LECTURER'S WRITTEN CORRECTION IN WRITING CLASS
A Case Study at Universitas Veteran Bangun Nusantara Sukoharjo in Academic Year 2013/2014

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Abstract

Written correction is the important part of FL writing instruction. The aims of this research are to find: (1) how the lecturer gives written correction to student's writing; (2) how the students respond to the lecturer's written correction (LWC); and (3) how far LWC affects the students' improvement in writing accuracy. This study is a case study where the participants are one writing lecturer and eight students at a private University in Central Java. Interviews, direct observation and documentary analysis were used in this study. The findings show that the lecturer used direct/indirect correction; metalinguistics (error code); focused/unfocused; and reformulation by underlining, crossing, and striking through to the incorrect forms. The correction was provided after the students submitted their final draft to the lecturer. All students preferred direct correction to other types and they made use of the correction for their learning through revising it. Finally, LWC affected the students' improvement on writing accuracy.

Keyword: Written Correction, Types of Written Correction, The Students' Responses, Case Study.

Abstrak

Koreksi tertulis dinilai sangat penting dalam pengajaran bahasa asing baik. Tujuan penelitian adalah: (1) menemukan bagaimana dosen memberikan koreksi terhadap pekerjaan menulis mahasiswa; (2) bagaimana mahasiswa merespon koreksi tertulis dari dosen; serta (3) sejauh mana koreksi tertulis dari dosen tersebut mempengaruhi peningkatan ketelitian menulis mahasiswa.

Penelitian ini merupakan penelitian studi kasus dengan partisipan seorang dosen mata kuliah writing dan delapan mahasiswa di salah satu universitas di Jawa Tengah. Interview, observasi langsung dan analisis dokumen digunakan dalam penelitian ini.

Hasil temuan menunjukkan bahwa dosen menggunakan koreksi langsung dan tak langsung, metalinguistik (pengkodean); terfokus/takterfokus dan reformulasi dengan menggarisbawahi, menyilang dan mencoret pada bagian yang salah. Koreksi tersebut dilakukan setelah mahasiswa menyerahkan draft terakhir kapada dosen mereka. Semua mahasiswa lebih menyukai koreksi tertulis yang langsung daripada jenis yang lain dan mereka memanfaatkan koreksi tersbut dengan mempelajari dan merevisinya. Selanjutnya, koreksi tertulis berpengaruh terhadap peningkatan ketelitian menulis mahasiswa.

Kata Kunci*: Koreksi Tertulis, Jenis Koreksi Tertulis, Tanggapan Mahasiswa, Studi Kasus.*

INTRODUCTION

The student's writing becomes the center of teaching and learning, fulfilling a range of purposes according to academic curriculum. Writing is an essential skill of educated persons, and its development is the responsibility of all college faculties. Because English is as a foreign language (FL) in Indonesia, there are many students who have difficulty with writing. It is true that writing is difficult not only for those whose English is FL but also for native speakers themselves. It is in line with Pleuger's (2001: 155) statement saying that writing is often thought of as the most difficult of the four skills. However, to write well in English is not a skill that can be mastered in one course, but rather it is a developmental process that takes time and attention. Chkotua (2012) says that foreign students do not have enough language practice. To have writing practice, the lecturers assess student's writing by giving task, for example, asking students to make compositions, written examinations and written assignment the main purpose of which is to demonstrate their mastery of disciplinary course content. After giving task to students, the lectures have to give corrective feedback (CF) to inform whether student's writing is already good or needed to be corrected. However, error correction is applied in actual language teaching (Pawlak, 2012: 5).

Correction in teaching writing is aimed to help undergraduate students to improve their understanding more about academic writing in both discipline-specific and writing/study skills. Adler-Kassner and O'Neill (2010: 61) say that the interaction between teacher-student language use and student learning can be especially important in writing because teacher feedback is tied to students' revision choices as well as to their overall understanding of writing. In contrast, Swing in Irons (2008: 25) confirms that not all students desire feedback from their teachers since students sometime feel unhappy with the correction. Wang (2010: 195) states that it is because there are many words crossed out, new words added, and an array of marginal comments. Truscott (1999: 111) also convinces that grammar correction is bad idea. He also states in his thesis that grammar correction should be abandoned because it needs more time and energy. This

study aims to investigate how the lecturer gives written correction to the students and examine how the students' responses towards lecturer's written correction and how far written correction affects the students' improvement in writing accuracy.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research was conducted at one of private universities in Sukoharjo Central Java. It took four months starting from October 2013 to January 2014. The research had been conducted using case study with a single-case design, which investigated a particular case or set of cases, describing or explaining the events of the case. Yin (2011: 17) says that case study study is a phenomenon (the "case") in its real-world context. In my opinion, a case study was appropriate to be applied in this study because I explored an in depth implementation of written correction by writing lecturer in EFL writing class. However, the cases were bounded by time and activity, and I had collected the detailed information using a variety of data collection procedures over sustained period of time (Stake as cited in Cresswell, 2009: 30).

