

USING TEACHER'S FEEDBACK TO IMPROVE STUDENTS' GRAMMAR MASTERY IN WRITING CAUSE AND EFFECT COMPOSITION

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Abstract: This paper discusses the result of action research which is aimed to improve the students' grammar mastery in writing cause and effect composition using teacher's feedback. The objectives of the research are 1) To find out how the teacher's feedback improves the students' grammar mastery in writing cause and effect composition; 2) To find out how the teacher's feedback improves the students' motivation in writing cause and effect composition. This research was carried out at the eleventh grade of senior high school in Boyolali. The method used in this research was classroom action research (CAR). To collect qualitative data, the researcher used interviews, observation, and questionnaires. While collecting quantitative data, the researcher used writing tests. After the data is collected, the researcher analyzed both quantitative and qualitative data. The result shows that: 1) teacher's feedback can improve the students' grammar mastery in writing cause and effect composition; 2) teacher's feedback can improve the students' motivation in writing cause and effect composition. It can be concluded that teacher's feedback can be used as an alternative strategy to improve the students' motivation and grammar mastery in writing.

Keywords: *teacher's feedback, writing, grammar, motivation, classroom action research*

INTRODUCTION

English is one of the most spoken languages in the world. In Indonesia, English is crucial to be mastered since it plays an important role in many aspects of life. Teaching and learning of English can be considered to be an integral part of the Indonesia educational system, therefore, the government obligates English as a subject that must be studied in schools.

Based on the 2013 Curriculum (*Kurikulum 2013*), teaching and learning English in high school should be stressed on the four language skills, namely listening, reading, speaking and writing. The mastery of writing skills is considered as a priority by some teachers and students who learn English.

Writing is crucial to master especially for students of English as a Foreign Language. Through writing, they can convey their ideas, thought, and feeling to communicate with others. Nunan (2003, p. 88) defines writing as a thinking process to formulate ideas, thinking about how to express a goal writing, and arranging in the ideas into statement and paragraph clearly.

The students are expected to be able to compose well-structured writing. To make good writing, there are five indicators of writing that the students have to deal with (Brown, 2004, p. 243). Those are 1) content, 2) organization, 3) grammar, 4) mechanics, and 5) vocabulary. From Brown's

explanation, it can be interpreted that grammar plays an important role in producing well-formed writing. Harmer (2001) also mentions that grammar is a vital aspect in learning English in order to acquire competency in using English.

In reality, there were still many students who failed to compose good writing. Based on the result of a pre-test, the students found many problems during the writing process, especially in grammar. The indicators of the problem were explained as follows: (1) The order of their phrases was usually arranged incorrectly, sometimes the order is written in Indonesian order, (2) They did not use the appropriate tense in writing a composition, (3) They made some subject-verb agreement errors such as did not add -s/es on singular subject, (4) They often ignored the use of linking words to connect the arguments so the flow of the arguments was not fluent and illogical, (5) Misuse of conjunctions, such as using "and", "or" and "so" at the beginning of the sentence.

The students also seemed to have less motivation in learning English. The researcher concluded the problems are as follows: 1) There were still a few students who could not focus on the lesson. It seemed they had a lack enthusiasm for learning. 2) In writing activities, few students did not work immediately and seriously instead of doing activities that were not considered as learning. Their ego-involvement in writing was still low. 3) Some students often used Google Translate as a translator rather than using word dictionaries, they translated sentences and they just copied from it. They did not have the desire to learn. From the description above, it could be concluded that the students' grammar mastery and motivation in writing need improvement.

The problems that have been discussed above urged the researcher to do a

classroom action research. The researcher then suggested giving feedback as a technique. Feedback can be an alternative outcome to solve those problems since it gives space for teachers to leave remarks and notes on their notebook related to the students' writing. Based on the background of the study above, there are two questions formulated as the problem statements: 1) How can teacher's feedback improve students' grammar mastery in writing cause and effect composition? 2) How can teacher's feedback improve students' motivation in writing cause and effect composition?

