

THE INFLUENCE OF DIRECT WRITTEN CORRECTIVE FEEDBACK TOWARD EFL STUDENTS' ESSAY WRITING

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ABSTRACT

This research referred to the experiences of the researchers in providing students writing courses in the context of EFL (English as Foreign Language) in Batam. It was found that students' essay writing contained several grammatical errors to plagiarism. This study aimed to determine the level of effectiveness of written corrective feedback (WCF) on the quality of students' essay writing. The research method was quasi-experimental where the control class was given treatment by using no WCF and the experimental class was given WCF. Both scores from control and experiment classes were different. The mean of experiment class was higher than the mean from control class. After analyzing them statistically, it was found that the hypothesis (Ha) was accepted. It meant that WCF had a significant effect on the quality of essay writing. It was concluded that WCF is a better way in improving the quality of students' essay writing.

Keywords: *Direct WCF, EFL Students, Essay Writing*

INTRODUCTION

Writing for EFL students in the university level is challenging. Writing is not an easy task to do as it needs process and takes much time to accomplish it. To deliver an idea into the writing, practice is needed. A practice to write an idea into a draft can be done repeatedly. They may write many drafts before writing. In writing a draft, they are able to develop their idea more deeply in a paragraph. It is not

exaggerated if we say that they are facing a great challenge of writing (Mubarak & Jusmaya, 2018).

In language skills, writing is one of language skill that seems to be difficult one than listening, speaking and reading. Based on the teaching writing experiences, students were sometimes mirroring their mind as they speak. This is not appropriate since writing and speaking are totally different. In speaking, someone can express their disagreement directly but

different in writing where the reader does not know and cannot argue with the author (Langan, 2010). If they write something as their mind speaks, just copy the ideas in the context of speaking and used it in writing, it is a mistake (Fulwiler, 2002; Warburton, 2006). Then, it is a problem to be solved if we find their writing has speaking pattern.

The writing process is one important step to develop a writing skill. The process is not short, because writing is not a natural talent but a process of discovery after continuous practices (Langan, 2010; Murray & Moore, 2006). In other hand the writer cannot perform to their true ability because of time constraint (Khuder & Harwood, 2015). The process of writing is a continuous process. Students should be able to understand that writing is an iterative process (Murray & Moore, 2006). It is understandable that the process of writing takes time.

There are at least four stages in writing process namely planning, drafting, revising and editing. The order may change according to the conditions of each student. A student can start from the planning to the editing stage or go back to the first stage and so on (Seow, 2002). At the planning stage, students are directed to write whatever is in their minds to be the subject of writing. They can also use wh-questions activities by asking questions such as what, where, when, why, who and how (Seow, 2002). They can choose their own style to find the main idea of their writing (Janet C Richards & Miller, 2005). This stage can be also described as prewriting terms where the writing process consists of five stages such as free writing, questioning, making a list, clustering and preparing a scratch outline (Langan, 2010).

At the drafting stage, students design ideas that have been collected in the previous stage. Then in the revising stage, students can review their writing based on the feedback given by the lecturer. The last stage is the editing process. This stage is the final stage of the completion of their writing and ensures writing can be understood by the reader (Fulwiler, 2002; Langan, 2010; Janet C Richards & Miller, 2005; Seow, 2002). Those stages in essay writing are important because they can once again prevent a student from plagiarism which is considered unlawful and has no moral education (Bailey, 2006; Janet C Richards & Miller, 2005; Warburton, 2006).

Writing is the heart of education. It is a fundamental task for a student from various disciplines because students are required to be able to write scientific writing of reports, assignments, research articles, essays, journals, or books. (Prihantoro, 2016; Swales & Feak, 2004; Warburton, 2006). So it is not excessive if we conclude that writing is the spirit of education.

Writing essays is a complex process. Essay consists of a set of interrelated paragraphs and discusses a central idea. The smallest part of writing is a word. Then the word is a representation of an idea that can be translated into a sentence. Interrelated sentences will form a paragraph and some related paragraphs form an essay. A good paragraph consists of topic sentences, supporting sentences, and closing sentences (Folse, Muchmore-Vokoun, & Solomon, 2002, 2010; Langan, 2010). By writing good paragraphs, students will be able to write an essay better.

In the university level, students are asked to write essay. They are expected to follow the process from

beginning in order to avoid plagiarism or also known as an academic theft (Pecorari, 2010). The role of lecturer is important to minimize plagiarism by providing feedback to individual tasks. This feedback is also known as Corrective Feedback (CF). Students themselves will be more motivated to write well because they know that their task is read by their lecturers and given valuable input.

