

CHAPTER IV
TEACHER'S WAYS OF GIVING FEEDBACK IN THE CLASS OF WRITING
AT THE 3RD SEMESTER STUDENTS OF ENGLISH DEPARTMENT OF
IAIN WALISONGO IN THE ACADEMIC YEAR OF 2010/ 2011

The data, after being collected from the participative observation, in-depth interview, and the documents review, would be analyzed and interpreted to answer the two research questions. The findings would be presented following the research questions namely, (1) kinds of feedback given by the teacher in the class of writing, and (2) the teacher's considerations for giving certain feedback to the students.

A. Findings

As already explained in Chapter 2, a teacher plays a very important role in any school program, since he is one of the factors determining whether the teaching will be successful. The presence of the teacher on his exact time is crucial to get students more prepared in the writing class. He must also maximize the time allocated to his teaching. In addition, another major concern when discussing classroom management in the class of Writing II is the number of students in the class. The importance of having appropriate number of students in the class was not indicated in the class of Writing II. The number of students was about 48 (forty-eight). It consequently gave a hard time for the teacher to provide feedback based on the needs of students and treat them differently.

1. Focus of the teacher feedback

Regarding to the focus of teacher feedback, the teacher considered that paying attention on both content and form of students' works were considered important in developing students' writing skill. It was required for the students to be familiar with lots of vocabularies, sentence structure, diction,

and topic being discussed. The finding was interpreted from the dialogue as follow:

Tanya: Apa yang Anda fokuskan dalam memberikan feedback: content atau form? Mengapa? Bagaimana?

Jawab: Saya biasanya memfokuskan pada vocabulary, structure, diction, dan juga tema. Pertama saya meminta membuat draft (outline) terkait topic sentence. Bagi saya, writing adalah cara mengekspresikan ide-ide dan pendapat.¹

The dialogue indicated that the teacher focused on form (vocabularies, structure, and diction) as well as on content (topic being discussed). For him, writing was a way of expressing ideas and arguments (content). Therefore, both content and form should be borne in mind.

Furthermore, among the options given by the researcher, namely, focus on form of writing such as grammar or mechanic mistakes, focus on content of writing such as ideas or organization, or focus on content and form, the two informants said that they received corrections more on form than on content when their teacher provided feedback to them. The argument was strengthened by the fact that the teacher gave feedback more on the matter of vocabulary, punctuation, sentence structure, etc.² That is why students preferred to pay more attention on form to content. These views were different from the researcher that emphasis feedback on both was better than one only. It was understandable that, for the first time approaching the academic writing, the students could not easily overcome the difficulties in gathering ideas as well as structuring error-free sentences without teacher's help.

2. Time of Giving Feedback

On this issue, it was obvious that the teacher seldom gave feedback during writing process. He wanted the students to do exercises individually

¹Transcript of interview guidelines for the teacher. See in appendix

²See observation checklist in appendix C2

with time limit. He, then, went around the students accompanying them doing the exercises. However, it seemed not effective since the teacher checked their works at glance.³ The teacher preferred to give amount of correction on the product of writing by choosing randomly one or two student's works to be written on the board as a sample. The teacher then analyzed the errors together with the entire students. Not all works were checked.⁴ In this sense, it is understandable that the numbers of students in the class were not appropriate, so the teacher could not give feedback thoroughly. That was indicated as the following dialogue:

Tanya: Kapan biasanya Anda memberikan feedback: ketika proses penulisan essay atau di akhir tulisan? Mengapa? Bagaimana?

Jawab: Saya memberikan feedback setelah proses penulisan selesai karena writing adalah sebuah product.⁵

The dialogue showed us that the teacher would rather give feedback at the end of writing process than during writing process. Furthermore, the interview with the students showed as follow:

Tanya: Model koreksinya itu seperti apa?

Jawab: Model koreksinya dilakukan secara bersama-sama. Biasanya diambil satu atau dua sample tulisan kemudian dibahas bersama-sama tentang kekurangan dalam tulisan tersebut.⁶

Tanya: Berapa kali Anda mengumpulkan Writing selama satu kali eksperimen?

Jawab: Jarang sekali. Biasanya dalam pertemuan diberikan tugas, tapi tidak direvisi. Cuman diambil beberapa sample saja.

Tanya: Apakah tugas tersebut dikoreksi bersama-sama juga?

Jawab: Iya, dikoreksi secara bersama-sama.

