



English teacher's strategies in providing written feedback and students' responses to the feedback at SMPN 12 Padang

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Abstract

This study aims to analyze teacher's strategies in providing direct and indirect written feedback through semi structured interview, and to analyze students' responses in their cognitive, affective, and behavioral responses through questionnaire and focus group discussion. The research was conducted at SMP Negeri 12 Padang with 65 ninth-grade students who came from class IX-2 and IX-4, and 1 English teacher. Descriptive quantitative research approach was employed because the main goal was to describe the existing phenomenon of students' responses statistically through frequencies and percentages. From the results, it showed that most of students preferred direct feedback with the percentage 88.8% rather than indirect feedback with the percentage 70.75%. The results indicated that the teacher provided both of the feedback, but direct feedback was more frequently and consistently used. Most students preferred direct feedback as it is clearly showed their mistakes, enable immediate correction, and helped them understand. However, some students appreciated indirect feedback because they thought it encouraged them to think critically, searched for the answers independently, and less dependent on the teacher. In the affective responses, 80.7% students said that written feedback made them feel confident, 87.6% said that they were motivated to write better. In behavioral responses, 64.6% students tried to ask teacher if there was something that they did not know, and 75.3% students tried to correct the mistakes that the teacher had marked. The study concludes that combining direct and indirect written feedback can enhance students' writing skills and increase their motivation in writing.

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INTRODUCTION

Feedback is an important element that can influence the success of students' language skills. This statement is supported by the opinion of Hattie (2021), feedback can increase effort, motivation, and engagement for understanding the material. It can also confirm a student's progress, or how far they have reached the goal, indicate the need for additional information, suggest new directions, and lead to restructuring understandings. In writing skills, teacher's written feedback is used to help students to know their mistakes, and can help them revise their writing. The benefits of teacher's written feedback according to Palupi, et al. (2023) are to enhance students' writing performance and increase students' motivation in writing. Many students find difficulties in writing because they do not know how to express their ideas well. This intervention is particularly critical for students who struggle to express their ideas effectively in writing (Sari, 2022)

Writing skills can be increased by using teacher written feedback to help students improve their writing skills, grammatically by using meaningful sentences to attract students' attention to the errors, corrections, or encouragement (Bonsu, 2021). Written feedback exists because of the assessment made by the teacher. One of the written assessments that is popular is the grammatical transformation task. According to (Brown, 2004), there are numerous versions of tasks that are possible, such as changing the tenses in a paragraph, changing questions into statements, changing from active to passive, and combining two sentences into one using a relative pronoun. The task that is often faced by students is changing the tenses. Commonly, English teachers written feedback will be focused on checking grammar correction, as happened at SMPN 12 Padang. Brown (2004) stated that on the positive side, the grammatical transformation task is easy to administer, quite high in scorer reliability, and perhaps taps into a knowledge of grammatical forms that will be completed through writing.

The effectiveness of written feedback fundamentally depends on the teacher's strategies in delivering the correction. Written feedback based on its form can be categorized into direct and indirect written feedback. Direct written feedback occurs when the teacher reads and gives feedback on what students have written directly, including comments, corrections, and suggestions (Arifin, 2019). On the other hand, indirect written feedback is a condition when the teacher indicates the area of error but does not provide correction in the students' assignments with written comments (Westmacott, 2017). Based on a preliminary interview with the English teacher at SMPN 12 Padang, some teachers preferred direct written feedback by explicitly correcting students' errors, while others relied on indirect written feedback in the form of symbols, underlines, or just short comments. SMPN 12 Padang was chosen because the English teacher has implemented direct and indirect written feedback to the students, the location was accessible from researcher's location, and in addition the students also had different levels of writing skills, thus enabling the researcher to gain greater insight into how students received and responded to teacher's direct and indirect written feedback.

The effectiveness of feedback also depends on how students respond to the feedback, such as how they understand direct and indirect written feedback given by the teacher and act on the feedback. The students' responses are important to see

whether the students fully understand, partially understand, or do not understand at all with the feedback given (Ramayadi, 2022). It is based on Widhiasih and Maharani (2016) that students' response is the social interaction made by the students in responding to the influences or stimuli in him/her self from the repetitive situation that is carried out by others, such as the repetition in the learning process carried out by the teacher. By understanding students' responses towards teacher's direct and indirect written feedback, teacher can adjust feedback strategies to increase students' writing skills.