LITERATURE REVIEW

The Definition of Writing

Byrne (1997) said writing is making some sentences to be arranged in certain patterns and ways. Harris (1993, p. 10) explained writing as a process that takes much time including thinking process before forming the final draft. In addition, according to Kay in Westwood (2004), writing is an exceedingly complex process requiring multiple brain mechanisms and particular abilities. Westwood elaborates that writing requires the writer to express ideas, organize and sequence points in a reasonable arrangement, choose lexis, check for grammatical accuracy, spell words correctly, apply proper punctuate, and write legibly.

From those explanations, it can be constructed that writing skill is a complex process to formulate ideas, arrange the points in a logical order and use vocabulary, grammar, and mechanics correctly.

The Definition of Grammar Mastery

Ur (2006, p. 4) defined that grammar is a set of rules that represents how words are combined or changed to form suitable units of meaning within a language. Then, Thornbury (Gerrard and Sidney, 2002, p. 1) say that grammar refers to the series of

guidelines that allow us to combine words in our language into larger units. Meanwhile, Richards, Platt, and Weber in Nunan (2005, p. 2) add grammar is a description of a language and the way in which components such as words and phrases are combined to make sentences in the language. From those theories, it can be concluded that grammar is a set of rules in which words or phrases are combined to form acceptable units of meaning within a language.

According to Meriam-Webster Dictionary (2013), the definition of mastery is 1) possession or display of great skill or technique; 2) skill or knowledge that makes one master of a subject. From those definitions above, the researcher constructs the theory of grammar mastery as a knowledge of the complete set of grammar rules and a skill to produce the right pattern of a sentence.

The Definition of Motivation

Brophy (2010, p. 3) explains that motivation refers to the student's personal experiences, especially their willingness to engage in teaching and learning activities and their reasons for doing so. Another definition is proposed by Weiner (in Elliot et al, 2000, p. 332) "motivation is an inner state that stimulates the students to action, leads them in specific instructions, and keeps them involved in certain activities". In addition, Harmer (2004, p. 51) mentions motivation as some kind of inner drive that encourages someone to do things in order to achieve something. From those definitions, it can be constructed that motivation is an inner drive that stimulates someone to do something, especially their willingness to participate in certain activities in order to achieve something.

The Definition of Feedback

Feedback has been widely known as an essential technique to develop the

evaluation process. Wiggins (2012) asserted that feedback is given or shared, whether oral or written, online or offline, in order to encourage students, perform well and reach success. Besides, feedback is defined as "a teacher's response to student's work with the purpose of furthering learning" (Moss and Brookhart, 2009, p. 44). Then, Kepner (1991) in Magno and Armales (2011) tells feedback in general as any procedures used to inform a learner whether an instructional response is right or wrong. In addition,

From those definitions, it can be concluded that feedback is a teacher's response to students' work both oral or written in order to encourage and inform the students whether an instructional response is right or wrong with the purpose of furthering learning.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research was carried out at XI MIPA 2 of a senior high school in Boyolali. There were 36 students who participated in this research. This research was conducted in 5 meetings from Monday, 28th of January 2019 until Monday, 25th of February 2019.

The research method used in this study is a classroom action research consisting of four stages: planning, action, observation, and reflection. The data were collected using interviews, observation, questionnaires, and tests. After getting the data, the researcher then analyzed both quantitative and qualitative data.

