An Analysis of Online Corrective Feedback Implementation in Writing Class

Titik Lina Widyaningsih
STKIP PGRI Tulungagung
titiklina@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

In an academic setting, writing is a skill which requires a high level of cognitive competencies. It means that as the students of university should prepare themselves for always being active learners to improve their level of cognitive competencies used for their writing skills. Nowadays, the range of technologies are available to be used in the class. To make the atmosphere in the class be more challenging and interesting, there are many lecturers use technology in their writing class. As one of example, utilizing technology in writing class, especially in providing the feedback for the students to enhance students' written performance. This research focused on analyzing the implementation of online corrective feedback (via e-mail) in the writing class. This research was conducted in the second semester students of English Department. The researcher used qualitative method to conduct this research. There were three kinds of instruments used in this research. There were interview, observation, and questionnaire. The result of this research showed that the implementation of online corrective feedback was really effective for the students' writing skills improvement. The lecturer's activities, the students' responses, and the online corrective feedback implementation itself were the factors that could not be separated in gaining a successful teaching and learning process in writing class.

Keywords: Online corrective feedback, Writing Skill

INTRODUCTION

Writing becomes more important in globalization era. It is proved from the situation when writing helps people in communication. The people's ideas that they have can be shared to others by expressing them into a writing. People from other countries still can read their ideas even though they live in different countries.

Improving writing to the students of university is very important. It is in line with Murray's statement that says all academics with good first degrees and higher degrees will have developed the ability to write for scholarly publication (Murray, Thow, Moore, & Murphy, 2008). The university students from many countries have access to the internet and global communication network such as sending an E-mail and presenting and publicizing their academic papers on the international conference.

In addition, from other language skills such as listening, speaking and reading, writing has considered as an important skill in English teaching and learning as foreign language. It

helps students stimulate thinking, keep them to focus and organize their ideas, and improve their ability to summarize, analyze, and criticize (Rao, 2007). It means that by practicing writing the learners will be able to get stimuli to activate their thinking process, feel the compulsion to focus and organize their ideas and finally they can produce very good writing. This statement is also emphasized by Guasch et. all statement that writing is a central activity across disciplines in higher education (Guasch, Espasa, Alvarez, & Kirschner, 2013).

It is important to create an effective writing class in English teaching and learning. The way how the lecturer creates the class atmosphere in writing will influence the students' writing skills. From many aspects, one of the aspect that influences the process of teaching and learning writing is the feedback toward students' writing provided by the lecturer.

Feedback is one of important part in teaching and learning writing (K Hyland & Hyland, 2006). It can give powerful effect learning process such as in writing (Norcini, 2010). Feedback has long been considered as important part for the students' writing skills development of second language, not only for its potential for learning but also for students' motivation (K Hyland & Hyland, 2006).

It is important to consider how students and lecturer perceive corrective feedback as there are differing views on the matter. Traditionally, the feedback was given by conventional feedback. According to Lee, the students in Hong Kong prefer direct corrective feedback than indirect corrective feedback. (Lee, 2005). Liang also found that students felt it was helpful when they did the identification of errors by underlining and coded feedbacks. It enabled them to improve their writing skills. Moreover, according to Ellis that ESL instructors prefer to provide conventional corrective feedback (Ellis et al., 2008). However, this may not be an effective way of helping students improve their written work for reducing errors they made. It means that the teacher should provide corrective feedback of a learners' written work to help the students identify every mistake.

In teaching writing, there are two kinds of conventional corrective feedbacks. The first is direct feedback and indirect feedback. Direct feedback is also known as explicit feedback. The lecturer gave the direct feedback by identifying the errors and correcting them on the learners' written essay. Indirect feedback is when the lecturer identifies the error without providing the correct form. The lecturers usually give the conventional corrective feedback by providing codes as clues of the errors committed such as *vt* to represent verb tense error. In most cases however, the lecturers would underline, circle or place an error tally in the margin to indicate the mistake the students have committed. Ferris et al. (2000) investigated the effects of direct and indirect error correction. The study showed that at the end of the semester, there was significant reduction of students' errors especially the ones who got the indirect error feedback. In another study, Ferris and Roberts (2001) investigated the use of corrective feedbacks by providing codes and errors underlined. They did not provide mark and error feedback.