There are several studies that have discussed about feedback such as, discussing the importance of feedback in Obilor (2019); academic writing students' perceptions of teacher's written feedback in Palupi, et al., (2023); and types of written feedback and challenges faced by English teacher in research of Hijriani and Hamzah (2024); however there is limited research that explores English teacher's strategies in providing direct and indirect written feedback and explores junior high school students' responses to teacher's direct and indirect written feedback, particularly at their cognitive, affective, and behavioral responses. According to (Munir, 2024), the cognitive response will examine how students use their thinking skills to the learning outcomes. Affective can be seen from students' attitudinal response, which refers to the emotions, judgments, and appreciations. Behavioral response refers to the students' actions when receiving the teacher's feedback.

In SMPN 12 Padang, some students showed their understanding in the class toward the teacher's feedback, while others seemed to have difficulty understanding direct or indirect written feedback. Therefore, this study aims to investigate two types of feedback that students received, direct written feedback and indirect written feedback, because these two types of feedback are often implemented by the English teacher at SMPN 12 Padang in students' exercise books.

METHOD

This research used descriptive quantitative research design supported by qualitative data. According to Singh (2006), descriptive research is concerned with current phenomenon and aims to identify the status of the phenomenon under investigation. The main aim of descriptive research is to describe something (phenomenon) and the characteristics, and more focus on what happened rather than how or why something has happened (Nassaji, 2015). In this study, quantitative data were utilized to analyze the generalizable data on students' responses to direct and indirect written feedback in their cognitive, affective, and behavioral responses.. The form of quantitative data was in the frequency, mean score, and percentage of students' responses to each type of the item. The data were collected through a questionnaire with 18 close-ended questions. Cognitive and affective responses used the Likert scale from the scale strongly disagree, disagree, agree, and strongly agree. Meanwhile for the behavioral responses, it used the Likert scale with the scale never, sometimes, always, and often, because it measured the frequency of students' action after receiving direct or indirect written feedback from the teacher.

Furthermore, to enhance the depth of analysis, quantitative data were supported by qualitative data. Qualitative data were obtained from focus group discussions with

the students and semi-structured interviews with the English teacher at SMPN 12 Padang. Qualitative data was needed in order to get information about students' feeling, motivation, and the students' frequency of action after received direct and indirect written feedback from the teacher. The focus group discussion was done with 20 students from each class within 15 minutes for each group. All of the questionnaire, focus group discussion, and teacher interview were conducted in Indonesian, but the reporting of results and interpretation of data is presented in English.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The Teacher's Strategies in Providing Written Feedback

The teacher explained that she used both direct and indirect written feedback strategies depending on students' writing proficiency and the type of errors that students had made. For major errors, teacher preferred to use direct feedback, because she could write the correction on the incorrect words. This could help students to understand the mistakes. However, for minor errors such as spelling, punctuation, or for the condition if students forgot to add s/es in the verbs, the teacher used indirect feedback. She made underlining or circling to allow students discovered and correct their own mistakes. In addition, as a strategy of written feedback, the English teacher had her own strategies to give the correction for the students. The teacher did it by giving the correction by different inks, so that students could realize easily and differentiate their writing and the teacher's writing. From the teacher's interview, the teacher tended to use direct feedback because it would be easy for students to see the correction. It was based on the teacher's opinion, *"If there is not much to be done, not much to be corrected, we give direct feedback. If the error varies, I'm more inclined to direct feedback"*. Once again, the teacher chose direct feedback because it was clearer to be understood by the students. In addition, the teacher also adjusted the feedback that she gave according to the ability and quality of her students' writing. The teacher said,

"If the story has gone anywhere, it will be given a question mark. But if it feels like this child can do it, it's just a matter of correcting. For example, if we give a lesson is about text. For example, we give past tense material. This student runs out everywhere. Sometimes they look on Google and make weird writing. Then I give a question mark. Because to fix it is already far away. But if it's still in the concept of learning in that material, we show which one is correct. So, it's better and I prefer direct feedback."

Next, after the teacher gave the written feedback to the students, the researcher asked about how the teacher's strategy in checking whether students understood or not after they were given written feedback. The English teacher said, she would make additional exercises with the same topic. She said, *"We'll give them more practice. If it's the same mistake, it means they don't understand. But if there are improvements from what we write, it means they read and understand from what we write"*. Another way that the teacher used was to provide an emoji, either a sad emoji or a happy emoji to show the results of the assessment. The teacher often used words such as excellent, very good, good, or good job as the assessment rather than giving scores, but she still provided written feedback for students' writing. This was proven by the results of the interview, which can be seen below.