Corrective feedback (CF) has been a discussion of experts in recent decades. Many related studies were conducted to find out whether CF has an important role in language teaching. CF is said to play a role in language learning that can improve students' learning motivation and proficiency in the acquisition of a second language. The CF may be either CF positive or CF negative (Ellis, 2009b). However, CF is said to also give a bad influence for the development of language and learning process. Regardless of the existing debate, it will be very interesting if this can be proven in the language learning environment as a foreign language.

The theory of Corrective Feedback (CF) has long been applied in the teaching of a second language. CF can be applied to language skills such as speaking and writing skills to acquire a second language. In writing skills known as Written Corrective Feedback (WCF). From the beginning it has been found controversy that WCF is not effective for second language learners. While other studies have found different things, some types of WCF can be useful for learning to write a second language (Amrhein & Nassaji, 2010; Ellis, 2009b; Mollestad & Hu, 2016; Shao, 2015; Van Beuningen, 2010).

WCF is divided into several types such as direct CF, indirect CF, metalinguistic CF, the focus of the feedback (unfocused and focused

feedback), electronic feedback and reformulation. In direct CF, the lecturer can give a direct correction form for the mistake of writing his students. Lecturers can cross off the wrong words and inappropriate use and then write the correction above or near the graffiti. While in indirect CF, the lecturer gives the correction to the students in two ways. The first way is to indicating + locating the error. The lecturer gives the underline to the wrong writing and indicates to the student the inscription by marking. Next the second way is with indication only, which gives an alleged error on the student's writing (Ellis, 2009a).

Many scholars have conducted research of WCF. Poorebrahim formed two groups of students in Iran and applied WCF indirect to students' writing. In findings, it was concluded that error reduction is not included in the learning process (Poorebrahim, 2017). Then, the study which aimed to see whether the CF indirect effect on the accuracy of student writing. The findings they obtained were indirect CF improving students' writing accuracy better than direct CF (Septiana, Sulisty, & Kadarisman, 2016). Furthermore, another had discussed Corrective Feedback in CLT-Adopted Classrooms' Interactions in which the focuses of the studies on the context of EFL. It was found that all lecturers provide correction with different types of CF to address all types of errors. It was concluded that the proportion of CF in the EFL class reflects the application of CLT (Liskinasih, 2016).

Patchan and Schunn (2016) discussed about peer assessment with many possible benefits for instruction across the curriculum. The result leads to the practical recommendation of grouping students by ability during peer assessment, contrary to student beliefs

that only feedback from high ability peers is worthwhile (Patchan & Schunn, 2016). Al-Maamari reported his study aimed to examine the assessment policies and practices of laboratory report writing. It was found that instead of community of practice, there were (sub) communities of practices wherein interaction, negotiation and communication amongst members and non-members were punctuated by control, power and autonomy, all working with the aim of narrowing the range between the personal goals of the academic and the communal goals of the institution (Al-maamari, 2016).

Related to the writing tasks, this study aims at knowing the influence of direct written corrective feedback (WCF) toward students' essay writing. WCF is applied during the class in writing class. WCF is a way of giving correction toward students' essay in order to improve their essay writing better. This study proposes the research hypothesis to be answered based on the statistic calculation. The hypotheses are written below:

Ho: Written Corrective Feedback (WCF) does not have a significant effect on EFL student essay writing.

H_a: Written Corrective Feedback (WCF) has a significant effect on EFL student essay writing.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research was a quantitative research using quasi-experimental research model. This research tested the hypotheses to determine the causal relationships (Gay, Mills, & Airasian, 2009). The posttest was provided at the end of the lesson to control the effects of WCF and its relation to the treatment of two groups. The posttest scores of control and experiment classes were

compared to see the effectiveness of WCF levels (Gay & Airisian, 2000).

This research was conducted in one local University in Batam. This university organized the English Education study program where writing course was one of the subjects. The population was 54 registered students. The students were distributed into some classes of writing subjects. The classes were homogeneous since they were taught by the same lecturer. To ensure that the population was normal and homogeneous, the normality and homogeneity testing were tested.

The sample was taken under cluster random sampling technique. The researcher chose two classes as sample from third semester. In selecting the class, the researcher used lottery and write on some small papers with different number, put them into a glass and chose two papers randomly. The first paper was for the experiment class which used WCF, and the other was for the control class which used no WCF.

The variables were WCF as independent variable and student essay as dependent variable. Independent variable was manipulated to control dependent variable and determine the effect of independent variables on dependent variable. Data collection was done through writing test. The test was carried out at the end of the experimental class treatment and control. The test was conducted after applying WCF to their essay.

The numerical value used in the calculation was the average value of a student's essay that showed the effectiveness of WCF on the student essay. The research hypothesis was answered based on the interpretation of data. Data from the students' essay writing test were collected for later analysis using normality test,

homogeneity test, and hypothesis test; T-test and variance analysis.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The researchers collected the data through students' essay writing where one class was treated by using WCF while other was not. After giving the treatment (non-treatment for control class) to the experiment class, the researchers took posttest at the end of the lesson to control the effects of WCF and its relation to the treatment of the group. The posttest scores of the control and experimental classes were compared to see the effectiveness of WCF levels in the two classes where they had been given the different treatments.

