 40 students. The scores achieved by the students increased from 44.50 in pretest to 64.25 in posttest. As the result, the mean scores in pretest had very poor score while in posttest the mean scores was still around fair to poor. The standard deviations of each component of both tests were also varied. In general, the pretest seemed to have smaller standard deviations (4.151) than the posttest (5.908).

c.   The students' pretest of experimental and control class of writing test

The result pictured out the frequency and percentage of the students' scores of the pretest in control and experimental classes in writing. Based on the results, it showed that in experimental group, 4 students (10%) out of forty were in the fair to poor classification, and 36 students or 90% whose grade were in very poor classification. While in control group, 2 students or 5 % got fair to poor and

38 students or 95 % got very poor. Both classes showed the similarity. None of the groups was categorized in excellent to very good and good to average.

d. The students' posttest of experimental and control classes of writing test

Based on the results, it showed that in the posttest of experimental class, 7 students or 17.5% were excellent to very good classification, 32 students or 80% were classified as good to average, 1 student or 2.5% was in fair to poor, and none of them had very poor classification. While in control class, 6 students or 15 % got good to average, 34 students or 85 % got fair to poor, and none of them were categorized as excellent to very good. Both class showed the similarity. The results above gave information that students in experimental class achieved better progress than students in control class.

e. The comparison between the students' score of pretest and posttest in control and experimental classes.

The result showed that the mean scores of experimental class was different with control class before treatment. The mean score of pretest of experimental class was 45.47 which were categorized as very poor and while means score of control class was 44.50. It was also categorized very poor. This indicated that scores of both classes were relatively the same. Gay (2006:124) stated that the difference between close score is essentially the same to the students mean score between experimental and control classes. It was relatively the same when the variables have equal intervals. Both experimental and control classes had the same or relatively the same baseline knowledge in writing before the treatment.

After the treatment, the students in both classes were given posttest to find out student's writing ability. The results were analyzed by using *t*-test with SPSS 16 version. The result showed that the mean score of experimental class was different with control class after the treatment. The mean score of posttest of experimental class was 79.20 categorized as good to average while mean score of students' posttest of control class was 64.25 categorized as fair to poor. These figures showed that after getting treatment, the result of experimental class in mean score was higher than control class. It proved that the treatment by using

types of corrective feedback gave significant improvement to students' writing skill.

To make sure that the pretest score of both groups are not significantly different. Table result indicated that the statistical hypothesis was based on statistical test in asymp. Sig (2-tailed), it could be concluded that the probability value was bigger than the level of significance .05 (.351 > .05). This assumed that the students' score of both classes was not significantly different. It indicated that both classes had the same ability prior to treatment.

The result presented in the previous page indicated that the statistical hypothesis was based on statistical test in asymp. Sig (2-tailed), it can be concluded that the probability value was lower than the level of significance .05 (0.00 < 0.05). This means that H_1 was accepted and, of course, the statistical hypothesis of H_0 was rejected. This showed that the students mean score of both classes was significantly different. It indicated that score of experimental class was higher than control class after the treatment. It can be concluded that the use of corrective feedback improved the students' writing ability.

After comparing the students' score of pretest and posttest of both classes, the following table showed the improvement of the students' pretest and posttest in each class before and after giving treatment, the result of t-test was calculated by using inferential statistic through SPSS 16.

Based on the statistics, it could be interpreted that the probability value was smaller than the level of significance 0.05 (0.00 < .05). It means that H_1 was accepted and H_0 was rejected. It was concluded that there was a significant difference prior to treatment in pretest and after treatment in posttest both for control and experimental classes. In other words, there was an improvement on the students' writing ability between pretest and posttest either in control or experimental classes after the treatment. This stressed that both types of corrective feedback and one type of corrective feedback were able to give significantly greater contribution to the students' writing ability.

2. *Direct corrective feedback was more effective than usual feedback*

Direct feedback provided some form of correction or structure or the error made in writing and usually involved the crossing out of unnecessary word/

phrase. In direct feedback, the researcher omitted any wrong addition from students' original texts. The researcher rewrote a word, phrase or a sentence, providing the correct spelling. Also added any missing items on students' original texts (*e.g.* prefix, suffix, article, preposition, word, etc).

Most of the students did active participation in applying types of direct corrective feedback because it could develop their writing ability. Bitchener and Ferris (2012) found that after receiving written corrective feedback students could improve their writing development. As an example, the students' mean score of experimental class was only 45.47 when they did pretest. This score increased to 79.20 in their posttest. This proved that the 6-meeting treatment by using corrective feedback was effective to improve students' writing skill. As the result, the rate of score classification also increased from very poor (50-34) to good to average (83-68).