RESEARCH FINDINGS

Pre-research Situation

There were some activities carried out by the researcher in the pre-research such as interviewing the teacher and the students, observing the teaching-learning process, and arranging a writing pre-test. She summarized the result as follows:

Table 1 The Results of Pre-research Activities

<p>Teacher's Interview January 4th 2019</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The teacher said that the students had low motivation in learning English. ▪ The teacher said that almost all students of XI MIPA 2 had a low ability in writing. ▪ The teacher said that the students of XI MIPA 2 had low grammar mastery. They still often made grammar errors in their writing.
<p>Classroom Observation January 7th 2019 and January 14th 2019</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The class was quiet enough, some students paid attention to the teacher's explanation. ▪ There were still a few students who could not focus on the lesson. They did side conversation, a student fell asleep in the middle of the lesson. They had lack enthusiasm in learning ▪ In the writing activity, some students did not work immediately and seriously after the teacher gave instruction. They did activities that were not considered as learning (side conversation, playing phone game, operating cellphone). As a result, they could not finish the writing assignment on time.
<p>Students' Interview January 14th 2019</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The students had low interest in English, especially in writing. ▪ They said writing was a difficult skill to be mastered. They considered writing was difficult because of the limited grammar mastery.
<p>Writing Pre-test January 21st 2019</p>

- The students made many grammatical errors in the pre-test, especially *agreements, word order, and tenses*.
- The students' writing pre-test mean score was only 69.28. The passing grade was 75.
- Only 46% of students (16 out of 36 students) were able to exceed the passing grade. The passing grade was 70%.

From the pre-research situation described above, the researcher summarised the problems faced by the students as follows:

Table 2 Problems Found in the Pre-research

1. Students have low motivation in writing English

Indicators:

- From the students' interviews, they had low interest in writing as they thought it was difficult to master, especially the grammar.
- In writing activities, few students did not work immediately and seriously instead of doing activities that were not considered as learning. They played a cellphone and had a side conversation with their friends. Finally, they could not finish the task on time. Their ego-involvement in writing was still low.
- Some students often used Google Translate as a translator rather than using word dictionaries, they translated sentences and they just copied from it. They did not care whether it is correct or not. They did not have the desire to learn.

2. Students have low grammar mastery in writing English.

Indicators:

- The order of their phrases was usually arranged incorrectly.
- They did not use the appropriate tense in writing a composition.

- They made some subject-verb agreement errors such as did not add -s/es on the singular subject.
- They often ignored the use of linking words to connect the arguments.

Research Implementation

After feedback was implemented in Cycle 1, the students become more active and more enjoyable during the writing class. In the first meeting conducted on January 28th 2019, they paid attention to the researcher's explanation while she taught them about the structure of cause and effect. The researcher also engaged the students by asking and answering questions related to cause and effect. However, active students still dominated the class. Therefore, she guided them to be more active and not be ashamed to express opinions.

In the second meeting conducted on February 4th 2019, the students began to write their first draft of cause and effect text. Some students started to make an outline before writing their drafts. They sometimes asked the researcher to discuss their problems and asked for a suggestion. In the end of class, she asked them to submit their writing if they had done it.

On the third meeting conducted on February 11th 2019, the researcher distributed the students' first draft that had been assessed. Many students looked surprised seeing their writing full of red marks. Some of them were also happy when they saw their writing had only a few errors.

The researcher then showed some examples of grammar errors made by the students. She used spoken feedback to discuss the grammatical errors by giving the students questions and lead them to answer. After that, the researcher ordered them to start revising and asked them to come to her if they had difficulty.

After the activities was done in Cycle 1, the researcher analyzed the students' post test 1 to see their grammar mastery in writing cause and effect composition. All the aspects increased, however only some aspects that reached the target such as sentence forms, linking words, conjunctions, and articles. While the aspect of tenses, word order, and agreements were still below the target and needed improvement.

Table 3 The Result of Students Writing in Cycle 1

Aspects of Grammar	Pre-test	Post-test 1	Passing Grade
Tenses	65.28	69.79	75
Word Order	64.58	71.9	75
Sentence Forms	72.92	81.6	75
Agreements	63.19	68.75	75
Linking Words	72.92	80.21	75
Conjunctions	72.22	79.51	75
Articles	84.72	86.11	75

During implementing the treatment, the researcher also observed the students' behavior to see whether there was an improvement in their motivation. There were some improvements in some aspects of motivation for example in the aspect of interest, desire to learn, recognized goal, reward, punishment, and praise. However, it could not be denied that the result in some aspects was not satisfying enough such as ego-involvement and competition.

