USING ERROR FEEDBACK TO IMPROVE STUDENTS' WRITING SKILL OF THE SEVENTH GRADE STUDENTS

Windarti Dian Ekowati Kusumaningrum, Rr. Hasti Robiasih

Universitas Sarjanawiyata Tamansiswa; Universitas Sarjanawiyata Tamansiswa ako.
sarap@gmail.com; hasti@ustjogja.ac.id

Abstract

    The research aims to (1) describe the implementation and (2) find out the results of using error feedback to improve students' writing skill of the seventh grade students at SMP N 3 Berbah Sleman. This action research conducted in two cycles which the subject was the students of VII D of SMP N 3 Berbah Sleman consisting of thirty-one students. To collect the data, the writer conducted the observation and interview. The qualitative data were obtained through observation and interviews. The results show that (1) the implementation of error feedback in improving writing skill covers pre-writing, writing the product, feedback giving, revising the product, and writing the final product. (2) The result of using error feedback in improving writing skill is the students became more interested and enthusiastic in learning writing descriptive text. The students' interest was increased.

Keywords: *Teaching writing, descriptive text, error feedback*

Introduction
    English is one of important languages in the world nowadays. Although English is rarely used as a means of daily communication, Indonesian people realize how important English to face the globalization.
    Based on the School Curriculum, English is a compulsory subject which is taught from the Elementary level to the University level. Based on this fact, people realize that mastering English is an important thing.
    To be able to master English, students have to master its skills. English itself has four skills: speaking, listening, reading, and writing, as stated by Harmer (2007). He also states that those skills are divided into two parts. They are receptive skills and productive skills. Receptive skills are listening and reading, while productive skills are speaking and writing. Writing skill as one of the four major skills is a skill which encourages students to be able using appropriate words and correct grammar for making a good sentence, and then bringing it into a good paragraph to express their idea. Writing skill is very important to be mastered as not all communication activities can be held in the spoken form, as stated by Langan (2005) that writing can be used as a means of communication.
    Eventhough writing is an improtant skill to master, not all students have good ability in writing. This condition also happens in SMP N 3 Berbah Sleman. Some students had low motivation in writing class. The indicators of the problem

could be seen from their attitudes toward writing class. Some students did not participate well in the class. Every student had their own characteristic, some of them actively engaged in class activity but some others did not. Some students also had problem related to writing technique such as developing ideas, the use of punctuation and capitalization, spelling, grammar accuracy, and vocabulary mastery.Some of the students did not know the right spelling of some words and their sentence construction was still influenced by Indonesian construction. As a result, some of them were also having problems in word order. For example, they wrote instead of black hair. It is an example of student's mistake in word order which is influenced by Indonesian sentence construction. Based on this fact, teachers must be able to find the way to help the students to master the writing skills' aspects.

Teaching writing is always related to feedback. However, not all teachers are able to give appropriate feedback. Based on the phenomena above, the writer tried to improve the students' writing skills through the use of indirect feedback. Feedback is the teacher's response to the students' work. It is supported by Wajnryb (1992: 49) who states that feedback refers to responses given by the teacher to what students produce in the classroom. Furthermore, Ur (1996: 242) says that in the context of teaching, feedback is information given to the students about their performances of the learning task, usually with the objective of improving their performance.By getting feedback, students can improve the quality of their performances. As stated by Ellis (1998: 274) that feedback is the identification and correction of learners' errors and the positive reinforcement of current utterance.

The feedback given to the students is based on what stage the students are on, what are the mistakes, etc. Harmer (2007:147) states that the way teachers give feedback on writing will depend on the kind of writing task the students have undertaken, and the effect the teachers wish to create.There are some kinds of feedback that can be used in correcting written work, such as self-correction, peer correction, direct feedback, indirect feedback, etc. One of the most effective feedbacks in written work is indirect feedback. Indirect feedback is an effective technique to help the learners find and then correcting their mistakes.Hyland (2006:83) states that indirect feedback is feedback given where the teachers highlight the errors by underlining, circling, providing a code, etc. but gives the students the opportunity to fix errors themselves.