Nevertheless, the conventional corrective feedback has weaknesses. One of them is that there will be problem if the students cannot understand the lecturers' writing dealing with the written feedback given by the lecturers on their written essay. Some students got difficulties in providing revision for teacher feedback to their writing since they were unfamiliar with the grammatical rules and metalinguistic terminology connected with the errors (Lee, 1997). Thus, the students usually find difficulties in interpreting the lecturers' conventional feedback. Many students, then, do not find it easy to write up their academic work into an acceptable form (Paltridge, 2014). Moreover interpreting the feedback from their lecturer seems not easy thing to do for students since they have to catch the point toward the lecturer's feedback toward their writing. Sometimes, they misinterpret the lecturer's written feedback toward their writing. Thus, some of them fail to provide the revisions based on the feedback given by the lecturer.

The students got benefit from the use of technology in classrooms. The related study showed that the technology use increased the students' motivation, improve their self-concept and mastery of basic skills, make them be more active learners in processing, resulting in higher-order thinking skills and better recall (Stepp-greany, 2002). It is also supported by the other studies that reported an improvement in student writing skills through the use of networked computers (Beauvois, 1998). In addition, technology increasingly helps the society access the internet via computers, laptops, mobile phones, tablets, and other devices (Nobles & Paganucci, 2015).

The integration of internet technology and educational plays a major role in learning and social interaction (Papanis, Giavrimis, & Papani, 2010) . The students need technology skills to be prepared for successful entry into a new, competitive workforce.

Online learning is a fast growing field in education. As mentioned by Yeh and Lo, who stated that it was also an emerging focus in the areas of computer technology and language learning where scholars and teachers are examining the impact of technology on writing instruction (Yeh & Lo, 2009). It is also in line with Ken and Hyland statement that said many researchers have been looking for innovation to meet the needs of a new kind of learner—one no longer limited by constraints of face-to-face conferencing (Ken Hyland & Hyland, 2006).

With e-mail writing, the computer network technology has provided the participating students with a very different type of learning environment and greatly affected the way the students used and acquired the target language. E-mail writing activities were integrated into the regular structure and goals of the course (Liaw, 1998).

There are many researchers have already conducted the research using the online corrective feedback toward the students' writing skills. Most of their researches prove that this method is feasible method to improve the students' writing skills. Li (2000) investigated

the use of online task-based activities in writing class. The results showed that students were able to produce more syntactically and lexically complex essays. Students were found to be receptive to receiving feedback via e-mail compared to the conventional corrective feedback method using pen and paper. The other study is in contrast to the study conducted by Hosseini (2012) which indicated that using computers and the internet had significant motivational effect on the students.

Nezami (2012) also found that online corrective feedback, mainly recasts and meta linguistic feedbacks, was beneficial to learners. Many L2 writers mentioned that e-feedback influenced their writing process. The L2 writers indicated that receiving e-feedback from many people helped them focus on the strengths and weaknesses of their writings. Receiving multiple e-feedback encouraged students to re-think their paper and revise more (Tuzi, 2004). It appeared that students in the computer-mediated class produced less mistakes/errors as compared to those in the conventional class (Tafazoli, Nosratzadeh, & Hosseini, 2014). The findings bear important implications for designing effective task-based e-mail activities for enhancing second language writing development. First of all, in order to make use of e-mail to enhance second language writing instruction, it is important to design effective e-mail writing tasks that are not only interesting, but also meaningful and relevant to the objectives and content of the writing course. In integrating e-mail activities into second language writing, teachers should take full advantage of the on-line communication channel provided by computer networks to stimulate interaction among the students, foster communication and encourage collaborative writing (Li, 2000).

In the second semester of English Department in STKIP PGRI Tulungagung, the lecturer had implemented online corrective feedback in writing class. The new method of providing corrective feedback is feasible to improve the students' writing skills. The lecturer used E-mail in giving the online corrective feedback.

The researcher conducted the study in the academic writing class of the second semester.

The research problem: *How was online corrective feedback implementation in writing class of the second semester students?*

The objective of the research: *To analyze the implementation of online corrective feedback in writing class of the second semester students.*

METHOD

This study used qualitative method. This study was conducted in writing class at the second semester students in academic year of 2016/2017. This class consisted of 25 students. The whole process took about 3 months.