The criteria for selecting the interview samples included a lecturer with 3-5 year experience in written correction in writing class. To strengthen the validity of information obtained from the lecturer (semi-structured), I also interviewed (focus-group interviews) 8 of 133 English students who were selected purposively. To enrich the findings of this research,data from documents and classroom observation were also considered. The documents comprised syllabus, lecturing schedule and the record of students' achievement (semester one and two), the artifacts collected from the students' test/papers (assignment) of semester one and two. Direct observation was also used to know the real condition of every class. Then, the data were analyzed by using interactive analysis model. It means that data collection and analysis occurred together in the field.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION
FINDINGS
How the lecturers give written correction to student's writing

This section explores implementation of written correction, the types and manner of written correction techniques used by the lecturer, and students' errors in writing. The knowledge of written correction techniques in term of the technical names was still unfamiliar by the lecturer although she had applied several types to correct students' writing. Direct correction, indirect, metalinguistics, focused/unfocused, and reformulation were used. I triangulated the information from the lecturer with the evidence from the artifacts. I showed the techniques of correction to the lecturer because she did not know the terms of correction in writing. I explained the types of written correction to the lecturer by showing the examples. Then, the lecturer began to understand about the types of the techniques. (Interview note: 08/01/2014).It proved that the lecturer used several techniques in correcting students' writing namely direct, indirect, metalinguistics, focused/unfocused and reformulation techniques.

> *"The lecturer usually gave direct correction, indirect, also this…* [whilepoiting reformulation technique]*, and this one…* [while pointing metalinguistics]." (Interview note: 24/12/2013).

The artifacts analysis showed that the lecturer gave mostly direct techniques than other types. The table 1 presents the percentage of types of written correction used by the lecturer.

Table 1. The Types of Correction Techniques

Types of Correction Techniques	Sum of Checklist	Percentage
Direct	20	10.0%
Indirect	78	39.0%
Metalinguistics:		
Error Code	10	5.0%
Explanation	0	0.0%
Focused	11	5.5%
Unfocused	69	34.5%
Reformulation	12	6.0%

While, the manner of correcting the students' error was by circling on the error words, and revising into the correct one, giving tick mark and inserting a word when there was a missing word in the sentence and putting strikethrough the incorrect usages. The lecturer believed that by giving some marks accurately to

the incorrect forms, the students understand their errors (interview note: 08/01/2014). There was similarity between direct and indirect techniques used by the lecturer in correcting students' work. The lecturer mostly used the circle for indirect technique. In the interview, I had explained the way of correcting students' work using indirect technique, namely by crossing the wrong word, giving circle or strikethrough.
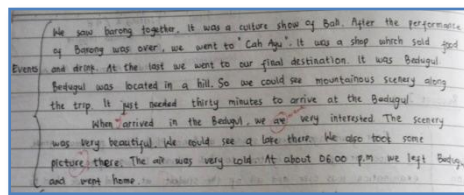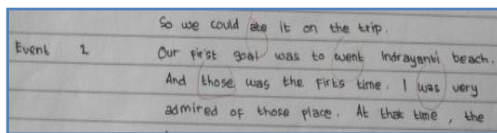

Figure 1. The Manner of Direct Correction
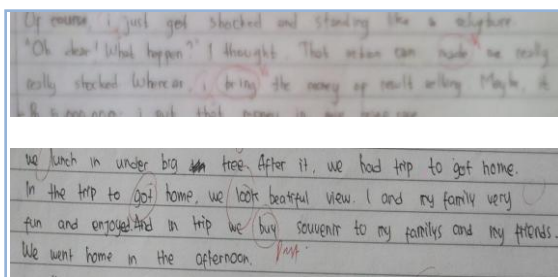

Figure 2. The Manner of Indirect Correction

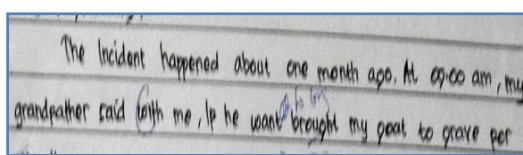**Figure 3. The Metalinguistics**

Figure 4. The Reformulation

The artifact analysis showed that students made errors on grammatical structure, mechanics, vocabulary, and content. According to the lecturer, most of the students made errors in grammatical structure, especially verb tenses and modals. I had also analyzed the artifacts about students' error in writing. The Table 2 shows the students' writing errors.

