



WRITTEN CORRECTIVE FEEDBACK GIVEN BY TEACHERS OF MTSN DURIAN TARUNG PADANG ON STUDENTS' GRAMMATICAL ERRORS

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Abstract

This research aimed at finding out the types of written corrective feedback used by English teachers of a junior high school on student's grammatical errors, and problems related to written corrective feedback on grammatical errors from the teacher's perspectives. This is a descriptive research in which the population was all of English teacher of MTsN Durian Tarung Padang. By using maximal variation sampling technique, all of the teachers, who were five teachers, were chosen to be the sample. The first instrument used was documents which were notebooks and exercise books of the students of the school in the year 2015/2016, and the second instrument was interview with the teachers. From the research, it was found that only three types of the five types were practiced by the teachers. They were, consecutively written from the most frequently used to the least, direct corrective feedback, indirect corrective feedback and metalinguistic feedback with the use of error codes. In addition, problems related to written CF were repetition of errors, students proficiency, student's attitude, time-consuming, ineffectiveness of existing error feedback practice, and readability of students writing. Therefore, English teacher, future teachers should enrich their knowledge of written corrective feedback, optimizing their correction to optimize the benefits to the students language development and find solution to solve problem related to written corrective on students' grammatical error.

Key words: Written corrective feedback, grammatical errors

A. INTRODUCTION

In language classroom, learning process involves exposure of input, trial-error and output. When receiving exposure of input, students have a concept in their mind and try it out. There will always be failure or errors during this process. This often calls for, according to Rassaei and Moinzadeh (2011: 97), corrective feedback. It is popularly known as error correction.

Corrective feedback is provided to learners to correct their errors. Corrective feedback, according to Larsen and Freeman (2011: 262), is negative evidence

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provided to learners which is used to correct their misconception about some aspects of the target language. It means that corrective feedback indicates the learners' misunderstanding or wrong hypothesis about aspects of a language which can be in pronunciation, grammar, spelling, and others. The indication or evidence then can be utilized to repair their language production.

On the other hand, corrective feedback definition can be specified in the scope of grammar matter only. Sheen (2007) in Rassaei and Moinzadeh (2011: 97) defines corrective feedback as a teacher's act that invites a learner to attend to grammatical accuracy of the utterance produced by learners. In addition, Pawlak (2014: 6) says that corrective feedback refers to teachers' response to incorrect language forms. Pawlak further explain that this corrective feedback can be given to students' speech and writing. Both have similar notions that corrective feedback is focused on language forms or grammatical accuracy.

Teachers' corrective feedback in EFL classroom is very important and influential for students' language development. Brown (2000:275) states that in EFL context, teachers provide useful linguistic feedback and their students are dependent on them because students cannot get it in real life. In addition, Brown and Abeywickrama (2010: 7) assert that corrective feedback also functions as a formative assessment to help students improve their language for continuation of learning. Therefore, when students make errors, corrective feedback from teachers can direct them to notice it and stimulate them to repair it for learning growth.

Furthermore, given in appropriate ways, corrective feedback results improvement on students' competence. Chandler (2003: 270) states that corrective feedback improves language accuracy over time. It means that the benefit of giving correction on students' works cannot occur in a blink of eyes. It takes time for teacher and students starting from giving correction, instructing students to notice it and make use of it. Thus, once it is practiced, students should be given chances to learn and internalize the correction to result the positive effect.

Corrective feedback is provided to all kinds of errors. It can be errors in pronunciation, grammar, or word choice. In addition, grammatical errors, according to Folse (2009:2), is one the most frequent things made by EFL students. It is because the rules of the students' first language are different from English as the target language. Besides, they do not use English as the language they use to communicate to other in real life.

In fact, grammatical competence is very essential in language learning even in communicative language learning. Grammatical competence, according to Brown (2000: 362), has a very important place as a major component of communicative competence, within which communication operates. Therefore, corrective feedback on grammatical errors as a part of language learning is very important.

Corrective feedback on grammatical errors can be in oral and written forms. Oral corrective feedback is performed verbally in short time. Meanwhile, written ones are performed in print, permanent and concrete. Moreover, based on preliminary research, many task or assignments in schools in Padang these days are in written forms such as doing exercises from textbooks, completing LKS and

others. Therefore, written corrective feedback on grammatical errors considerably deserves attention in language teaching.

