

## The Implementation of Teacher's Indirect Corrective Feedback in Learning Writing

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### Abstract

This study was conducted (1) to find out whether the implementation of indirect corrective feedback can improve the students in learning writing; and (2) to describe what happens when teacher's indirect corrective feedback is implemented at one of senior high schools in Boyolali. The method used in this research was classroom action research, consisting of two cycles, each consisting of planning, acting, observing, and reflecting. In this action research, the researcher is the teacher in the teaching learning process. There were qualitative and quantitative techniques of data collections in this research. The qualitative technique of data collection included interview, observation, diary, audio recording, transcription, and document analysis. Whereas, the quantitative included the students' pre-test and post-test scores. The findings showed that the implementation of teacher's indirect corrective feedback could improve the students' writing skill in argumentative essays and the classroom situation. The mean score improved from 65.42 in pre-test, to 72.89 in post-test 1, and to 77.93 in post-test 2. Teacher's indirect corrective feedback also changed the class situation to be more active, interactive, and attracted the students to join the teaching learning process.

**Keywords:** writing skill, indirect corrective feedback

### INTRODUCTION

In four basic skills of English, writing can be considered as the most difficult skill to be mastered by students in English language teaching. Unlike the other skills (speaking, reading, and listening) writing needs complex elements of English and frequent particular practice to develop because in almost every activity of English language teaching, there is writing skill integrated in it. Richards and Renandya (2002: 303) stated that the difficulty of writing lies not only in generating and organizing ideas, but also in translating these ideas into readable text, and it becomes even more pronounced if their language proficiency is weak.

Although writing is difficult, it is still an important subject for students to learn. Writing is like a summary of students' understanding of the input process (reading and listening). If a student is good at reading and listening and does write a lot, his/her writing will be excellent. In addition, Chenoweth and Hayes (2001) in Barkaoui (2007), for instance, find that fluency in writing increased as the writer's experience with the language increased. The other reason why writing is important for students to learn is that almost every aspect of high education and work environments require good writing, for example; journal writing, proposal, report, thesis, and so on. Vygotsky, Luria, and Bruner (as cited in Yinger, 1981) suggest that written language plays an important enabling role for many higher cognitive functions.

Based on the curriculum, it is assumed that senior high school students should be skillful in writing short essays. In fact, when the researcher conducted his pre-observation in the school, he found that the students faced some problems related to writing skill, the problems are: (1) the students lacked vocabulary mastery. They did not know the words they were going to use in their writing. (2) The students had difficulty using correct grammar in their writing. (3) The students had problems in arranging the correct sentences. There are many short compositions from the students, and students made a composition that lacks supporting details. So, there was insufficient information given to the main idea. (4) The students had problems organizing the text. The students made some paragraphs in a bad structure, and they could not express their ideas in writing successfully. (5) The students found it difficult to develop their ideas. They only wrote three to five sentences in one paragraph and the students took much time to start writing.

In addition to these language skill problems, there are also several classrooms' situation problems reflected in the situation of the writing class itself. Based on the interview and observation, the researcher can conclude that the classroom situation problems are: (1) there was less focus of skill strategy development activity. The students' presentation might cover listening, speaking, and reading activity but the students barely get the strategy of those skills. For example using think-pair-share, infer meaning, or think aloud in learning reading; assessing the situation, monitoring, self-evaluating, and self-testing in learning listening; and using the steps of planning, report, analysis, practice in learning speaking (Richards, 2008). Moreover, the students seldom get the strategy of writing skill (prewriting, draft writing, revising, editing, Linse (2005)). (2) The students' motivation in the learning process was low. (3) There was poor classroom interaction. Teacher-students interaction was also too short since the teacher only gave a brief feedback after the presentation was over. (4) There was monotonous activity. The only activity was the students' presentation which ended with a short discussion.