In this research, the researcher used three kinds of instruments. There were interviews, observations, and questionnaires. The interviews were done to get the information from both the lecturer and the students. The observations were done to get valid data about the implementation of online corrective feedback done in the writing class. The observations were done from the lecturer's activities during the class and the students' responses toward the activities done by the lecturer. The last, questionnaires were given to all of the students to know their opinion about online corrective feedback implementation in writing class. The data got from those instrument were going to be analyzed by the researcher.

FINDINGS

As mentioned above, this research used three kinds of instruments. There were interviews, observations, and questionnaires. Based the findings, the researcher found the

information about the implementation of online corrective feedback in writing class as follows:

Based on the interview done with the lecturer, it was concluded that the lecturer was well-prepared in implementing online corrective feedback in the writing class. The prepared the lesson plan in detail. She provided fast-response and detail corrective feedback toward the students' tasks sent via E-mail. Not only highlighting with the colors, but she gave notes in each student's task. She used the menu of "New Comment" from Microsoft Word feature. A task usually would not finish only with a reply containing revision notes, it took even three until 5 times revisions based on the quality of the writing and the cognitive competencies. During the consultation process, the lecturer allowed the students to have online consultation via E- mail. The lecturer informed that she made portfolios of the students' writing tasks. She documented and assessed portfolios of the students' writing tasks via online. The lecturer said that implementing online corrective feedback in writing was really helpful for her to enhance the students' writing skills.

Based on the interview done with eleven students, the researcher found that those eleven students gave positive responses toward the implementation of online corrective feedback in the writing class. The researcher only took eleven students from 25 students because from the tenth and eleventh students, she got the same information. It meant there was no new information. So, since it was a qualitative research, so she should stop the interview when there was no new various information.

From the observation done in five meetings, the researcher could report the implementation of online corrective feedback in writing class. At the beginning of the class, the lecturer informed to the students to make an E-mail account. The students had to send their E-mail addresses to the lecturer. As other ordinary class, the lecturer still explained the material about writing based on the topic in the certain chapter and gave them task to write

with certain topic to be elaborated. The students had to write in the computer or laptop. It meant that their writing had to be typed.

As the class was over only in fifty minutes, so the students usually did not have enough time to finish the task to write in the one meeting. Then, the process of consultations about their writing were continued to other occasion via online using E-mails. The students were required to use Microsoft Word Processor to complete their task and send them to the lecturer through E-mails. The feedback was given through E-mails. The participants received their feedback via e-mail. Their errors were highlighted in different colors to indicate the type of error made. The green color was used to show them the grammar mistake. The red color used to show them spelling mistake. The blue color was used to show them problem toward their unclear ideas they wanted to express. The yellow color was used to show them not proper dictions.

The result of the observation toward the students' responses showed that the students were really interested and enthusiastic in joining the writing class. Based on the data, from 25 students, there was 92% of the students were active during the class.

The result of questionnaires given to all of the students showed their positive opinion toward the implementation of online corrective feedback even though they sometimes found difficulty.

The following was the percentage of the questionnaires result.

The statements	Percentage of the 25 students' responses	
	Yes	No
I understand about the concept of online corrective feedback implemented in our writing class	100%	0%

The online corrective feedback from the lecturer is easy to understand.	93%	7%
The highlight used by the lecturer to show the mistakes is really helpful for me to provide the revisions	93%	7%
The comments provided by the lecturer give me more clues to provide correct revision.	91%	9%
The online consultations provided by the lecturer gives me more opportunities to question her about the corrective feedback that I cannot understand.	93%	7%
I still need more verbal explanation toward the lecturer's feedback in the class.	10%	90%
It is easy for me to give revision since I type the task. The processes are just deleting the mistake and providing the revision.	100%	0%
The features of verb agreement and spelling mistakes provided by Microsoft Word are really helpful for me to know the mistakes and event to provide the correct ones.	100%	0%
The internet connection sometimes is problem for me during consultation.	30%	70%
Online corrective feedback is effective for me to improve my writing skill	93%	7%

DISCUSSION

This study was aimed at analyzing the implementation of online corrective feedback in writing class in the second semester. The researcher found that to implement online corrective feedback, a lecturer should be well-prepared in the writing class. The lecturer must prepare the detail lesson plan. The lecturer must provide fast-response and detail corrective feedback toward the students' tasks sent via E-mail.