Tanya: Kemudian siswa yang tidak mendapatkan kesempatan dikoreksi bagaimana?

³See observation checklist in appendix C1

⁴See observation checklist in appendix C2

⁵Transcript of interview guidelines for the teacher. See in appendix

⁶Interview guidelines 1 for the students

Jawab: Biasanya mereka hanya menyaksikan tulisan di papan tulis yang dikoreksi bersama-sama; dicari permasalahannya kemudian diselesaikan bersama-sama.⁷

From the dialogue above, the researcher concluded that although the feedback was given at the end of writing process, not all works were checked for he discussed only one or two works. However, the respondents would rather choose more teacher feedback during writing process than in the end of writing process (product) when being asked about their own preferences of commenting. More students argued that having feedback during writing process would help them on identifying errors earlier. They could also learn errors and corrections from other students because they wrote the same topic.

3. Method of Giving Feedback

Regarding how the teacher provided feedback, based on the observation, the teacher showed a balance in utilizing both indirect and direct feedback in giving feedback to students' writing. The observation indicated that, for example, the teacher provided alternative answers when the students made mistakes in defining 'paragraph' and wanted them to check the correct answer by themselves. The teacher also allowed the students to find the exact meaning of some ambiguous words. In the other hand, the teacher gave direct feedback when exact term about tools in the kitchen was not found. Some said *equipment, tools*, etc. However, the teacher suggested *household utensils*.⁸

Furthermore, based on the findings from the interview, for some reasons, the teacher used oral feedback. In the other hand, two respondents said that oral feedback would be more helpful for the students while one respondent preferred to choose both written and oral feedback. They argued that by using oral feedback, they could get clarification of the problems

⁷Interview guidelines 2 for the students

⁸See observation checklist in appendix C1

directly and look for further information about the topic being discussed. However, they added that written feedback was also relevant since it could monitor their own progress, identify specific language areas to develop further, and provide authentic evidence of their mistakes. The dialogue was as below:

Tanya: Mana yang lebih banyak membantu Anda: feedback secara lisan atau tertulis? Mengapa demikian?

Jawab: Saya kira feedback secara lisan akan lebih membantu karena kita bisa mendapatkan feedback secara langsung. Di samping itu, kalau disampaikan melalui tulisan, terkadang kita masih saja bingung tentang apa yang harus kita tindak lanjuti. Dalam feedback secara lisan, jika kita belum paham, kita bisa menanyakan langsung lagi mengapa saya salah.⁹

Jawab: Kedua-duanya, karena secara lisan saya memperoleh penjelasan langsung dan secara tertulis saya memperoleh bukti otentik bahwa saya masih belum bisa.¹⁰

Jawab: Menurut saya lebih banyak membantu secara lisan. Karena di samping langsung tertuju kepada saya, saya juga bisa balik bertanya ketika saya belum memahami letak kesalahan saya.¹¹

To sum up, oral feedback was more preferable by the students although written feedback was also needed. Therefore, both written and oral feedbacks are necessary to make students easier in accomplishing good writing product.

4. Reason for Giving Certain Feedback

a. The Focus of Feedback

In the sense of the reasons for the focus of feedback, as known, the teacher has focused both on form and on content. Here, the teacher argued that the students' understanding and preparation both on the form and on

⁹Interview guidelines 1 for the students

¹⁰Interview guidelines 2 for the students

¹¹Interview guidelines 3 for the students

content of writing was the main consideration of the reason underlying the focus of feedback. For him, form of writing, including grammar, mechanic and word use, had direct influence on the students' writing. If the form of writing were indicated as bad, the product of writing would not be good for sure.¹² Additionally, he insisted, focus on content was also necessary because writing was a way of expressing ideas and arguments. Therefore, students should be trained to express their ideas through intensive guidance on the content of writing. The reason was described as below:

Tanya: Selain fokus pada kajian penulisan essay, apakah mahasiswa juga diajarkan grammar di kelas writing Anda? Bagaimana? Mengapa?

Jawab: Iya, tetapi tidak terlalu sering. Karena materi grammar dan writing selalu berkaitan; apabila grammarnya jelek, maka writingnya juga jelek.

Tanya: Apa yang Anda fokuskan dalam memberikan feedback: content atau form? Mengapa? Bagaimana?