The researchers took the data from two classes and named them into English A as Control group and English

B as Experiment group. The students were asked to write the paragraph and the lecturer gave treatment to each class. For control class, the lecturer did not give any treatment. It meant that the lecturer asked them to write and gave them score. For the experiment class, the lecturer applied the written corrective feedback (WCF) where the lecture gave some feedbacks toward students' paragraph.

After writing from the first meeting until the sixth meeting, the researchers formulated a post-test writing to know the impact of the written corrective feedback toward students' essay. A post-test was applied to both classes, control and experiment classes. To see the summary of students' essay writing score from both classes, the table below represents them in form of score.

Table 1 : Summary of Students' Essay Writing Scores

	Control Class	Experiment Class
<i>N</i>	29	25
<i>Maximum Score</i>	69	82
<i>Minimum Score</i>	60	74
<i>Mean</i>	65.24	77.80
<i>Variance</i>	6.40	5.50
<i>Standard Deviation</i>	2.53	2.35

From the table above, it can be described that both control and experiment classes have very different scores. In a control class where the total sample was 29 students, the researchers did not apply any treatment related to their tasks in writing. They wrote tasks and submitted to be scored. At the end of class, the researchers gave them a post-test. The data from the post-test were explained descriptively. The maximum score for this class was 69 and its minimum score was 60. The

range score was not too far. The mean score was 65.24. The variance was 6.40 while its standard deviation was 2.53. Experiment class had 25 students and it was applied the written corrective feedback to improve students' essay score. After that a post-test was given to measure the score after WCF was applied in the class. The maximum score was 82 while the minimum one was 74. The mean was 77.80 where it was higher than control class. The variance was 5.50 and standard

deviation was 2.35. Both scores were lower than the control class scores. With the same characteristics between two classes, the researchers found that the scores could be different as one

class was applied WCF. To see the comparison of the data, it is going to be understandable if it is described by the diagram below.

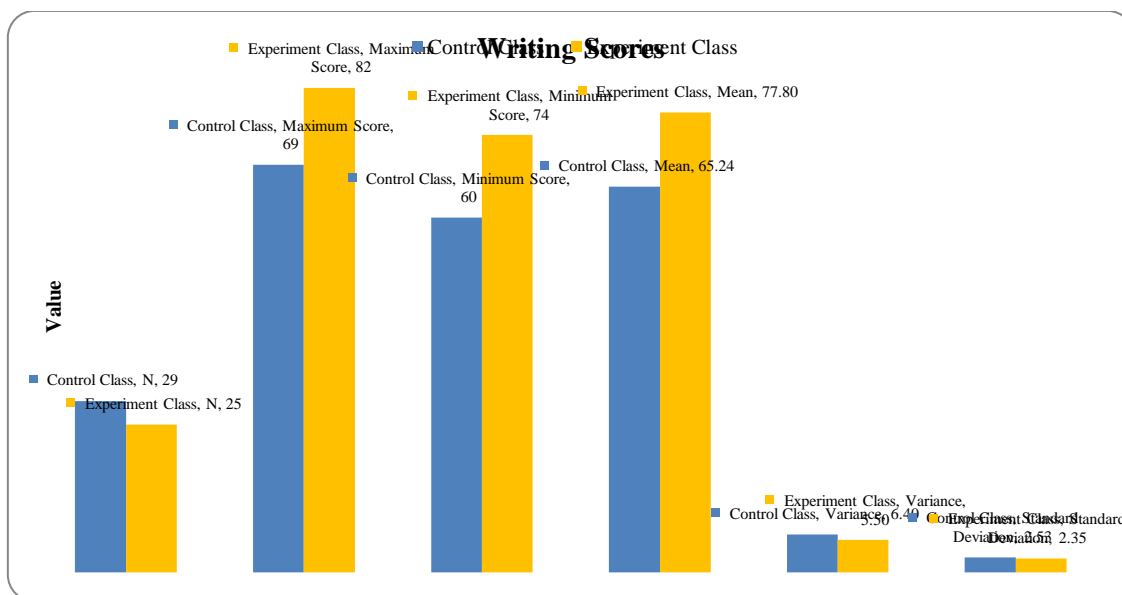


Figure 1 : Students' Scores of Essay Writing

From the distribution frequency of control class, the highest score was 69 where only one student got that score from 29 students with the percentage was 3%. For the lowest score was 60 where the frequency was only one student with the same percentage was 3%. The highest frequency was 6 where six students got score 67 with the percentage was 21%. While the lowest frequency was 1 with some scores such as 60, 61, 65, and 69 and the percentage of each score were 3%. Meanwhile, the highest score of experiment class was 82 where the frequency was only 1. It meant that only one student got that score from 25 students. The percentage was 4%. The lowest score was 74 where there were three students who got it with percentage was 12%. The highest frequency was 6 with the score was 77 and the percentage was 24%. It

meant that there were six students who got score 77. While the lowest frequency was 1 and the percentage was 4%. The scores were 75 and 82. From both classes, the highest score was 82 and the lowest was 60.