Based on the problems stated above, there are many techniques that can be used by teachers to improve students' writing skill and the classroom situation. One of the solutions is implementing an appropriate technique in order to overcome those problems. In addition to modeling and raising students' awareness about L2 writing processes and conventions, teachers should provide learners with constructive feedback on their L2 writing (Hyland & Hyland, 2001; Ferris & Roberts, 2001; in Barkaoui, 2007). Celce-Murcia (2001) also says that feedback is the most central component to improve

writing skills. Supporting that statement, Karim & Ivi (2011) found facts that feedback has some important roles in the writing process to develop students' writing skill.

From the statement above, the implementation of teacher's indirect corrective feedback is needed to improve the students' writing skill and the classroom situation. Teacher's indirect corrective feedback includes some steps. They are modeling, comprehension questions, language based exercises, oral composition and written composition. From those overviews about the nature of teacher's indirect corrective feedback, the researcher can conclude that teacher's indirect corrective feedback is a method to teach writing using written feedback and or feedback codes in the students' writing which helps students to go through the effective writing. This method eases students to focus on one writing section and allows them to have obvious revision from the first to the end of writing steps.

In addition, Karim & Ivi (2011) found some benefits of feedback, those are: (1) feedback from the teacher can give a general guideline to improve their writing. This is supported by Lee's study (2008) that found some students like receiving a teacher's response by giving marks to the error because the students will know which one should be avoided in the next assignment. (2) Feedback can motivate the students in a positive way and give them confidence. (3) Feedback can help students to review their mistakes because they get a transparent idea of what the students have acquired. (4) Feedback can make the students understand their strengths and weaknesses. (5) Feedback can make the interaction between students and teacher grow stronger.

The aims of the research are to investigate whether indirect corrective feedback can improve the students in learning writing and to describe the teaching learning process when indirect corrective feedback is implemented in teaching writing. This research focused on argumentative essays. Argumentative essay was chosen because it stated in the syllabus of the eleventh grade. There are some other researches which implemented teacher's indirect corrective feedback as the solution to improve students' writing skill. Hence, the researcher believes that writing skill on argumentative essays of the students in the school can also be improved by using the teacher's indirect corrective feedback.

## **RESEARCH METHOD**

This research was implemented in one of the senior high schools in Boyolali. The research was conducted in August 2016 - October 2016. It included the pre-research, action, and activities after the action.

In conducting this research, the researcher used action research as the research approach. McMillan as quoted by Mertler (2012:14) says "action research offers a process by which current practice can be changed toward better practice. The overarching goal of action research is to improve practice immediately within one or few classrooms or school". In addition, Koshy (2005:1) adds "action research supports practitioners to seek ways in which they can provide good quality education by transforming the quality of teaching-related activities, thereby enhancing students' learning".

In this research, the researcher used qualitative and quantitative techniques of collecting the data. Qualitative data collection techniques that the researcher used in this

research includes: interview, observation, diary, audio recording, transcription, and document analysis. The researcher also used students' writing scores (pre-test and post-test) as quantitative data collection. To analyze the qualitative data, the researcher used constant comparative techniques as described by Burns (1999: 157-160) who mentions that there are several stages for analyzing data: assembling the data, coding the data, comparing the data, building interpretations, and reporting the outcomes. On the other hand, to analyze the quantitative data the researcher used descriptive statistics techniques. The researcher compared students' scores from the pre-test and the post-test.

This research was divided into two cycles. Each cycle consisted of two meetings. After each cycle was done, the researcher conducted a post-test to know the improvement of the students' writing skill.

### **FINDINGS (or, this section may be combined with DISCUSSION)**

In order to identify the students' problems in writing, the researcher got the pre-research data by observing the class, interviewing the students and the teacher, and doing pre-test. From these activities, the researcher could identify five main problems of the students in writing skill. The problems are: the lack of vocabulary mastery, the use of grammar, the difficulties in arranging a sentence, the problem in organizing the text, and the difficulties in developing ideas. It can be seen in table 1.