Table 2. The Proportion of Error Elements

Error Elements	Sum of Checklists	Percentage
Grammatical Structure	85	58.2%
Mechanics	30	20.5%
Vocabulary	23	15.8%
Contents	8	5.5%

How the students respond the lecturers' written correction.

All students agreed that they preferred direct correction. Conversely, based on the artifact analysis, the lecturer applied mostly indirect correction.

> *"We immediately know the errors (NH). What the correct forms are (RS). I know I made errors, and finally I will not make the same errors in the future (LT). I can remember the errors I will not do anymore (NA)."*(Interview note: 24-12-2013).

The clearness was also important for students. Given clear comments, the students had more understanding. Although the lecturer mostly used indirect correction, there at least was circle or cross mark on the incorrect usage. Through this way they could learn the mistakes. *"If there are* corrections*, I will see and learn, sometimes I also revise them"* (Interview note: 24/12/2013). The different types of correction used by the lecture created the discrepancy between the students' preference and the lecturer's practice. All the students said that they preferred direct technique to other techniques, while the lecturer used mostly indirect correction. The students preferred direct technique because they know immediately their errors and correct forms. They added that they always remembered their errors so that they did not make the same errors in the future.

It is an important stage in process writing. Much of the research that has investigated written CF (for example, Ferris and Roberts as cited in Ellis, 2008: 104) has centered on whether students are able to make use of the feedback they receive when they revise.

Based on the interview (Interview note: 24/12/2013), it is known that they believed that they were able to make use of the correction by learning their errors and they sometimes revised them. They also added that they asked their friends or their lecturer if they met problems they did not understand yet.

How far the LWC affects the students' writing

Before, I explain whether LWC is useful according to students' perspective and at the end of this section, I explores about the effect of LWC to students' writing.

> *"Yes, it is very helpful since I sometimes thought that it had been correct but actually it was wrong, so I could know the correct one, and I learnt it (NH). It is very important, sir. In order to know the errors and what the correct one is (RD)."* (Interview note: 24/12/2013).

The result of interview above revealed that all students agreed that LWC was useful for them because they could identify their errors on their writing. Concerning with the effect of LWC, there are two factors which affect the students' writing becomes improved. First, they received the correction and they learnt it by themselves. It means that they could revise their errors when they know the answers. Secondly, they asked their friends who had more understanding in writing skills and they sometimes asked their lecturer for further details. When I asked them about their level of writing accuracy, they said that their writing accuracy became improved because of the LWC(Interview note: 24/12/2013).

I also collected the data of students' writing achievement from semester one and semester two which is provided in table 3:

Table 3. Students' Final Achievement

Semester	Class	Class Average	Total Average	Percentage
One	A	2.70		
	B	2.90	2.80	70.0%
	C	2.80		
	D	2.80		
Two	A	3.40		
	B	3.40	3.30	82.5%
	C	3.20		
	D	3.20		

The table 3 shows that the students' achievement improved, 12.5%. Although there was improvement but the students never gained the maximal

grade. Their achievements stayed the same, because they were the position "B". In the interview, they also said that their grades were still in "B" (interview note: 24/12/2013).

DISCUSSION

The results of the current research showed that there seemed to be a strong bond between providing language learners with written correction and their writing accuracy. It is line in with the suggestion by Ferris as cited in Burke and Pieterick (2010: 21) that teacher commentary, error correction produce beneficial results. The students' writing accuracy becomes improved. It is different from Truscott's argument that feedback is notably unsuccessful in helping to reduce error frequency in subsequent student writing (Ferris, 2005: 261). Written correction pushes the learners towards noticing the linguistic problems that they are struggling with and that sometime they take for granted. However, Brookhart (2008: 1) suggests that good feedback is to give students information they need so they can understand where they are in their learning and what to do next—the cognitive factor. What improves students' writing accuracy? This question is delivered to explore how far LWC affects the students' improvement in writing accuracy. The students have different answers about what writing aspects become improved.