Data Analysis

After collecting the data and giving the scores to each control and experiment class, then the data was analyzed by using some types of analysis such as normality testing, homogeneity testing and hypothesis testing; *t-test*.

Normality testing used Lilliefors test to be applied in this research. This testing was aimed at knowing whether the students' essay writing scores in control and experiment class were normally distributed or not.

Table 2 : Normality Testing

<i>Variable</i>	<i>L_{observed}</i>	<i>L_{table}</i>	<i>Conclusion</i>
Control Class	0.122	0.165	<i>Normal Distributed</i>
Experiment Class	0.153	0.173	<i>Normal Distributed</i>

The score of *L_{observed}* was smaller than *L_{table}* for both control and experiment classes. It meant that both data were normally distributed and homogeneity and hypothesis testing could be done.

After that, homogeneity testing was applied in order to know whether each group had the same variance score or not. It was done through the variance test (F test).

Table 3 : Homogeneity testing

<i>Variable</i>	<i>F_{observed}</i>	<i>F_{table}</i>	<i>Conclusion</i>
Writing Score	0.86	1.91	<i>Homogeneous</i>

F_{observed} and *F_{table}* were 0.86 and 1.91. The conclusion from this test was both control and experiment classes were homogenous. Then, hypothesis testing was calculated by using T-test to

know whether a hypothesis was accepted or not. The result of the T-test for control and experiment class could be drawn into the table below:

Table 4 : The Summary of T-test for Control and Experiment Class

Variable	Class	N	\bar{x}	s	<i>t_{observed}</i>	<i>t_{table}</i>	Conclusion
Writing Score	Control	29	65.24	2.53	18.92	2.67	Significant
	Experiment	25	77.80	2.35			

From the table above, it could be seen that *t_{observed}* was bigger than *t_{table}*. Based on the result of this calculation, *H_a* was accepted from the hypothesis that had been proposed in the first chapter. To conclude this calculation, it could be said that Written Corrective Feedback (WCF) gave a significant effect on EFL student essay writing.

Data Discussion

After analyzing the data of the research by using statistical analysis of hypotheses testing, the researcher found that the Writing Corrective Feedback (WCF) affected the students' writing

scores. From the hypothesis of the research which was described in the previous chapter, the research analysis statistically answered the hypothesis of the research which was the assumption of the researchers. WCF gave a significant effect on EFL student essay writing. The mean scores of students' writing score for both control and experiment classes were totally different. For this reason, the researchers, then, discussed the findings of the research related to the hypothesis given.

The finding answered the hypothesis where the WCF gave a

significant effect on EFL student essay writing. From the analysis which had been done by the researchers, it could be drawn that the mean score of writing ability for both control and experiment classes was different where the experiment class was higher than the control class. The improvement could be clearly seen from both classes where one class was applied WCF in teaching and learning session and the other was not applied the WCF for students' writing. This hypothesis testing result was in line with some researchers who have found that WCF can be useful for learning to write a second language (Amrhein & Nassaji, 2010; Ellis, 2009b; Mollestam & Hu, 2016; Shao, 2015; Van Beuningen, 2010). Therefore, from some experts' point of view, it was proved that WCF had a significant effect toward EFL student essay writing.

Moreover, the WCF was not only to help the students in a process of learning writing, but also helped the students to reveal their ability in writing a paragraph. No doubt that the WCF helped them to develop their skill especially in writing skill. They were encouraged to write better after getting a valuable feedback from the lecturer. It was normal that in the first attempt of writing, many students failed to meet criteria of good paragraph. The causes could be many things. But, by giving written corrective feedback to students' writing, it obviously helped them to improve better. The lecturer reminded them what is wrong about their sentence in a paragraph. The students were more aware to the grammar mistakes later on. Written corrective feedback was believed in helping other weaker students in writing to be better and help to improve their ability in writing as well.

CONCLUSION

After gathering the data of the research, describing, analyzing and discussing them based on the theory applied in this research, the hypothesis of the research was finally answered through statistically analysis. Based on the research finding above, it could be concluded that Written Corrective Feedback (WCF) gave significant effect on EFL students' essay writing. It can be seen from the mean score of both control and experiment classes. The students' mean score of experiment class which were applied the written corrective feedback was higher than students' mean score which were not applied the written corrective feedback in the learning process.

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