"By differentiating the writing, by making variations in different colors. For example, in ink, if a student writes in black, then we look for ink writing that is not black, so that the student is clear when he opens the book, there is red, when he opens the book, there is blue, so that the student immediately knows. But if we write the same ink, they are confused, is it their writing or my writing? Or sometimes emoji. An emoji of a disappointed person. If you're disappointed, it means the arch is downward, the eyes are downward, the lips are downward. If you're happy, the eyes curve up, the lips curve up".

Therefore, it could be concluded that the teacher often used direct feedback as the strategy to give correction for the students if the errors of their writing were too much, and later the teacher would explain the correct answer to the students by calling them one by one. But if it was a minor error, the teacher used indirect feedback so students could discover and think about the correct answer. This is supported by the statement from Fhaeizdhyaal (2020), that indirect feedback can bring more benefits to learners' long-term development because it forces students to find the correct answer by themselves, meanwhile direct feedback is more suitable for low intermediate learners because it does not need self-correction, and is more suitable in word choice and sentence structure. Then the teacher also used different ink to differentiate the writing and also used an emoji as the feedback.

Students' Responses on Direct and Indirect Written Feedback through Questionnaire and Focus Group Discussions

The final results of analyzing students' responses based on 18 statements were analyzed and are presented in the following table. This table presents the scores, percentages, and categories of students' responses that covering 3 main indicators, namely cognitive, affective, and behavioral responses. These results provide an overall picture of the tendency of students' responses.

Table 1. Final Results of Students' Responses toward Questionnaire Analysis

No.	Score	Percentage	Average score	Category	Statement
Cognitive Responses					
1.	233	89.6%	3.58	Very positive	The feedback that my teacher write help me to find out the mistakes in my writing.
2.	218	83.8%	3.35	Very positive	The written feedback from my teacher helps me to improve my writing in English lessons.

3.	186	71.5%	2.86	Positive	I understand some of the abbreviations in the corrections written by my teacher, such as "check the v! = check the verb!", 'V' stands for verb, 'S' stands for Subject, 'P' stands for Punctuation.
4.	182	70%	2.8	Positive	I understand some of the correction symbols given by the teacher in my assignments. For example, I understand the circled errors, or I understand if only a question mark is given on the error.
5.	231	88.8%	3.55	Very positive	It is easier for me to understand if the teacher directly gives the answers when correcting.
6.	219	84.2%	3.36	Very positive	The feedback written by my teacher helped me improve my vocabularies knowledge in the topic of Comparative Degree.
7.	200	76.9%	3.07	Positive	Teacher-written feedback helps me to improve my understanding on the concept of correct grammar in the topic of Short Message.
8.	169	65%	2.6	Positive	Teacher-written feedback helps me to improve my understanding of how to create positive, negative and interrogative sentences in the Simple Past Tense topic.
Affective Responses					

9.	215	82.6%	3.30	Very positive	The feedback that my teacher writes make me feel happy.
10.	207	79.6%	3.18	Positive	Teacher-written feedback makes me feel like I can write in English.
11.	210	80.7%	3.23	Positive	The feedback given by the teacher makes me feel confident.
12.	228	87.6%	3.50	Very positive	The feedback my teacher wrote motivated me to write better in the future.
13.	212	81.5%	3.26	Very positive	The feedback written by the teacher makes me excited to learn writing in English.
Behavioral Responses					
14.	192	73.8%	2.95	Positive	When I get feedback written by my teacher, I only look at the scores.
15.	201	77.3%	3.09	Positive	When I get feedback written by my teacher, I look at my score and read the corrections.
16.	168	64.6%	2.58	Positive	When I get feedback written by my teacher, I look at the score, read the correction, and then ask the teacher for further explanation, if there is something I don't understand.
17.	196	75.3%	3.01	Positive	When I get feedback written by the teacher, I try to correct the mistakes that the teacher has marked.
18.	127	76.1%	1.95	Negative	After I received feedback from my teacher, I improved my writing skills by asking for help from tutors/private tutors.
Total			3594		

$$\begin{aligned} \text{Percentage of overall score} &= \frac{\text{Total overall score}}{\text{Overall max score}} \times 100\% \\ &= \frac{3594}{4680} \times 100\% = 76.7\% \end{aligned}$$

The results of the detailed analysis of students' responses towards direct and indirect written feedback showed that some of the items 7 out of 18 were categorized as "Very Positive", while 10 items were categorized as "Positive", and the remaining 1 item was categorized as "Negative". The total score for all items was 3594 out of 4680, which means 76.7% of total was "Positive".