First, LWC makes their grammar become better (Interview note, 24/12/2013). Grammar here refers to the set of rules that allow us to combine words in our language into larger units (Greenbaum and Nelson, 2002:1). Grammar plays important role in writing where students can put words in the right order. It is the central component of writing and mediates between the system of written symbols, on the one hand, and the system of meaning, on the other. LWC is conducted to present the Standard English to the students where they have not been familiar with the correct rules, or perhaps, they are inaccurate in using grammar. However, correction is required with the analytic grammar which makes explicit the knowledge of the rules in which the students operate the language properly (Greenbaum and Nelson, 2002:1).

Secondly, the lecturer conducts written correction on the content of student writing to help the students to write better. Concerning with the content correction, it goes in line with statement of Coffin, Curry, Goodman, Hewings, Lilis and Swann (2003: 105) which state that feedback on the content of the essay writing is lecturer's concern which is a key area of this particular university course. Third, LWC helps students become more self-sufficient and aware of the elements that lead to successful writing. Commenting on the organization of repairing in the language classroomm, Seedhouse, as cited in Pawlak (2012:143) points out that the focus of repair in meaning-and-fluency contexts is on establishing mutual understanding and negotiating meaning. The students feel that LWC make their writing well-organized (Interview note, 24/12/2013). In other words, a well-organized piece of writing supports readers by making it easy for them to follow, while a poorly organized piece leads readers through a maze of confusion and confounded or unmet expectations. Ferris (2005: 214) suggests that the organization of writing consists of three parts a clear beginning (introduction), middle (body), and end (conclusion) to the essay.

Fourth, the students become creative in determining the vocabulary in their writing because of LWC (Interview note, 24/12/2013). Most EFL students have limited vocabulary knowledge. However, the decontextualized vocabulary had indeed become a problem and something of a disincentive (East, 2008: 6) in writing.

From the explanation above, it can be inferred that LWC can help the students not only to have better clarity and quality of their grammatical structure but also to be able to create a meaningful content of the text because the sentences they make well-organized. However, a well-organized piece of writing and contextual vocabulary in their writing can support readers by making it easy to follow. What types of written correction affect the improvement of writing accuracy? This is the last issue related to the types of written correction lecturer utilizes. This study was conducted to investigate what types of written correction used by the lecturer which can affect the students' improvement in writing accuracy. However, Truscott (as cited in Ferris, 2005: 289) strongly argues that

CF is ineffective or harmful because it consumes so much teacher and student energy and attention, taking time away from activities that could promote genuine learning. Many previous studies have proved the effectiveness of types of error correction. Kao (2013) and Farid and Abdul Samad (2012) on their experiments about the effectiveness between direct and indirect correction, it is known that direct correction is sufficient for students' acquisition of English article than those who receive indirect correction. On contrary, other studies conducted by Maleki and Eslami (2013), and Abedi, Latifi, Rassaei and Molinzadeh (2010) show that there is greater improvement in producing writing than those who received direct correction. Other types of correction are focused and unfocused correction. The studies related to unfocused CF group did not do better than the control group where accuracy in English articles was concerned (Farrokhi and Sattarpour, 2011; Sheen, Wright and Moldawa, 2009). While, Saeb's (2013) study shows that there is a significant improvement in accuracy for the two experimental groups from pretest to posttest.

Metalinguistics works well in exposing learners to the target structure in juxtaposition with consciousness- raising activities such as error correction can improve the learners' uptake of grammatical structures. Fatemi's (2013) study which shows that learners receiving metalinguistic corrective feedback worked better than those receiving recast. The last type of correction is reformulation. This activity is in accordance with the statement of Nicholas, Lightbown and Spada as cited in Ibarrola (2009) that reformulation is making only the necessary correction and readjustments to make it native-like without changing the original meaning. Furthermore, the previous study related to this correction has also proved that reformulation is useful and effective as one of types of written correction applied in teaching writing (Ibarrola, 2009).

CONCLUSION

It is true that LWC was able to improve students' writing accuracy. Based on the focus-group interviews with the students; they considered that they were assisted by written correction which they received from their lecturer. Based on

the findings of this recent study, providing written correction the lecturer did not focus only on grammatical structure but also other elements, for instances mechanics, vocabulary, organization, and content. However, The written correction used by the lecturer affected the students not only to have better accuracy clarity and quality of their grammatical structure but also to able to create a text with meaningful content or organization, creative vocabularies so that the they were able to make well-organized text. Also, by receiving written correction, they did not repeat the same errors in the future. Furthermore, the results of documents of the students' writing achievement between semester one and semester two showed that there was significant improvement. The students' achievement increasing 12.5% in semester two (82.5% from 70%), it shows that LWC was effective to develop students' accuracy in writing. Based on the findings of this recent study, the research presents the proposition: how far LWC affects the students' improvement in writing accuracy.

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