There are several types of written corrective feedback. The first one is direct corrective feedback. It means that the teacher provides the correct form to the students. According to Ferris (2006: 24) this can take several forms like crossing out the incorrect or unnecessary items, inserting missing item, and writing the correct form above or near to the deviant items and combinations of these. The second one is indirect corrective feedback. It means that the teacher indicates that the student has made an error or mistake but does not correct it. According to Ellis (2009a: 100) this can be done by underlining or putting other symbols like circles or question mark on the deviant items.

In addition, the third type of written correction is metalinguistic corrective feedback with the use of error code. Using this type, the teachers provide certain codes to indicate the students' errors. According to Ellis (2009a: 101) this consists of abbreviation that stands for certain grammatical items. The fourth type is metalinguistic corrective feedback with the brief grammar description. The teacher only gives a brief explanation or description with or without certain signs or marks. The last type is reformulation. It means that the teacher reformulates or constructs native – speaker version of part of student's writing that contains error.

Furthermore, there are several problems that teachers face or find related to written corrective feedback. The first one is *time-consuming*. Pawlak (2014:214) says that sometimes teachers have insufficient time to do it. The second problem is *repetition* of student's errors. Lee (2003: 228) explains that many times students make the same errors again and again even though explanation of the grammar aspects or of the errors has been given to them. Additionally, the third problem is *student proficiency*. Students differ in terms of their proficiency. According to Truscott (2001: 95), practical problem related to this is whether the students understand the errors and correction given or not.

The fourth problem is the *ineffectiveness of existing error feedback practice*. Lee (2003: 228) asserts some teachers have not yet been able to provide or not felt satisfied with the way they give correction. Another problem is choice in *marking* grammatical errors. Ellis (2009b: 6) says that the choice to correct errors should be regarded by teacher. The last problem is *students' attitude* towards the correction. Chandler (2003: 271) says that some students do not even read correction given on their tasks.

Either leaving grammatical errors uncorrected or giving corrective feedback with improper treatment does not give benefit for students. Giving no correction lets students keep the wrong concepts. They have no idea which structures are correct or not since they are not given responses or corrected. Moreover, correction with inappropriate treatment does not avoid students to make the same errors. Inappropriate treatment fails to direct the students to proceed or internalize it in effective ways. In fact, some grammar aspects are required in curriculum and appear in semester and national exams. There were some researchers which had been conducted related to the teaching writing. One of them was Oktrifiani and Syafe'i (2013) which was conducted the use of writing models as a technique in teaching writing in elementary school students. Thus, based on the problems

stated above, written corrective feedback on grammatical errors given by English teachers of junior high school is chosen to be researched.

B. RESEARCH METHOD

This research was a descriptive research because it described a particular phenomenon that occurs in field, which was written corrective feedback on grammatical errors. Thus, through this research, the researcher intended to understand and report written corrective feedback given by English teachers of MTSN Durian Tarung Padang on students' grammatical errors, and the problems from the teachers' perspective.

The population of the research is all the five English teachers in the school. In choosing the sample, maximal variation sampling technique is used. Through this technique, this research was supposed to show the types of written corrective feedback given by the English teachers in maximal variation. Therefore, the five teachers became the samples. There were two instruments used, document and interview. The data about written corrective feedback on grammatical errors practiced by the teachers were obtained through the documents. The documents were students' notebooks and students' exercise books. The books were examined to seek for the presence of written correction on grammatical errors and then they were classified into the types. Each time the correction was found, it was noted into tallies. The tallies were counted and then converted into a common percentage formula. In addition, to find out problems related to written corrective feedback on grammatical errors from the teachers' perspectives, interview was used as the second instrument. The research was administered in MTsN Durian Tarung Padang, on March 21st until April 2nd 2016.

C. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

The procedure of examining students' book was done to find out the types of written corrective feedback given by English teachers of the school on students' grammatical errors. After that, they were classified into the five types as noted below. The results were described as follows.