Table 4 Result of Students' Motivation in Cycle 1

Motivation	Aspects of Motivation	Pre-research	Cycle 1
Intrinsic	Interest	40%	66.7%
	Desire to learn	33.3%	53.3%
	Ego-involvement	50%	50%
	Recognized Goal	40%	60%
Extrinsic	Reward	60%	70%
	Punishment	50%	70%
	Competition	60%	60%
	Praise	40%	60%
Mean Score		46.7%	61.3%

After the researcher considered some problems that occurred in Cycle 1, she then revised the plan and sought a solution. She prepared all the needs in the second cycle. The first meeting in Cycle 2 was conducted on February 18th 2019. The researcher informed the students' post-test 1. She told them that even though the mean score had exceeded the target, there were still some aspects that needed to be improved.

First of all, she explained some tips on how to produce good writing and avoid grammatical errors. She explained grammar aspects that students must be careful about in their use especially *agreements*, *word order*, and *tenses* which were the most often wrong aspect. The researcher engaged them by giving questions and asked them to answer. They seemed to enjoy it when trying to answer the questions, they were not afraid if they answered incorrectly. The condition was much better than the previous meetings.

She then gave them an example of a correct cause and effect text dealing with grammar entitled "Drought", she explained the grammar in the text and discussed it together. The students were serious and some of them asked some questions.

After all the materials had been delivered, the researcher immediately distributed the worksheet and asked them to start working on the first draft entitled the effects of a low score on the exam. When they started writing, she kept reminding them to be careful and pay attention to the grammar used. Finally, the writing process ran well and all the students were able to submit on time.

The second meeting was conducted on February 25th 2019. To make the class more relaxed, the researcher invited the students to play a game. The students were very happy and excited. She first explained the game and explained the rules of the game. During the activity, they were very happy and

active. There was one group that looked very enthusiastic to win the game.

After that, she moved to the next activities. She distributed the students' drafts that had been corrected by the researcher in the last meeting. The students were excited to see their writing. As usual, she asked them to revise the errors. During the revising process, students worked quietly and seriously. .

Table 5 The Result of Students Writing in Cycle 2

Aspects of Grammar	Post-test 1	Post-test 2	Passing Grade
Tenses	69.79	75.35	75
Word Order	71.9	77.22	75
Sentence Forms	81.6	82.93	75
Agreements	68.75	75	75
Linking Words	80.21	77.43	75
Conjunctions	79.51	81.94	75
Articles	86.11	86.81	75

During the activities, the researcher also observed the students' behavior as she did in Cycle 1. The result is as follows:

Table 6 The Result of Students' Motivation in Cycle 2

Motivation	Aspects of Motivation	Cycle 1	Cycle 2
Intrinsic	Interest	66.7%	73.3%
	Desire to learn	53.3%	66.7%
	Ego-involvement	50%	70%
	Recognized Goal	60%	80%
Extrinsic	Reward	70%	80%
	Punishment	70%	70%
	Competition	60%	80%
	Praise	60%	80%
Mean Score		61.3%	73.75%

Based on Table 6, there was an improvement in some aspects of motivation, namely *interest*, *desire to learn*, *ego-involvement*, *recognized goal*, *reward*, *competition*, and *praise*. While in the aspect of *punishment*, no increase occurred in Cycle 2. However, the scores achieved were quite good in Cycle 1 and 2, which were 70%.

DISCUSSION

Teacher's feedback can improve the students' grammar mastery and motivation in writing cause and effect. The researcher summarized the important points as a result of implementing teacher's feedback. The explanation are presented as follows:

1. The use of teacher's feedback improves the students' grammar mastery in writing cause and effect composition.

The use of teacher's feedback was able to improve the students' grammar mastery in writing cause and effect composition. They performed better after getting feedback from the researcher. During the interview with students, they considered writing was difficult because of the grammar. In line with the teacher's statement, she said that the students of XI MIPA 2 had grammar problems in their writing. After the implementation of the pre-test, the students made errors in some aspects of grammar such as tenses, word order, sentence form, agreements, linking words, conjunction, and articles. From the pre-research data, the researcher concluded that the students had a grammar problem in their writing.