Jawab: Saya biasanya memfokuskan pada vocabulary, structure, diction, dan juga tema. Pertama saya meminta membuat draft (outline) terkait topic sentence. Bagi saya, writing adalah cara mengekspresikan ide-ide dan pendapat.¹³

The dialogue indicated that the teacher focused on form (vocabularies, structure, and diction) as well as on content (topic being discussed) because those matters were regarded as important in good product of writing. However, this consideration was not seemingly indicated by the students' statement saying that the teacher focused on grammatical matters more than content.¹⁴

b. The Time of Giving Feedback

In this regard, the teacher has given his feedback and correction on the product of students' writing. Here, he argued that writing was a product, so the feedback should be given on the final product of writing. In

¹²See examples of students' works in the appendix

¹³Transcript of interview guidelines for the teacher. See in appendix

¹⁴See interview guidelines 1 for the students, point 4

addition, it would probably spend lots of time to guide all students with feedback thoroughly during the writing process. Therefore, feedback on the end of students' writing was regarded as relevant. The finding was also taken from the dialogue below:

Tanya: Kapan biasanya Anda memberikan feedback: ketika proses penulisan essay atau di akhir tulisan? Mengapa? Bagaimana?

Jawab: Saya memberikan feedback setelah proses penulisan selesai karena writing adalah sebuah product.¹⁵

Since writing, according to the teacher, was a product, so feedback should be addressed to the product of writing.

c. The Method of Giving Feedback

First, the teacher used oral feedback other than written feedback. The reason was understood from the fact that the number of students was too many. Therefore, it was almost impossible for the teacher to give written feedback to the entire students for the time was also limited. Moreover, the choice for giving oral feedback was more preferable for the students.

As mentioned before, the appropriate number of students in the class of Writing II was not indicated. Consequently, students' participation could not be expected maximally for the allocated time was very limited compared to the number of students. Second, this led to the condition in which the teacher could not be expected to monitor the teaching learning process and make adjustments whenever and wherever necessary. Then, the change of schedule often affected to the students being less prepared. The source was as below:

Tanya: Bagaimana Anda menyampaikan feedback: tertulis atau lisan? Mengapa? Bagaimana?

Jawab: Saya biasanya menyampaikan feedback secara oral (lisan) karena siswa tidak kondusif dan jumlah siswa terlalu banyak.

¹⁵Transcript of interview guidelines for the teacher. See in appendix

Saya mengambil sample dari salah satu tulisan mereka supaya mereka semua mengetahui.¹⁶

Furthermore, based on the observation, the teacher has given both direct and indirect feedback to the students because some of them were unable to self-editing and some of them were quite independent to indicate that the mistakes had been made.¹⁷ It was agreed with the situation at the moment basically.

5. Factors Hindering the Teacher Feedback

In discussing the factors hindering the teacher feedback, arguments from the teacher and students will be presented. Each of whom also posed different emphases on factors hindering the feedback. According to the teacher, inappropriate number of students was the major factor hindering the feedback. The argument was based on the finding as below:

Tanya: Bagaimana Anda menyampaikan feedback: tertulis atau lisan? Mengapa? Bagaimana?

Jawab: Saya biasanya menyampaikan feedback secara oral (lisan) karena siswa tidak kondusif dan jumlah siswa terlalu banyak. Saya mengambil sample dari salah satu tulisan mereka supaya mereka semua mengetahui.¹⁸

The argument was also agreed by the students as they said:

Tanya: Menurut anda, apa yang melatarbelakangi dosen anda untuk tidak memberikan feedback secara merata?

Jawab: Saya tidak bisa menyalahkan dosen karena memang kondisi kelas kurang ideal dimana satu kelas diisi lebih dari 30 orang sehingga tidak memungkinkan dosen untuk mengoreksi satu per satu.¹⁹

Different argument was said:

¹⁶Transcript of interview guidelines for the teacher. See in appendix

¹⁷See observation checklist in appendix C1

¹⁸Transcript of interview guidelines for the teacher. See in appendix

¹⁹Interview guidelines 1 for the students

Tanya: Tadi anda mengatakan bahwa tidak semua tulisan dikoreksi. Kira-kira apa yang menjadi pertimbangan dosen anda?

Jawab: Saya kira beliau cukup sibuk karena harus membagi waktu mengajar di mahasiswa PLPG setahu saya. Tidak hanya itu, perkuliah juga terkadang berganti jamnya.²⁰

Based on the additional factor given by the student above, the change of schedule seemingly influenced the students' preparation to get more involved in classroom participation beside the busy schedule of the teacher in handling many classes.