The reasons why the writer chose indirect feedback are, first, for junior high school level this technique is appropriate enough since students still need guidance in correcting their errors, but they also need to learn to be independent. Unlike when teachers applying self-correction or pair assessment which the students have to do the correction themselves, indirect feedback allows teacher to give guidance for the students through the use of codes and let the students correct the errors themselves. Second, since the students correct the mistake themselves, they can memorize the errors they had made and how to correct it so they can avoid making the same mistakes. Ferris and Robberts (2002) in Ellis (2012) argued that indirect feedback can lead to long-term learning.

Research Method

The type of this study is an action research. The participants of this research were the grade VII students of SMP N 3 Berbah Sleman which consisted of 31 students. The writer used the observation guidelines and interview guidelines as the instrument of collecting the data. The writer classified the data of the teaching-learning activities based on observing, questioning, exploring, associating, and communicating stages, analyzed the results of interviewing with the collaborator and the students, and also the students' writing to analyze the data.to analyze the data. They were analyzed and described in systematic and logic sentences.

Finding

In implementing error feedback to improve students' writing skill of the seventh-grade students at SMP N 3 Berbah Sleman, there were two cycles of teaching learning practice. In each cycles, there were four stages consisted of planning, acting, observing, and reflecting.

In the planning stage of cycle 1, the writer prepared the materials and lesson plan. Next, in the acting stage, the writer had five stages which consist of pre-writing, writing the product, feedback giving, revising, and writing the final product.

In pre-writing of cycle 1, the students were given a handout consisted of the materials about descriptive text and tasks. Then the writer explained about nominal and verbal sentences, descriptive text, and codes meaning in error feedback. Next, in writing the first product stage, students wrote their first product. They wrote about one of their families. In feedback giving, the students were given feedback on their writing. The writer gave codes on the students' work. Most of students made errors such as grammar, punctuation, wrong word, unnecessary words, and missing words. After that, the students revised their work by correcting the text which was given codes by the writer in the revising stage. The writer explained the meaning of the codes first, and then the students revised their writing. Then they rewrote their work as their final product which had been revised as their last stage.

Next was observing stage of cycle 1. The collaborator wrote the report of the activities. The students were interested in learning descriptive text, and they asked many questions about the codes and the words they did not know. However, some students did not pay attention to the writer.

In the reflecting stage of cycle 1, the writer found the weaknesses of the cycle 1. First, some students did not know many vocabularies because most of them did not bring dictionary. Second, the students seemed afraid in making mistakes in writing. Third, the writer gave explanation about verbal and nominal sentences on the board, but on the hand-out, there was no written explanation about that, so some students asked their friend and the writer. Fourth, some students talked to their friends since they would have a camping, but they had not prepared the stuffs well. They would have a camping the next day, on 21st of May 2017.

Based on the problems found on the cycle 1, the writer did the cycle 2. She

made planning 2 which consisted of asking the students to bring dictionary, arranging a lesson plan in order to conduct the teaching and learning process in cycle 2, planning to explain about the materials better by giving them explanation one by one and checking their work, and trying to manage the class better by taking more attention to students who were the center of noisy in the class.

In the acting 2 stage, the writer re-explained the material about descriptive text in the pre-writing 2 step. Then in the writing 2 step, the writer asked the students to write about an idol but not like in the writing 1 step, the writer put the picture on an idol on the writing 2 task. It made the students easier to describe the idol. Next in the feedback giving 2 steps, the writer gave feedback on the students work. The writer found some errors on the students' work although they were less than the cycle 1. Then the students revised their work after the writer gave feedback in revising 2 steps. Then, the students wrote their revision on the writing the final product 2 steps.

In observing 2, the collaborator wrote the report of the activities. The teaching-learning process runs better than the cycle 1. The students were more interested in learning descriptive text, they less asked about vocabulary because they brought their dictionary. The last, in reflecting 2, the writer found that the activities which ran in the cycle 2 were better than cycle 1. It could be shown from the students' writing which had less error than cycle 1.

The use of error feedback in students' writing skill of the seventh grade students at SMP N 3 Berbah Sleman was improved. It could be seen from the students' interest in learning English. They also could use grammar better than before the indirect feedback treatment given. So, they could write a simple descriptive better than before.

Discussions

The implementation of the research was pre-writing, writing the product, feedback giving, revising, and writing the final product.

In pre-writing step, the writer gave a hand-out and tasks. She explained to the students about the descriptive text, and then asked the students to do the exercises. The different between cycle 1 and cycle 2 was the tasks. In cycle 1, students wrote a descriptive text which themed *My Family* without any picture given, but in the cycle 2, the theme was *My Idol* with a picture given.