Highlighting with the colors was not enough. The lecturer must give a note in each student's task using menu of "New Comment" from Microsoft Word feature. This menu seemed totally helpful for the students since they read the comments easily. The lecturer did not need to use her hand writing. She just typed the comments. It was also emphasized by Lee who stated that some students cannot apply the teacher's feedback to their writing because they feedbacks were unfamiliar (Lee,2005). So, the researcher found that it was easy for the students to understand the corrective feedback given by their lecturer since it was typed in computer. The feedback could be read easily.

According to the lecturer, a task usually would not finish only with a reply containing revision notes, it often took even three until 5 times revisions based on the quality of the students' writing and the cognitive competencies. The students with minor revision usually only needed once revision. The minor revision is included grammar mistakes/ verb agreement and spelling mistakes. The students with major revision usually needed more than once revision. The problem was about organizing their ideas. as we know that, organizing idea was not an easy thing to do. It was also emphasized by Yunus who stated that organizing idea in writing was not easy (Yunus & Chien, 2016).

Based on the data from the lecturer, there were 3 students from 25 students who had to give 5 times revision. Those students found difficulties in organizing ideas. Even they still needed verbal explanation in the class after getting the corrective feedback via E-mail. Online corrective feedback was helpful but the explanation from the lecturer was also important for them.

The fact that the lecturer documented and assessed the portfolio of the students' writing tasks helped her to know the progress of the students' writing skills. It was also in line with the statement of Godwin who said that portfolios are a standard way for professionals to collect and showcase their work (Godwin-jones, 2008). Computer helped the

lecturer to save the portfolio in folder and anytime she needed, she could access it easily without keeping many papers.

Based on the interview done with eleven students, the researcher found that those eleven students gave positive responses toward the implementation of online corrective feedback in the writing class. The researcher only took eleven students form 25 students because from the tenth and eleventh students, she got the same information. It meant there was no new information. So, since it was a qualitative research, so she should stop the interview when there was no new various information. The students said that it was easy for them to follow the lecturer's teaching and learning process using online corrective feedback. They said that the limitation of the time for their meeting in the class could be covered from the online consultation that the lecturer provided for all of them. They still could ask to improve their writing. It appeared that students in the computer-mediated class made less mistakes/errors as compared to those in the conventional class (Tafazoli et al., 2014)

From the observation done in five meetings, the researcher could report the implementation of online corrective feedback in writing class. At the first meeting of the class, the lecturer informed the students to make an E-mail account. The students had to send their E-mail addresses to the lecturer. She also explained the lesson plan used in the class which focused on the implementation of the online corrective feedback. She made an agreement with all of the students to obey the rule. She let the students know the purpose of the online corrective feedback implementation. Overall, she told the students about the scenarios during five weeks ahead. At the second meeting, the lecturer explained the material about writing based on the topic in the certain chapter and gave them task to write with certain topic to be elaborated. The students had to write in the computer or laptop. It meant that their writing had to be typed. The process of consultations about their writing were continued to other occasion via online using E-mails. The students were required to use

Microsoft Word Processor to complete their task and send them to the lecturer through E-mails. The feedback was given through E-mails. The participants received their feedback via e-mail. Their errors were highlighted in some such as red, green, blue and yellow. During the observation, the lecturer completed all of the activities as she prepared in her lesson plan. The third meeting, the lecturer evaluated the process of online corrective feedback. She asked for the students' opinions toward the problem they might face during doing the first task. The result of the evaluation showed that the students found problem on joining the online consultation. The fourth meeting the lecturer gave a new topic to write. She gave the same instruction as the previous session. The different one from the previous instruction was that the students could join consultation as they could connect to the internet connection. It meant not be based on the tight previous schedule of consultation. The fifth meeting the lecturer held the mini test to the students. Based on the result of the mini test, the researcher found that there was 89% of the students got good score.