*Table 1 Pre-research Findings*

<b>Problem Indicators</b>		<b>Description</b>
A. Classroom Situation	1. There was less focus of skill strategy development activity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The students' presentation might cover listening, speaking, and reading activity but the students barely get the strategy of those skills.</li> <li>• There was no writing skill development</li> </ul>
	2. The students' motivation in the learning process was low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Some students chatted with their friends and did not pay attention to the presentation.</li> <li>• Some students were sleepy during the lesson.</li> <li>• They were afraid of questioning or giving opinions.</li> </ul>
	3. There was poor classroom interaction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The presenters only presented the material and barely engaged interaction with the audience (the other students).</li> <li>• Teacher-students interaction was also too short since the teacher only gave a brief feedback after the presentation was over.</li> </ul>
	4. There was monotonous activity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There was no other activity beside the students' presentation</li> </ul>

		which ended with a short discussion
B. Writing Competence	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The students were lack in vocabulary mastery</li> <li>2. The students had difficulty of using correct grammar in their writing</li> <li>3. The students had problem in arranging a correct sentence</li> <li>4. The students had problem in organizing the text</li> <li>5. The students found it difficult to develop their ideas</li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• They did not know the words they were going to use in their writing</li> <li>• Some students used past tense for present or common situation</li> <li>• They had difficulty in word order, using appropriate conjunctions, and punctuation</li> <li>• The students made some paragraphs in a bad structure</li> <li>• They could not express their ideas in writing successfully</li> <li>• They only wrote three until five sentences in one paragraph</li> <li>• The students took much time to start writing</li> </ul>

Based on the problems, the researcher designed a lesson using indirect corrective feedback to teach writing. The lesson was divided into two cycles and two post-tests. Each cycle consisted of two meetings. In preparing the materials, the researcher arranged the lesson activities to make sure that the lesson could overcome the problems of writing skill. It can be seen in table 2.

Table 2 The List of Activities Using Teacher's Indirect Corrective Feedback

Activities	The Aims	Problems Indicators being addressed	Cycle/ Meeting
1. The teacher shows pictures and videos to the students and asked to give their opinions	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. To trigger the students' interest about the material they are going to learn</li> <li>b. To develop their opinion of something</li> </ol>	A1, A2, A3	C1/M1, M2 C2/M3, M4
2. The students are given model paragraph	a. To introduce the text to the students	A1, A2	C1/ M1 C2/M3
3. The teacher gives comprehension questions	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. To build the students' background knowledge of the material</li> <li>b. To raise students' curiosity and arouse their motivation to</li> </ol>	A2, A3, A4	C1/M1, M2 C2/M3, M4

	answer		
4. The teacher explain the material to the students using powerpoint and asked the students to write the important points	a. To help the students explore the social function, the language feature, and the structure of argumentative essays that had been exposed to them. b. To raise students' curiosity and arouse their motivation to question c. To lead the students think critically and analytically d. To lead the students to be autonomous in finding out the knowledge.	A2, A4, B5	C1/M1 C2/M3
5. The students asked the teacher about vocabularies and material they do not know	a. To improve students' understanding about the material b. To improve students' vocabulary	A2, A3, B1	C1/M1, M2 C2/M3, M4
6. The students are asked to write their argument about some issues	a. To improve their knowledge b. To train the students to write	A1, A2, B1, B3, B5	C1/M1 C2/M3
7. The students write their argument on the white board	a. To investigate the students' writing skill b. To improve students' understanding in arranging a sentence	A1, A2, A4, B1, B2, B3, B5	C1/M1 C1/M3
8. The students are asked to write the outline of an argumentative essay and develop it into a text using their own words	a. To get the students involved in the process of writing b. To train the students to write	A1, A2, A4, B1, B2, B3, B4, B5	C1/M2 C2/M4
9. The students receive a feedback guideline and listen to the teacher's explanation about the kind of	a. To promote teacher students interaction b. To give clear idea of what indirect corrective feedback is and how the students should revise their writing	A1, A3, A4, B1, B2, B3, B4, B5	C1/M2