Teachers/ Grade	Types of Written Corrective feedback				
	DC	IC	MC1	MC2	R
T1/ VII	49	5	-	-	-
T2/ VII	45	13	-	-	-
T3/ IX	86	94	-	-	-
T4/ VIII	12	3	2	-	-
T5/ IX	31	3	-	-	-
Total	223	118	2	0	0
%	65.01	34.40	0.58	0	0

Notes: DC: Direct Corrective Feedback, IC: Indirect Corrective Feedback, MC1: Metalinguistic Corrective Feedback with the Use of Error Codes, MC2: Metalinguistic Corrective Feedback with Brief Grammatical Description, R: Reformulation

The table shows that among the five types of written corrective feedback, only three types were found in students' books. The first one is direct corrective feedback which was practiced by all of the teachers, 223 times in total. The second type is indirect corrective feedback. Similarly with the former, it was also practiced by all of the teachers, 118 times in total. Meanwhile, the third type, metalinguistic feedback with use of error codes, was only practiced by one teacher, 2 times.

Moreover, it was found that that direct corrective feedback was the most frequent type of written correction used by the teachers (65.01%). Four of five teachers use this type more frequently than the other types. The second highest frequent type was indirect corrective feedback (34.40%). Only one teacher used this type of correction more frequently than feedback. In addition, the third highest frequent type was metalinguistic feedback with the use of error codes (0.58%). Meanwhile, the two others, metalinguistic corrective feedback with brief grammatical description and reformulation, were not used at all.

The first type of written corrective feedback, direct corrective feedback, was the highest frequent type used by the teachers of the school. Direct corrective feedback provides students the correct form of their errors. Thus, Ferris and Robert (2001) in Ellis (2009a: 97) assert that this type of correction is probably better than indirect correction for low-proficiency students. By using this type, the students could directly see the correct form which they could not make it themselves because of their lack of grammar rules. This is why this type was the most frequently used by the teachers of the school whose most of the students were beginner learners. This finding is similar to Lee (2004:300) who also found that direct corrective feedback was also the most used type of written correction practiced by the teachers of secondary classrooms in Hong Kong based on her study. Moreover, the options or strategies of direct corrective feedback practiced by the teachers were varied. All of the options asserted by Ferris (2006:24) were used as indicators. They were crossing out incorrect or unnecessary items, inserting missing items, writing down the correct form near the errors and combination of these, which was the combination of crossing out the error + writing down the correct form.

The second type of written corrective feedback is indirect correction. Based on the findings, it was the second highest frequent type after direct correction. Using indirect corrective feedback, teachers do not provide the correct form. The students are just signaled that errors have occurred with or without locating the errors. Ellis (2009a:100) says that this correction requires students to think about the students by themselves. Thus, it is suitable for students who have sufficient knowledge or who are in higher level of proficiency while most of the students in this research were not. That is why most of the teachers, except teacher 3, practiced this correction much lesser than direct correction. It is in line with

Bitchener et.al (2005:193) who asserts that many surveys revealed that both teachers and students prefer to direct corrective feedback than indirect corrective feedback. Additionally, the options explained by Ellis (2009a:101) were used as indicators. They were underlining, circling and giving a cross symbol to indicate errors.

The least frequently used type of correction practiced by the teacher in this research was metalinguistic feedback with the use of error codes. According to Ellis (2009a:101), this type provides students with certain codes to indicate errors. The codes are abbreviations related to linguistic terms. It means that it requires both teachers and students to have knowledge of linguistics and related terms to understand the codes given. This research found that regarding the students' knowledge of English grammar, this type was not often used. It was only practiced by one teacher of grade VIII in a very small number. The codes used by the teacher were simple ones which the students could probably understand and were familiar with such as code 'V1' for verb 1.

Another type of written corrective feedback, metalinguistic with brief grammar description, was not used at all. It is a type in which the description of certain errors to make it correct is given. The description can be in students' L1 or the target language. According to Pawlak (2014: 137) this technique very often uses linguistics terminology which may only be owned by students in higher level of proficiency. Therefore, it was not used by the teachers.

The last type correction type used by the teacher was reformulation. Reformulation means the teachers rewrite or reformulate certain part of students' writing into the native-speaker version. Based on the finding, this type was not practiced by the teachers. In fact, Harmer (2007: 148) asserts that reformulation leads students to discover the changes by themselves, comparing their own and their teachers'. By looking at the students' proficiency, the students may not able to do those. Additionally, many of the assignment based on the research, were grammar drills of particular aspect of grammar. It means that students were not required to write long sentences on their own ideas. This is why the reformulation was not practiced by the teacher of the school.