The result of the observation toward the students' responses showed that the students were really interested and enthusiastic in joining the writing class. Based on the data, from 25 students, there was 92% of the students were active during the class. The way the lecturer explained the material also influenced the students' interest in learning writing. To have successful process of teaching and learning process, the lecturer prepared learning agreement which was discussed and agreed with all of the students.

The result of questionnaires given to all of the students showed their positive opinion toward the implementation of online corrective feedback even though they sometime found difficulties. The result showed that all of the students could understand the concept about online corrective feedback implemented in writing class easily. There was only 7% of the students found difficulties in understanding the online corrective feedback from the lecturer. The problem happened because the students had low understanding in grammar, so they still

found it was difficult for them to understand the lecturer's feedback even though it had been typed. There was 93% of the students said that the use of highlight using colors during the providing the feedback was really helpful for them to provide the revisions. It meant that this feature provided by Microsoft Word was useful for the lecturer to show kinds of mistakes that the students did in their writings. The comments provided by the lecturer toward each student's task helped the students to revise their writing. The percentage showed 91% of the students felt that it was helpful. There was only 7% of the students did still not take the chance to have online consultation provided by the lecturer. The problem was because those students were quite lazy to have more discussion with the lecturer in other occasion. There was only 10% of the students still needed verbal explanation about the lecturer's feedback. It meant that online corrective feedback was quite enough for most of the students to understand the feedback from the lecturer and provide the revision. The features that Microsoft Word provided such as editing (deleting-revising), grammar and spelling checker made the students' time more effective to finish their writing. All of the students agreed toward this statement.

However there was still problem that the students face. There was 30% of the students could not have good and fast internet connection. So it disturbed the process when they wanted to have online consultation with lecturer. To solve this problem, the lecturer could give certain schedule for online consultation session in order the students could try at least to find better place to get good signal better than in their homes. The students could take this chance to submit their task in early time. As the last statement mentioned in the questionnaires, there was 93% of the students agreed that online corrective feedback was effective for them to improve their writing skills.

This research was in line with some previous researches. Tafazoli states that in his research the use of computer was really helpful to improve the students' writing. Electronic

venues such as the Microsoft Word or E-mails provide features that inform the users about some of their writing mistakes/errors such verb agreement or spelling mistakes (Tafazoli et al., 2014). This features influence the students' motivation of experimental group. They felt excited in working with the technology, especially in writing. This condition also happened to this research. It meant that the students felt more motivated when the researcher taught writing using online corrective feedback using E-mail. They found the feedback from the researcher easily since the feedback was written in the form of font form the Microsoft Word. In addition, they also found it easy to revise their writing based on the feedback given by the researcher since the just delete the wrong words or phrases even paragraphs and retype it to provide the revision. This study is in line with the research conducted by Tuzi. The feedback done using electronic impacted to the students' writing (Tuzi, 2004).

A study conducted by Scheeler, McKinnon and Stout (2012) also found that using online corrective feedback had positive effect on 5 pre service teachers. However, ESL instructors were also encouraged to find out their students' preference for corrective feedback before the writing lesson. Li (2000) investigated the use of online task-based activities in a process oriented writing class. The results showed that students were able to produce more syntactically and lexically complex essays. Students were found to be receptive to receiving feedback via e-mail compared to the conventional corrective feedback method using pen and paper. The value of feedback in improving collaborative writing assignments in an online learning environment (Guasch et al., 2013).

CONCLUSION

The research reported in this article has a number of limitations. Nevertheless, the result of this research showed that the implementation of an online corrective feedback using E-mail method was effective for teaching writing skill. The lecturer found it was easy to help the

students improve their writing skill. In addition, the students also got easiness in giving

revisions toward the lecturer's online corrective feedbacks. The online corrective feedback

helped the lecturer improve the students' writing skills. The researcher recommends for more

extensive research in teaching writing using the online corrective feedback using E-mail. The

lecturer's activities, the students' responses, and the online corrective feedback

implementation itself were the factors that could not be separated in gaining a successful

teaching and learning process in writing class. She also suggested to other lecturers to

implement online corrective feedback in writing class. The most important this was that the

lecturer should implement it based on the condition in their classes since this factor also

contributed to the successful of online corrective feedback in writing class.