After applying types of corrective feedback, the researcher had assumption that this strategy was one way to assist the students to practice and improve writing skill. As the researcher explained at the previous chapter that there were some advantages of this strategy, they are:

1) Facilitated the development of self-assessment (reflection) in learning.
2) Encouraged teacher and peer dialogue around learning.
3) Helped clarify what good performance is (goals, criteria, expected standards).
4) Provided opportunities to close the gap between current and desired performance.
5) Delivered high quality information to students about their learning.
6) Encouraged positive motivational beliefs and self-esteem.
7) Provided information to teacher that can be used to help shape the teaching.

The mean score of pretest of experimental class were 45.47 and mean score of control class were 44.50. This results showed that both classes had different score, but after analyzing by using t-test formula, the result showed that the difference were not significant. This indicated that both classes had the same ability in writing before the treatment was given. The score of students' posttest showed improvement. It could be seen from students' mean score. The students' mean score of control class in posttest was 64.25 while experimental class was

79.20. This showed that both classes had different score. It could be proved by using t-test to find out the significant difference and the result showed that the mean score of both classes was significantly different after conducting treatment. The students' score of experimental was higher than score of control class. It means that the use of types of corrective feedback in teaching writing gave better effect than the use of one type of corrective feedback. This result was also supported by Liu. According to Liu (2008), direct corrective feedback reduced students' errors in the immediate draft. The mean scores of the experimental and the control classes increased after they were given treatments. The experimental class managed to improve writing ability by using types of corrective feedback while the control class also managed to improve writing ability by using one type corrective feedback. The improvement of students' writing ability was marked by the results of the posttest occurring in both experimental and control classes. However, the improvement rate of the experimental class was higher than control class. Based on the research findings, the students who were taught by using types of corrective feedback and one type of corrective feedback showed good progress. Most of the students in experimental class, 32 (80%) got good to average classification, 7 (17.5%) got excellent to very good, 1 (2.5%) got fair classification and none of them got poor and very poor classification either. Meanwhile, the result of control class in posttest showed that none got excellent to very good classification but the result was still same with pretest, there were 6 (15%) got good to average, 34 students (85 %) who got fair to poor, even though none of them got excellent, fortunately there was no students who were classified into very poor classification. The results indicated that the students' writing ability in both control and experimental classes increased. However, the students' writing in experimental class was still higher.

Furthermore, both in control and experimental classes, some students still had serious problem in all writing components which increased only a few points in experimental class. However, based on the research, the students had already made a significant progress in all writing components after they were given treatment.

However, from five writing components, it seemed that students gained higher score in content both in control and experimental classes. They did much better in the content than in other components. In control class, for example, students' mean score increased from 14.90 in the pretest to 18.02 in the posttest. Then, it was followed by vocabulary (9.02 to 14.0), organization (9.32 to 13.72), and language use (8.52 to 13.72). Mechanics, as one of the components, was the most difficult component for students in control class. The main score was only 3.87 in the posttest from 2.52 in the pretest.

Meanwhile, in experimental class, students also gained higher score in the content. They did much better in this component than other components. As an illustration that in the content, the mean score increased from 15.07 in the pretest to 21.55 in the posttest. Then, it was followed by vocabulary (9.02 to 18.38), organization (9.27 to 17.43), and language use (9.47 to 17.25). Mechanics, as one of the components, was also the most difficult component for students in experimental class. The main score was only 4.60 in the posttest from 2.62 in the pretest. From these results, it could be interpreted that students could improve their writing ability after treatment. The results of this research concluded that after each meeting, by using direct corrective feedback, the students were in fairly good category. It means that the direct corrective feedback was successful to improve the writing skill of the fourth semester students of *Sekolah Tinggi Ilmu keperawatan* (STIK) Stella Maris Makassar 2013/2014 academic year.

Conclusion

Based on the result of data analysis, the researcher conclude that the use of direct corrective feedback significantly improved the students' writing ability to the fourth semester students of *Sekolah Tinggi Ilmu Kesehatan* (STIK) Stella Maris Makassar. It was clearly shown that the score of students' posttest showed improvement. It could be seen from students' mean score. The mean score of control class in posttest increased to 64.25 from 44.50 in pretest while experimental class, the mean score was 79.20 from 45.47 in pretest.

For that reason, Direct corrective feedback was more effective than usual feedback. Students got better improvement when they were given direct corrective

feedback compared with usual feedback only. This could be seen from the posttest of experiment class, the mean score was higher (79.20) than control class (64.25).

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