Furthermore, the data of problems related to written corrective feedback on grammatical error was obtained through interview. By analyzing the answer of the teachers, some problems were found. The data is presented in the following table.

No	Problems	Teachers
1.	Time	1 teacher
2.	Repetition of error	4 teachers
3.	Student proficiency	4 teachers
4.	Ineffectiveness of existing error feedback practice	2 teachers
5.	Choice in marking errors	0
6.	Students' attitude	4 teachers

7.	Readability of students' writing	1 teacher
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It was found that there were 6 problems that the teachers of the school found or faced. They were time, repetition of errors, student proficiency, ineffectiveness of existing error feedback practice, students attitude, readability of students writing. Meanwhile, none of teacher found problem of choice in marking errors. First, providing students written corrective feedback on their assignment took time. Sometimes it is even time consuming. Only one teacher faced this problem. Second, students repeated the errors even though they had been corrected previously. Four of five teachers found this problem.

Moreover, students' proficiency was another problem. Since students had low proficiency, they are not able to locate, correct the errors and relate the correction given with their knowledge. It was a problem for 4 teachers. Fourth, it was perceived by 2 teachers that they had not yet found the effective error feedback practice. Fifth, 4 teachers found that many students did not care of correction given on their task. Sixth, 1 teacher asserted that it was difficult to give correction on grammatical errors because students' writing was sometimes unreadable.

Among the six, there were three most common problems: repetition of errors, students' proficiency and students' attitude. First, the teachers found that even though having been corrected, some students still make the same errors. It means that the purpose of the practice of error correction was not achieved. It is in line with Lee (2003: 228) who found that students make the same errors although it has been explained to them clearly.

Second, a number of the students were low proficiency. They were not able to identify errors, correct it and relate it with the knowledge. It is similar with what Evans et. al. (2010: 70) found in his study. He stated that some students are not developmentally ready for written corrective feedback. Third, students' attitude like how they respond and learn the correction appeared a problem as well. Similarly, Chandler (2003) found that some students do not read or proceed the correction given to them.

Corrective feedback requires time. The research found that this problem was perceived by one teacher only. It is in contrast with Lee's finding (2003: 228) which revealed that for her research subject, time was the problem asserted the most by the teachers. In addition, ineffectiveness of existing error feedback practice was found by few teachers. It was found from the interview that the teachers had not yet found effective written corrective feedback which suited their students' need. Another teacher further asserted that she was just practicing types commonly used by her and other teachers and had not yet manage to look for other types or technique.

Another problem was readability of students' writing. One of the teacher said that the students' writing was sometimes unreadable. Grammatical errors refer to incorrect forms. If the 'form' itself is not clear, it is difficult for the teacher to read, understand it and even to decide the correction.

D. CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

Through examining students' books, it was found that among the five types of written corrective feedback found from theories, only three types were practiced by the teachers. They were direct corrective feedback, indirect corrective feedback, and metalinguistic feedback with the use of error codes. Among the three, the first type was used the most. Finally, through interview, there were six problems related to written corrective feedback. First, providing written corrective feedback on grammatical errors is sometimes time-consuming. Second, some students still make the same errors after being corrected. Third, students have low proficiency; they are not able to locate and correct errors and relate their knowledge with the correction given. Fourth, it is perceived that existing error feedback practice is not effective. Fifth, some students do not care or learn the correction given. Last, students' writing is sometimes unreadable that it is sometimes difficult for teacher to understand it and decide the correction.

There are some suggestions for teachers, students and next researchers. First, teachers should be creative in providing correction that students will study the correction, internalize it and make use of it. Second, teachers should enrich their knowledge about written corrective feedback, included the various type. Thus, they can choose which one is suitable for their students and vary practicing their corrective feedback types. Third, students should be informed the importance of corrective feedback for them. They should study it and make it another learning source. They should be more proactive to confirm or ask their teachers if they do not understand the correction given on their task. Last, for the next researchers who are interested as well in the studies of error correction, they can make a research comparing written corrective feedback types and problem practice by teachers from different levels such as comparing the teachers of a junior high school and senior high school. Hopefully, the next researchers can find interesting finding by comparing two different schools and levels.

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