

IMPROVING STUDENTS' WRITING ABILITY THROUGH WRITTEN FEEDBACK

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Abstract

This research was conducted to solve the problem faced by second language learners (L2), especially in writing since it has been a big problem which puts students into trouble as shown by errors made in organizing the composition and the language. The problem is stated as how the implementation of written feedback can improve the tenth grade students' writing ability. The objective of this research is to find out written feedback can improve the Tenth Grade Students' Writing Ability at MA Ma'arif NU Kencong in the 2015-2015 Academic Year". This research was Classroom Action Research. The data was taken from observation and test and was analyzed using formula $M = \Sigma X/N$. The result showed that written feedback improves the students' writing ability both the score and the active participation by giving valuable feedback in the form of symbol and abbreviation, and they can independently revise their writing from the feedback given by the teacher. It could help to remind the students' errors that had been made when they are writing.

Keywords: *Writing ability, written feedback*

I. Introduction

Writing is one of the most powerful communication tools we use today in our life. It is a process of transforming thoughts and ideas into written form. Writing skill is complex and difficult to teach. Many students think that writing is complicated to learn. Therefore, it is assumed that writing may be considered as the most difficult among the language skills. Consequently, writing has become a big problem which put students into trouble as shown by errors made in both arranging the sentence structure and composing the language. Thus students cannot write topics of their writing correctly, especially for L2/FL learners who basically learn foreign language as their second language. They should firstly consider many things before putting their ideas into written text. Hyland (2003) stated that learning to write in a foreign or second language mainly involves linguistic knowledge and the vocabulary choices, syntactic patterns, and cohesive devices that comprise the essential building blocks of texts.

Based on the preliminary study and observation, it was found that the tenth grade student of MA Ma'arif NU Kencong had fair to poor writing abilities. It can be showed by the average writing score is 60, while the minimum score for writing

achievement set by the school is 70. This score is based on pre-test and observation which was conducted for the tenth grade student of MA Ma'arif NU Kencong in March 22nd, 2016. Based on the errors made by the students, it can be seen that their problem is still classical, they still lack in sentence structure including grammar, mechanic, vocabulary and organization.

Written feedback is decided to implement to improve students' writing ability. Feedback purposes to give valuable response in form of symbols and abbreviations to students' written product which has many errors. Ur (1991) defines feedback as information that is given to the learners about their performance of the learning task, usually with the objective of improving their performance. Regarding on the students' problems are still rely on grammar, mechanic, vocabulary, and organization. Therefore, it is assumed that written feedback can improve students' writing ability by giving indirect appropriate symbols and abbreviations on their grammatical, mechanical, vocabulary, and organization errors. So they will analyze and revise it themselves. Therefore, they will be able to remember their errors and do not make the same error in the next writing. Then, it can help to improve and remind their self-efficacy in writing as well. Ferris (2012) said that indirect feedback, especially if it is paired with required revision and/or analysis or reflection activities, has greater potential to help students grow in autonomy in monitoring their own writing.

II. Method

Classroom Action Research is chosen to overcome the writing problem that arouse in the class. Classroom Action Research is a research conducted by teacher to an activity that is intentionally planned, applied in a class and accurately observed the result (Arikunto, 2013). Moreover, the design of the research follows Kemmis and Mc Taggart (1988 in Arikunto 2013) which is implemented in four stages: planning, implementing, observing, and reflecting.

In order to obtain the primary data, the instruments used were test and observation checklist. The test was used to measure the students' writing achievement. A test is a set of questions, exercises or other instruments which are used to measure skill, knowledge, intelligence owned by the individual person or

groups (Arikunto, 2013). According to Hughes (1996), there are four types of test, namely proficiency test, achievement test, diagnostic test, and placement test. However, this research used achievement test to measure the tenth grade students' writing achievement after they are taught writing descriptive text by giving written feedback to the students' writing. Then, the primary data would be analyzed by using mean score.

III. Result and Discussion

The result of students' test can be seen that their writing has significantly improved. The mean score shown the improvement compared to the assignment score, the mean score significantly had improved from 61.09 to 76.12. Meanwhile, the students' active participant improved from 45.16% in the first meeting to 70.96% in the second meeting.

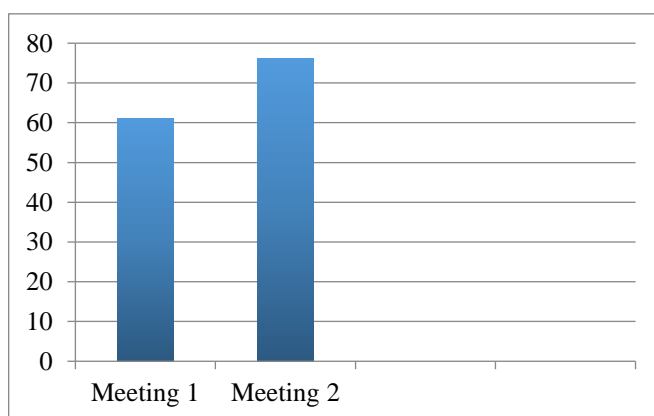


Figure 1. The students mean score

Based on the students' writing assignment and test, it was found that they still had many errors in constructing sentence structure including the use of grammar, the use of pronoun, word misspelling, and mechanics.

Grammar	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The use of pronoun (he, his, or him) • The use of compound adjectives • Possessive errors (have or has) • The use of verbs in present tense (singular or plural)
Vocabulary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vocabulary miss-use (huge or large, small or tiny, good, kind or nice)

Mechanics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Punctuation • Capitalization
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Table 1. Common errors which were made by the students

From the errors made by the students, it was given indirect written feedback in the form of symbols and abbreviations to the errors. By getting indirect feedback from the teacher, the students reflected about the errors have been made and then they were able to identify their weaknesses and to revise by themselves based on the feedback. Ferris (2012) said that indirect feedback, especially if it is paired with required revision and/or analysis or reflection activities, it has greater potential to help students grow in autonomy in monitoring their own writing. In addition, Keh (1990) says that feedback has the function as input from the reader to the writer with the effect of providing information to the reader as a revision. This feedback-revision process helps the students remember their previous weaknesses and errors in their next writing, not remake errors as their previous writing. However, the students see the teachers' feedback as crucial thing to improve their writing. It is similarly stated by Hyland (2003) that "many students see their teacher's feedback as crucial to their improvement as a writer".

IV. Conclusion

Based on the result and discussion, it can be concluded that the use of written feedback can improve the tenth grade students' writing ability at MA Ma'arif NU Kencong in the 2015-2016 academic year by giving valuable indirect written feedback to the students' errors such as grammatical, vocabulary, and mechanics errors on the students' draft for conducting self-revision. The process of giving indirect written feedback, revision, and evaluation help the students remember their previous weaknesses and errors in their next writing and do not remake errors as they did in the previous writing. The improvement of sentence structure that leads to the writing quality can be showed from the score of the student test. The score was increased from 61.09 to 76.12 after written feedback was applied to the students.

V. References

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