After the researcher implemented feedback on their writing in post-test 1 and post-test 2, their errors in all aspects decreased. After correcting their errors, they could perform better in the next writing and avoided the same errors. In line with Ferris (2006), based on the data from an ESL composition class in an American university, it was also found that after receiving teachers' feedback students could significantly reduce their errors during one semester and they could improve their writing in the long run as well.

The improvement of their grammar mastery could be seen from their writing achievement from the pre-test, post-test 1 and post-test 2. Most of their errors in some aspects of grammar decreased. Feedback given by the researcher made the students recognize their errors and learned to correct them. From the interview, the students stated that they got a better understanding of grammar after getting feedback. In conclusion, the implementation of feedback could be one of the best options to improve the students' grammar mastery in writing.

2. The use of teacher's feedback improves the students' motivation in writing cause and effect composition.

Based on the pre-research data, some students were not motivated in joining the writing class. Some students could not focus on the lesson. From the interview, they said that they were not excited if they were asked to write a composition because it was difficult. It indicated that their motivation in learning English was still low.

After finding these problems, the researcher tried to find a way to improve their motivation by creating a new atmosphere in learning. She then proposed teacher's feedback as a treatment. Wiltse (2002) stated that instructor's feedback could inspire and motivate the students to work harder on improving their writing. Through teacher's corrective feedback, she hoped that the students would think that writing was fun. If they made errors in writing, they could fix them through feedback.

After the implementation of teacher corrective feedback, the result showed there was an improvement in students' motivation both intrinsically and extrinsically in writing cause and effect

composition. To see the improvement, the researcher compared the data observation achieved in pre-research, Cycle 1, and Cycle 2.

After the researcher implemented feedback, the students' *interest* improved. Their score in pre-research was 40%, then improved to 66.7% in Cycle 1, and 73.3% in Cycle 2. They looked pleased and more enthusiastic during the writing activities. Then, the students' desire in learning improved, the score in the aspect of *desire to learn* in pre-research was 33.3%, then improved to 53.3% in Cycle 1, and 66.7% in Cycle 2. When they had difficulty in correcting their errors, they asked the researcher and discussed them together. Feedback also improved the students' *ego-involvement* in learning activities. At first, their ego-involvement did not improve in Cycle 1, the score was the same as in the pre-research, that was 50%. The researcher then revised the plan and offered a solution to improve their ego-involvement in writing, as a result, their score improved in Cycle 2, which was 70%. The researcher demonstrated the value of mastering grammar in writing and not merely because of getting a good score. She also provided informative feedback on their draft regarding their achievements and what they should improve. The result was they were able to learn and complete the task better in Cycle 2. Besides, feedback increased the students' intrinsic motivation in the aspect of *recognized goal*. The students learned better when they knew the goals they needed to achieve in learning. Their score was 40% in pre-research, 60% in Cycle 1 and 70% in Cycle 2. They understood well the objective to be

achieved in this chapter, so they wrote the text carefully by paying attention to grammar. Feedback increased the students' motivation in the aspect of *reward* as well. The score was 60% in the pre-research, 70% in Cycle 1, and 80% in Cycle 2. Almost all the students were happy when they got a reward for the achievements they had made. They did their work well after knowing that their writing work would be assessed. Then, feedback improved the students' motivation in the aspect of *punishment*. The score obtained in the pre-research was 50% and then increased to 70% at the end of cycle 1. Even though the score did not increase in Cycle 2, it was still good, 70%. By giving punishment, their extrinsic motivation increased, they studied well and obeyed the teacher's orders to avoid punishment. Feedback also improved the students' motivation in the aspect of *competition*. The score obtained in pre-research was 60%, the score was the same in Cycle 1, 60% and then improved to 80% in Cycle 2. At first, the active students still dominated the class, finally, some students engaged well in the learning. When a researcher held a quiz, they tried their best in class. Lastly, feedback improved the students' motivation in the aspect of *praise*. The score in pre-research was 40%, 60% in Cycle 1, and 80% in Cycle 2. They were happy when they got praise from the researcher. By being complimented, they were motivated to maintain and improve their performance.