The overall data showed students had positive responses toward teacher's direct and indirect written feedback at SMPN 12 Padang. This could be seen by the total average responses of cognitive, affective, and behavioral to these feedbacks. First, regarding cognitive responses, the findings show students' understanding for some materials, if they were given direct and indirect written feedback. The first statement with average score of 3.58 or 83.8%, expressed written feedback could help students to know their mistakes in writing. Then item question number 2, with the average score of 3.35 or 71.5%, showed a very positive response that written feedback could help them to improve the quality of their writing. Item question number 3 related with indirect feedback about students' understanding in the abbreviations of teacher's written feedback, showed the average score of 2.86 or 71.5% had a positive response. Almost similarly, item question number 4 with the statement about the students' understanding for the symbols in the teachers' correction or feedback, showed that the average score of response was 2.8 or 70% was in positive response. It was found that some students still understood if they were given the corrections in the form of symbols and abbreviations but with the notes in simple sentences. Next, in item question number 5 about students' understanding when they were given directly the correct answer (or in here was called direct feedback), the average score of 3.55 or 88.8% showed very positive response. In addition, the utterance from students in class IX-2 was, "*We prefer to be direct because we know where the mistake is, is it from the incorrect writing, or the incorrect translation, or the meaning*". This meant that students preferred direct feedback because they could know directly what the error was in their writing and could be revised soon. Item question number 6 had average score of 3.36 or 84.2% students agreed that teacher's correction helped them to improve their vocabularies in comparative degree topic, and it had very positive response. Item question number 7 had average score of 3.07 or 76.9% students had a positive response that teacher's written feedback could help them to understand correct grammatical in making short message. In item question number 8, teacher's feedback could help students in making the sentence in the topic of simple past tense, the average score was 2.6 or 65% and this was in positive response.

Second, for the affective response, students' responses tend to be very positive (three out of five responses), and two for the rest were positive responses. According to Gonzales et al., (2021) affective or emotional response are students' reactions in the school such as happiness, sadness, anxiety, and interest. In item question number 9, when the students were asked about their feeling after given direct and indirect written feedback from the teacher, they felt happy because they could know what were their

mistakes were, and knew the correct answers. It was shown by the total percentage 82.6% and with the mean score 3.30 indicated a very positive response. Even though there was still one student that felt anxious when she was given indirect feedback, because she was nervous to see the score. One of the anxious students said, *"I was nervous about how much the score would be when it was corrected and I didn't know which part was wrong"*. There was one student felt frustrated when her wrong answer was being corrected by the teacher. She said, *"I'm already tired of the same wrong answers, so I'm tired"*. It can be seen that not all of the students liked to be corrected. Other students felt anxious and frustrated when their answers were corrected by the English teacher, especially if they had not been able to get the right answer. This is aligned with Zhang (2024) who stated that high level students commonly can have positive feelings when they get teacher's feedback. meanwhile, low-level students can have negative affective response.

Then, for item question number 10, the students had opinion that teacher written feedback could help them to write better in English. This was shown by the data that 79.6% students' response was in positive response, which meant they agreed with that statement. Next, item question number 11, students agreed that teacher written feedback helped them to get confidence while they tried to write in English. The average score is 3.23 or 80.7% of students' response was in positive category. In item question number 12, students also admitted that they were motivated to revise their writing and paid attention to their faults after they were given direct written feedback from the English teacher. For overall percentage, 87.6% and the mean score 3.50 indicated that students had a very positive response. The reason of why they wanted to revise their errors and did not want to repeat the same mistakes again in the future was because they wanted to get good scores for the next time. Based on student's utterances in focus group discussion, *"in order to get good scores"*. It is strengthened by Li and Christiansen (2020) who found that effective feedback from teacher has a beneficial impact on students and motivates them to learn carefully, leading to long-term engagement. According to the students, teacher written feedback is beneficial for their writing. This was shown by the data that the average score of item question 13 was 3.26 or 81.5% students' response was in very positive category.

Third, behavioral response refers to how students respond to written feedback through actions such as making revisions (Gonzales et al., 2021). Students who perceive feedback as manageable are more likely to revise their work and take other actions (Ene & Yao, 2021). These actions may include discussing the feedback with the teacher/peer or with external resources when there is something that they do not understand (Rabbani & Aljanahi, 2024). In the questionnaire, item question 14 was made to see how often the students only looked at their scores only when their answers were corrected by the teacher in the written feedback. From the data of questionnaire, it was known that the total percentage of students' responses was 73.8% and the mean score 2.95 indicated a positive response. Many students said they often revised their writing after receiving feedback, with the statement, *"Immediately corrected. In order the wrong answers can be the right answers"*. This suggests that although grades were often noticed first, students were also engaged with feedback.