feedback they are going to get in their writing			
10. The teacher writes indirect corrective feedback to the students' writing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. To give solution to the students' problem</li> <li>b. To improve the students' writing</li> <li>c. To promote interaction between the teacher and the students</li> </ul>	A1, A3, A4, B1, B2, B3, B4, B5	C1/M1, M2, C2/M3, M4
11. The students get back their text to read and learn the feedback and revise their text based on the feedback given	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. To grab well the feedback</li> <li>b. To give chance for the students analyze their own problem</li> <li>c. To let the students identify other problems they might have in their text</li> <li>d. To give solution of the students' problem</li> <li>e. To invite the students think more critically</li> <li>f. To promote interaction</li> <li>g. To arouse students' motivation to ask and participate more in the lesson</li> </ul>	A1, A2, A4, B1, B2, B3, B4, B5	C1/M2, C2/M4
12. The teacher gives oral feedback	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. To give feedback for the unnoticed errors</li> <li>b. To warn the students that they might have some errors in their text which they do not notice</li> <li>c. To motivate the students to find the other problems they might have</li> <li>d. To promote interaction</li> <li>e. To accommodate the students to ask</li> </ul>	A1, A3, A4, B1, B2, B3, B4, B5	C1/M1, M2, C2/M3, M4
13. The students and the teacher verify the feedback	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. To confirm whether the students understand the feedback</li> <li>b. To identify the cause of the students' error</li> </ul>	A1, A3, A4, B1, B2, B3, B4, B5	C1/M1, M2, C2/M3, M4

	c. To explore more the students' problem and their concern		
	d. To create intimate relationship		
	e. To get a closer and personal interaction between the teacher and the students		
14. The students resubmit their text feedback to the teacher	a. To know how well the students understand and comprehend the feedback	A2	C1/M2 C2/M4

Table 2 shows the lesson activities using the teacher's indirect corrective feedback to improve students' writing skill. The first and second column explains about the activities and the goal of the study. The third column indicates the problems that can be addressed from the learning activities. To make it clear, table 3 shows how the problems indicator can be solved.

*Table 3 Problem Indicator as being addressed by Teacher's Indirect Corrective Feedback*

	<b>Problem Indicators</b>	<b>Teacher's Indirect Corrective Feedback Activities</b>
A. Classroom Situation	1. There was less focus of skill strategy development activity	1, 2, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13
	2. The students' motivation in the learning process was low	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 11, 14
	3. There was poor classroom interaction	1, 3, 5, 9, 10, 12, 13
	4. There was monotonous activity	3, 4, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13
B. Writing Competence	1. The students were lack in vocabulary mastery	5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13
	2. The students had difficulty of using correct grammar in their writing	7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13
	3. The students had problem in arranging a correct sentence	6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13
	4. The students had problem in organizing the text	8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13
	5. The students found it difficult to develop their ideas	4, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13

From table 3, it can be seen that the problem indicators can be solved with the teacher's indirect corrective feedback activities. Based on those activities, it is expected to overcome the problems of the students and also improve the students' writing skill. In cycle 1, the researcher prepared the lesson plan about an argumentative essay for two



meetings. The researcher also prepared the materials such as powerpoint presentation, model paragraph and exercises used in the teaching learning process.

In the first meeting of cycle 1, the researcher as the teacher explained the topic lesson, it was an argumentative essay. The students learned about ways to write opinions, some questions dealing with the main idea, specific information, social function, language structure, and language features of an argumentative essay. After given a model paragraph, the students were given an exercise to write a brief opinion about some topics on the whiteboard. The teacher corrected and gave oral feedback to their writing on the whiteboard. Then, the students were given another exercise to write an argumentative essay. The teacher provided them with a feedback code guideline that they will use in the next meeting.