REFERENCES

Beauvois, M. H. (1998). Conversations in Slow Motion: Computer-Mediated Communication in the Foreign Language Classroom. *Canadian Modern Language Review*, *54*(2), 198–217. http://doi.org/10.3138/cmlr.54.2.198

Godwin-jones, R. (2008). Web-Writing 2 . 0 : Enabling , Documenting , and Assessing Writing Online. *Assessing Writing*, *12*(2), 7–12. Retrieved from http://llt.msu.edu/vol12num2/emerging.pdf

Guasch, T., Espasa, A., Alvarez, I. M., & Kirschner, P. A. (2013). Effects of feedback on collaborative writing in an online learning environment. *Distance Education*, *34*(3), 324–338. http://doi.org/10.1080/01587919.2013.835772

Hyland, K., & Hyland, F. (2006). *Feedback in Second Language Writing: Contexts and Issues*. *Feedback in second language writing:* http://doi.org/10.1017/S0261444806003399

Hyland, K., & Hyland, F. (2006). Feedback on second language students' writing. *Language Teaching*, *39*(02), 83. http://doi.org/10.1017/S0261444806003399

Lee, I. (1997). ESL learners' performance in error correction in writing: Some implications for teaching. *System*, *25*(4), 465–477. http://doi.org/10.1016/S0346-251X(97)00045-6

Lee, I. (2005). Error correction in the L2 writing classroom: What do students think? *TESL Canada Journal*, *22*(2), 1–16.

Li, Y. (2000). Linguistic characteristics of ESL writing in task-based e-mail activities. *System*, *28*(2), 229–245. http://doi.org/10.1016/S0346-251X(00)00009-9

Liaw, M.-L. (1998). Using electronic mail for English as a Foreign Language instruction. *System*, *26*(3), 335–351. http://doi.org/10.1016/S0346-251X(98)00025-6

Murray, R., Thow, M., Moore, S., & Murphy, M. (2008). The writing consultation: developing academic writing practices. *Journal of Further and Higher Education*, *32*(2), 119–128. http://doi.org/10.1080/03098770701851854

Nobles, S., & Paganucci, L. (2015). Do Digital Writing Tools Deliver? Student Perceptions of Writing Quality Using Digital Tools and Online Writing Environments. *Computers and Composition*, *38*, 16–31. http://doi.org/10.1016/j.compcom.2015.09.001

Norcini, J. (2010). The power of feedback. *Medical Education*. http://doi.org/10.1111/j.1365-2923.2009.03542.x

Paltridge, B. (2014). Academic writing. *Language Teaching*, (September), 87–105. http://doi.org/10.1017/S0261444804002216

Papanis, E., Giavrimis, P., & Papani, E. M. (2010). The contribution of the internet into learning. *Review of*

European Studies, *2*(1), 54–60. http://doi.org/10.5539/res.v2n1p54

Rao, Z. (2007). Training in brainstorming and developing writing skills. *ELT Journal*, *61*(2), 100–106. http://doi.org/10.1093/elt/ccm002

Stepp-greany, J. (2002). Student Perceptions on Language Learning in a Technological Environment: Implications for the New Millenium. *Language Learning & Technology*, *6*(1), 165–180. Retrieved from http://llt.msu.edu/vol6num1/steppgreany/

Tafazoli, D., Nosratzadeh, H., & Hosseini, N. (2014). Computer-mediated Corrective Feedback in ESP Courses: Reducing Grammatical Errors via Email. *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences*, *136*, 355–359. http://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2014.05.341

Tuzi, F. (2004). The impact of e-feedback on the revisions of L2 writers in an academic writing course. *Computers and Composition*, *21*(2), 217–235. http://doi.org/10.1016/j.compcom.2004.02.003

Yeh, S. W., & Lo, J. J. (2009). Using online annotations to support error correction and corrective feedback. *Computers and Education*, *52*(4), 882–892. http://doi.org/10.1016/j.compedu.2008.12.014

Yunus, M. M., & Chien, C. H. (2016). The Use of Mind Mapping Strategy in Malaysian University English Test (MUET) Writing. *Creative Education*, *07*(04), 619–626. http://doi.org/10.4236/ce.2016.74064