In conclusion, it could be said that feedback from the researcher could improve the students' motivation in writing cause and effect composition.

CONCLUSION, IMPLICATION, AND SUGGESTION

Conclusion

After conducting the action research to the students of XI MIPA 2, the researcher concluded the points as follow: 1) Teacher's feedback improved the students' motivation in writing cause and effect composition. From the data of observation and interview, it was found that the students had less interest in writing English text. They had a lack of motivation and enthusiasm in learning, the observation score in the pre-research was only 45.33%. After teacher's feedback was implemented, their motivation improved to 61.3% in Cycle 1 and 73.73% in Cycle 2. The improvement involved intrinsic motivation (interest, desire to learn, ego-involvement, recognized goal) and extrinsic motivation (reward, punishment, competition, praise). 2) Teacher feedback improved the students' grammar mastery in writing cause and effect composition. The improvement could be seen from the result of the writing test. The pre-test mean score was 69.28, it was still below the target, while the passing grade was 75. They did many grammatical errors during the writing test. After implementing the teacher's feedback, their mean score improved to 77.14 in post-test 1 and 80.89 in post-test 2. Their errors reduced and they could avoid the same errors in the next writing. Their grammar improvement in writing involved tenses, word order, sentence form, agreements, linking words, conjunctions, and articles.

Implication

The result of this research implies that teacher's feedback is an effective technique to teach writing. It is proven from the research findings which show that teacher's feedback can improve the students' motivation and grammar mastery in writing cause and effect composition at XI MIPA 2.

Motivation plays such an important role in the development of the students' writing since it is a driving force for them to write in a meaningful way. The implementation of feedback can attract the students' interest and motivation to get involved in the writing process. Feedback can give a powerful effect on motivating the students to improve and make better writing. It is proved by their enthusiasm when joining the writing class. During the process of teaching-learning, they become more active.

Besides, English writing skill needs grammar to make a meaningful sentence. Receiving feedback on their grammar errors from the teacher during the writing process assists the students to expand and will give a great influence on their writing skills. Feedback gives the students the opportunity to do self-assessment and self-reflection during the learning process. They know their weaknesses and have the desire to make them better. It can be concluded that feedback is an influential tool to encourage and develop the students writing skills.

Suggestion

In writing class, teachers should use the appropriate technique to enhance the effectiveness of the teaching-learning process. Teacher's feedback is one of the essential factors in the process of teaching writing. Through feedback, they can guide and lead the students to acquire the target in a more effective way.

To make the students motivated in joining the writing class, teacher's behavior, teaching style and informal interactions with students all have a large effect on students' motivation; therefore, teachers should be aware of these things while implementing teacher's feedback.

Teachers should not only focus on the students' writing result, but they should guide the students to write appropriately by paying

attention to the grammar use. Teachers should be prepared to provide meaningful feedback if the students cannot perform in the writing task well.

Students should not think writing is difficult to master because every student needs a process to improve their skills in writing. They should not be ashamed or feel hopeless when they make many mistakes in writing. They should be usual to do self-reflection and self-correction to get improvement in writing. They could discuss their writing problems with friends or consulted with the teacher to find the solution.

In writing, they must pay attention to aspects of writing, one of which is grammar. A writing has its own value if it uses grammar accurately, it will improve the quality of their writing. Therefore, students are supposed to master grammar. They could improve their grammar mastery through corrective feedback given by the teacher.

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