The feedback codes guideline proposed by Hedge (1998: 152) that the researcher uses is as follow:

Table 4 Feedback Codes Guideline

Codes	Codes Meaning	Examples
WF	Wrong form	there are many <u>apple</u> the tablle
T	Wrong tense	In the last few weeks you <u>didn't</u> <u>have</u> much fun
^	Word missing	she ^ a beautiful girl
Sp	Word spelling	<u>Confortable</u>
WO	Wrong word order	I like <u>very much</u> children
P	Wrong punctuation	look out,
Voc	Vocabulary	the scenery was very <u>happy</u>
//	New paragraph is needed	
Ø	Not necessary	John came in and <u>he</u> sat down
A	Article	Albert gives her an bucket of flowers
?	I don't understand what you're trying to say	
!!	You really should know what's wrong here because: - we've just done it in class - I've told you so many times	

In the second meeting, the students revise their writing that had been put in the feedback codes.

In the finding of cycle 1, there were some points found in the actions. First, the students became more active in the teaching learning process. Some of the students were enthusiastic when answering the question. Some students finished every task and activity eagerly although it was a bit difficult in the beginning. They could manage their concentration on the lesson. Second, the students could improve their writing skill. The result of the post-test 1 indicated that the students' writing skill increased. Their ability in developing ideas improved a little bit. Third, it was found that most students were confused in choosing appropriate words and made the sentences in bad structure; they

usually translated words or sentences by using an electronic dictionary without considering the context. It made the text confusing to read. Fourth, many students were confused about grammar. They did not use the right tenses to make sentences. Fifth, many students despaired easily when faced with difficult tasks. They often gave up and asked the teacher or friends for the answer without trying it first. Some of them could not understand the feedback given or they still could not recognize the errors they made. The last was the students could not manage the time efficiently when they did the writing, but generally the students' writing skill increased. Based on the facts, the researcher thought that it was necessary to conduct the second cycle.

Cycle 2 consisted of two meetings and one post-test. The topic lesson was still an argumentative essay. In the third meeting, the students learned about their errors in post-test 1 and the explanation about the outline. They were asked to analyze where the errors are and how to correct them. After dealing with students' errors, the teacher explained more about the outline, for example, the function of the outline and how to make an outline.

After learning about the outline, the students had an in-pair discussion. Each pair handed two argumentative texts to read. Then they compared the two texts in terms of language features and structure. For about ten minutes discussing, the students presented the result of their discussion in front of the class.

Then, still handing the same texts, the students compared the texts and explained which text was better. Some students said that text A was better and some said that text B was better. At the end, the researcher made a conclusion for the students that text A was better. He explained the reasons why text A was better. After that, the teacher asked the students to use the remaining time to write an argumentative text in pairs, so the students can work collaboratively with the table mate.

In the fourth meeting, the researcher began the class by asking the material they had learnt in the previous meeting. Next, the students received feedback. Just the same as the first cycle, after giving back the students' text, the researcher gave oral feedback for some common errors. After that, he told the students to use the feedback guideline to do the correction in their writing. It seemed that the way of giving indirect feedback could increase the students' participation especially in verifying the feedback and their correction.

In the second cycle of the research, the researcher found the improvements from the first cycle. The students understood more in revising the writing. Their organization of their writing was better than before. They also used their time well both their individual section and pair. Consequently, their spelling and mechanics were better since there were only a few errors. The grammar of the text was also better than before. These improvements were supported by the mean score of the test in the second cycle. In the second post-test the students' mean score was 77.93. It was better than the mean score of the first post-test that was only 72.89. The improvement of students' score can be seen at Table 4, as follows:

*Table 4 The Improvement of the Students' Achievement*

Sub Cycle	Observation	Cycle 1	Cycle 2
Kind of Test	Pre-test	Post-test 1	Post-test 2
Students' mean score	65.42	72.89	77.93

The classroom situation of the second cycle had an improvement. Firstly, the students looked more interested in teaching the learning process. The students became more active and interactive. In the beginning, all of the students did not look confident enough to write an English text because they were afraid to make a mistake. After the treatment, the students were confident and could finish the writing easier than before.