In writing step 1, students wrote descriptive text about one of their family, but in writing step 2, they wrote about an idol. The errors that the students made in cycle 1 were more than in cycle 2.In feedback giving step 1, the writer found six errors on the student work. The writer put some codes on the second, fourth, and fifth sentence. On the second sentence, the writer put the code {} on the word *young*. That code indicated that the student wrote unnecessary word on that sentence. Then, still in the second sentence, she put WW on the word age which meant the student wrote wrong word. The word *age* should be *old*. On the fourth sentence, the writer put the word G on the word dance. It meant the student made an error in grammatical aspect. Next, she put the

code √ between listening and music. The code meant the writer missed to write something. In this case, the student forgot to write preposition "to" between the word listening and music. Last, the writer put the code G between the word *school* and *SMK N 2 Yogyakarta*. The student's mistake was, she missed to write the linking verb of "be" and preposition "in". It should be "*My sister's school is in SMK N 2 Yogyakarta*".

In feedback giving step 2, the writer found two errors on the student work. It was an improvement because the previous cycle, the student made six errors. The teacher gave two codes as the feedback of student's writing because the student made two mistakes. She gave G which meant grammatically incorrect and √ which meant there was a missing word.

In the revising step, the students revised their work. In cycle 1, the student still made some errors in revising her work. But in cycle 2, the student did not made any error in revising her work. Next step was writing the final product.

1. **The results of using error feedback to improve students' writing skill of the seventh grade students at SMP N 3 Berbah Sleman.**

The result of the implementation of using error feedback to improve students' writing skill of the seventh grade students at SMP N 3 Berbah Sleman was increasing. In cycle 1, students' interest in making descriptive text was lower than cycle 2. It could be described as result below.

Table 1. The Students' Writing Skills in each Cycle

Writing Aspects	Cycle 1	Cycle 2
Content	• Mostly writing as much as what was required, few writing less than what was required. • The ideas were similar to the examples of the text in the worksheets or books.	• Writing more sentences, giving more description, and communicating more messages.
Organization	• Mostly not including the identification part of the text. • The ideas were not well organized.	• Mostly using complete text organization. • Mostly the ideas were well organized.

Language Use	(continued) • Mostly cannot differentiate between main verbs and auxiliary verbs. • Mostly writing sentences without verbs. • Having low understanding of present tense. • Incorrect subject-verb agreement. • Mostly not using articles or using article incorrectly. • Incorrect use of object pronouns and possessive pronouns. • Incorrect adjectives group writing.	• Having improvement on writing grammatically correct sentences. • Using verbs in writing sentences. • Having better understanding of present tense. • Writing sentences with correct subject-verb agreement. • Using articles correctly. • Using objective pronouns and possessive pronouns correctly, although some students were still confused. • Having better understanding of adjectives group.
Vocabulary	• Mostly having difficulty in determining correct words to express adjectives or an action. • Showing limited use of English vocabulary. • Mostly using inappropriate word choice.	• Using effective verbs, adjectives, and adverbs for some students. • Mostly using extended vocabulary with occasional inappropriate word choice.
Mechanic	• Frequently using capitals for common nouns, word in the middle of a sentence, not giving punctuation. • Incorrectly placingpunctuation. • Mostly doing misspelling in some writing.	• Few using capitals for common nouns, words in the middle of a sentence. • Placing punctuation correctly. • Few doing misspelling in some writing.

Conclusion

     The first conclusion is that error feedback and the activities done by the students after they got the feedback can be used to improve the students' writing

skill. After giving feedback to the students, the teachers should give chance to students to revise their work. The improvement could be seen through some points. The first point is the students' ability in improving the content of the composition and they are also able to correct their errors based on the feedback given by the writer. The second point is that the students' improvement can be clearly seen from score 1, score 2, score 3, and score 4. The second conclusion is that the implementation of error feedback improves the quality of teaching writing and the students' motivation in learning writing. It can be seen from students' positive attitude toward writing. It is indicated by their activeness in the class. Comparing with their activeness in the cycle 1, they seem more active in the cycle 2. They also enthusiastically write what the writer asks to write. They are not afraid anymore in making mistakes because they know that their teacher will give feedback to them and they will be given a chance to correct their mistakes.

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