6. Teacher's Difficulties and Suggestion on Giving Feedback

Regarding to the difficulty on giving feedback, the teacher agreed that the process was not smooth. Hence, it was necessary to change it. In addition to the observation, the evidence was taken from the dialogue below:

Tanya: Bagaimana Anda menyampaikan feedback: tertulis atau lisan? Mengapa? Bagaimana?

Jawab: Saya biasanya menyampaikan feedback secara oral (lisan) karena siswa tidak kondusif dan jumlah siswa terlalu banyak. Saya mengambil sample dari salah satu tulisan mereka supaya mereka semua mengetahui.

Tanya: Apa kesulitan Anda ketika memberikan feedback terhadap students' writing?

Jawab: 1. siswa seringkali tidak siap dan tidak mempersiapkan diri.
2. siswa sering mengulangi kesalahan yang sama dalam teks.

Tanya: Apa yang Anda rekomendasikan terkait dengan feedback guru terhadap students/ writing?

Jawab: Kuota siswa di kelas harus ideal.²¹

The teacher said that the students were not well prepared when attending writing class. Moreover, they often made the same mistakes on the text. Therefore, the students must get prepared and bear in mind the mistakes that they ever made.

²⁰Interview guidelines 3 for the students

²¹Transcript of interview guidelines for the teacher. See in appendix

Facing the problems during the process of providing feedback, the teacher has to find ways to deal with the situation.

B. Analysis

Based on the findings explained above, the researcher would like to analyze both the strengths and weaknesses of the teacher's ways of giving feedback in the class of writing.

1. Strength

- a. The teacher promoted classroom interaction when managing large number of students in the class. It seems important since classroom interaction could help the teacher saving time and energy in handling the class.
- b. Given the large number of students in the class, the teacher initiated peer-checking feedback to deal with the students' writings although it did not work optimally.
- c. The teacher consistently paid much attention on the matter of vocabulary, punctuation and sentence structure. Thus, improvement on those issues could be expected.

2. Weakness

- a. The teacher gave feedback more on form. Much feedback on form will make students start to think that grammar is the only thing that counts in writing.
- b. The teacher gave feedback mostly on the product of writing. This enables the students to deal with more difficulties when thinking about what they are going to write and planning how they are going to organize it. However, although feedback was given in the end process of writing, not all works were checked.
- c. The teacher did not involve written feedback to students' writing. However, written feedback assists students in monitoring their own progress and identifying specific language areas to develop further.

3. Possible solution

- a. Feedback on form of writing can be given through peer-checking feedback, while the teacher can give feedback on content during writing process or in the end of writing, directly or indirectly, and through written or spoken ways. Additionally, most difficult and common mistakes of the writing can be solved through conference feedback, discussion involving all class members where the teacher poses more like a partner in the teaching and learning process.
- b. The evaluation of the product of writing is not necessarily done in the class. It can be taken as homework, so the students can give some remarks on the indicated mistakes of the works. Therefore, both the teacher and students would not be exhausted.

C. Discussion

It is obvious that although the teacher focused on both form and content to students' writing, he focused on grammatical matters more than content. However, it is not appropriate to focus on only lexical and grammatical mistakes; instead, ideas and ways to present them should also be looked on. Nevertheless, apart from the positive side, content-focused feedback still has problems, that is, teacher comments on content will be of little use if students do not know what they mean or how to use them productively to improve their skills as writers. In general, the researcher does agree that it is better to pay attention on both content and form of students' works, as both are considered important in developing writing skill of students. Moreover, it should be noticed that whether content or grammar should not receive equal treatment or even priority. The preference, in contrast, depends on the background of teachers and students, on the needs of students, on the feature of each assignment, and so forth.

In addition, feedback should be delivered both during the process of writing and in the product of writing. If the teacher tries to make comments and corrections only on the final version of the student paper, the teacher would be exhausted and the student would be discouraged. One alternative can be giving feedback through the process of writing because being a good writer the students continually change, add to, improve what they have already written. Therefore, feedback during writing process seems very reasonable.

Furthermore, although direct feedback was in general more effective than indirect feedback in terms of providing clear and concrete suggestions, the combination of the two was better. With direct object, the teacher simply provides a target-like form for the student writing or a suggested correction if more than one is possible. Indirect feedback, on the other hand, provides students with an indication that an error has been made, but requires the students to self-correct.

In this chapter, findings of the three instruments were analyzed and interpreted. The summaries from these results, suggestions for improvements, limitation of the study and recommendations for further studies would be given in the following part.