Based on the research findings, the result of the research showed the improvement of the students' writing skill and classroom situation. The improvement of students' writing skill is that (1) they could develop their idea to be a good paragraph. The students were helped from model paragraphs about argumentative essays in a different topic. They were helped by a pair discussion activity with their table mate. (2) By giving exercises, such as making and arranging the outlines to build a good paragraph, the students' wrote an argumentative essay in good order. There was suitability between the main idea and the supporting details. (3) Most students' choice of vocabulary is suitable with the context. This was helped by the class discussion and the teacher's explanation. (4) The texts comparing activity helped the students to understand the good language use aspect and made them do only few grammar errors. (5) The students' attention to spelling and mechanics increased. It is because the teacher gave extra time to correct their spelling and mechanics before it was collected.

From the explanation above, it can be seen that a teacher's indirect corrective feedback can improve the students' writing skill. It is in line with Karim & Ivi (2011) who found that feedback from the teacher can give a general guideline to improve their writing.

The implementation of teacher's indirect corrective feedback also improves the classroom situation. The students became more active and interactive. In the beginning, all of the students did not look confident enough to write an English text because they were afraid to make a mistake. During the classroom research, the students were given stimuli from power point presentations, videos, model paragraphs and exercises; so when they were asked to make an argumentative essay, the students were confident and could finish it easier than before. The implementation of indirect corrective feedback also attracted the students' interest to join the lesson from the beginning until the end of the lesson. It involved various learning activities that made the students more active in class. The teacher often got the students to be involved in the classroom discussion. The teacher asked some questions which needed feedback from the students. Their responses were good. They actively answered the teacher's questions. Even their speaking skill was not good enough; they tried to answer the questions. By frequently having discussions with the students, the classroom situation and activity were more alive and enjoyable.

In addition, the students' motivation in learning English, especially writing, also improved. It can be seen from students' activity in the verification process. They were not shy when asked about the feedback they did not understand. They had a very good

will to improve themselves to be better in writing. They were not afraid to talk using simple English conversation. They were also aware that learning English was important. It was caused by the teacher monitoring the students when they got pair group and individual work. The teacher gave immediate feedback when monitoring the students. In this way, the students were motivated and confident. This improvement in class situation is in line with Karim & Ivi (2011) who found that feedback can motivate the students in a positive way and give them confidence.

## **CONCLUSION**

The first conclusion is that the teacher's indirect corrective feedback can significantly improve the students' writing skill. The improvements can be seen from some points. The first point is the students' ability in improving the content of the composition and improving the form of the language based on the feedback given by the teacher is getting better. It can be seen from the changing numbers of the students who could make use of teacher's feedback to improve the content and the form of the language of their composition. Clearly, the improvement of the students' writing skill can be seen from the result of the tests. The mean score of pre-test was 65.42 and it improved into 72.89 in the post-test 1 and

77.93 in the post-test 2. So, the result of post-test 1 and 2 has passed the minimum requirement criterion (KKM) of that school that is 70. It showed that the implementation of teacher's indirect corrective feedback in teaching writing argumentative essays can improve the students' writing skill.

In general, teacher's feedback helps students learn to write in a very conducive atmosphere so that they can write without any feeling of aversion. Through teacher's feedback, students can self-correct their own writing actively. They are encouraged to practice writing and do not have to be afraid of producing many errors. Since writing is a skill gained by practicing, it makes sense to say that the more they practice writing, the better they will write.

The second point to be concluded is that the implementation of teacher's indirect corrective feedback gives a good impact in the class situation. It can be seen from the positive improvement in the class situation during the teaching learning process. It can be indicated by: the students looked more interested in the teaching learning process; the classroom situation also became more conducive. The implementation of teacher's indirect corrective feedback also changed the class situation in becoming more interesting, so the students were not bored and free from monotonous activity during the lesson.

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