The teacher confirmed this by saying that some students did not understand only looked at the scores or grades, but others who understood immediately revised their

work. Thus, the data demonstrated the students' responses to feedback are complex, and while scores are initially important, some students are willing to improve their writing, especially when they are encouraged or directed. This explanation has also explained the reason for item 15, about the frequency with which students read the corrections given by the teacher. A total of 77.3% of students had a positive response with an average score of 3.09. In addition, this reason was also in line with questionnaire item 17, how much the frequency of the students revised or fixed their errors that had been given written feedback by the teacher. A total of 75.3% or the average score 3.01 of students had positive response.

Next, item question 16, when students were asked how often they asked the teacher for an explanation if there was something they did not understand, the students' responses had a total percentage 64.6% with the mean score 2.58 indicated a positive response. The students commonly felt convenient to ask with their friends. It was reinforced with students' statements in the focus group discussion, some of them said they were more comfortable asking for explanations from friends when compared to teachers. This was in line when the researcher interviewed the teacher about the teacher's views on the reasons why students are more comfortable asking friends. According to the teacher, students often feel afraid and embarrassed if their friends laugh at them because they don't understand, so students prefer to ask their close friends.

Last but not least, for item question number 18, the students were asked about the frequency of how often they asked for help from their English private tutor if there was something that they did not know. It showed a negative response, with the average score of 1.95 or 76.1% students said they almost never asked for help from their tutor because they did not have any English private tutor. So, most of the students just leaned on the teacher's explanation at school. While there were some students said, if they did not know, they searched and learned from the internet, and some of them said they learned just by reading the books. This was based on the data from students' focus group discussion, they said, "Ask to the teacher" or "Sometimes ask a friend" or "Search in the books". There are 2 students decided to do self-learning because they did not want to depend too much on the teacher, so they hoped they could learn from many sources. This showed that even though most students did not have tutors, they still had the effort to find additional references from friends, books, or the internet. It is supported by the statement that high-level students use external resources to enhance their knowledge, meanwhile low-level students do not use specific strategy to review teacher comments (Zhang, 2024).

Students' and Teacher's Preferences between Direct and Indirect Written Feedback

From students' perspectives, they preferred teacher gave the correction directly because it was easier for them to understand their faults. Item question 5 showed data that the average score for that item is 3.55 or 88.8% students showed very positive response rather than item question number 3 and 4 with the average percentage is 70.75%. In focus group discussion, one of the students said, "We prefer direct because we know where the mistake is, is it from the incorrect writing, or the incorrect translation, or the meaning". Then, it was also supported by the research from Yunus

(2020), that more than 80% of students from the class that he had researched, the students preferred their teachers to underline, correct, and explain the errors.

Next from teacher's interview she said, "*If there is not much to be done, not much to be corrected, we give direct feedback. If the error varies, I'm more inclined to direct feedback*". Farida (2022) in her results research about the actual practices of teacher written feedback, stated that the reason why the teacher gave direct feedback on students' writing was because sometimes it might be time consuming to explain the problems, so teacher just wrote the correction on students' writing, and chose direct feedback to save the time. However, from the majority of the results, there were still 3 students who openly stated that they still liked indirect feedback because it facilitated them to learn on their own without having to rely on the teacher. For the majority of students when they were asked in the focus group discussion, most students still insisted on liking direct feedback because it was simple, easy to understand, and did not make it difficult to find the correct answer again.

CONCLUSION

The findings of this study reveal that for teacher's strategies in providing written feedback, she employs both direct and indirect written feedback strategies, though direct feedback is used more frequently. The teacher also uses different ink to mark the corrections in students' writing, in order the students are able to understand about their mistakes. Next, the English teacher uses an emoji rather than scores at the students' writing, and make a few exercises to test the students' ability. In conclusion, written feedback especially direct written feedback plays a significant role in shaping students' learning behavior, and students' writing skills. Furthermore, if direct and indirect written feedback are combined together, they can enhanced students' writing skills by providing clear correction and stimulates the students to have critical thinking for understanding the mistakes. Students in grade IX at SMPN 12 Padang generally have positive responses across cognitive, affective, and behavioral responses to teacher's direct and indirect written feedback. In cognitive response, the students recognize their mistakes, understand the corrections, and agree that feedback helps them to improve their writing skills. Teacher and students more likely direct feedback than indirect feedback, because it can help them to easily recognize their mistakes. It is aligned with their behavioral responses by revising their work based on teacher's comments, discussing unclear parts with teacher or peers, and even they use external resources such as books or the internet to improve their understanding. In affective responses, students are happy and encouraged when they get written feedback from the English teacher. The majority of students feel supported and motivated by the corrections. Future research is encouraged to engage more schools and explore the long-term impact of various types of feedback on students' writing development.

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