



## Exploring Teacher's Feedback on Students' Writing Skill in Indonesian EFL Classroom

### Mengeksplorasi Umpan Balik Guru terhadap Keterampilan Menulis Siswa di Kelas Bahasa Inggris sebagai Bahasa Asing di Indonesia

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#### Abstract

This research was based on the phenomenon in school where many students find writing challenging. The students do not know if their writing is correct since they are too shy to ask the teacher when they have problems. In addition, students lack enthusiasm to learn writing because the class was unattractive. This research aimed to find out the teacher's written feedback in students' written tasks and the factors of good teacher's written feedback completed by teachers, teacher barriers, and students' responses to written feedback in the second semester of tenth grade at SMA Islam Athirah 1 Makassar in 2021/2022. This was qualitative research. The data were evaluated utilizing data reduction, data display, and data conclusion. This investigation involved tenth graders at SMA Islam Athirah 1 Makassar. This research sampled 32 students from one class, X IPA 2. The researcher collected data via instruments, interviews, questionnaires, and document examination. From the data analysis, it was observed that the teacher rarely met all three aspects. Many challenges that teachers had in offering written feedback and students lacked reaction in the second semester of tenth grade at SMA Islam Athirah 1 Makassar.

**Keywords:** *teacher's written feedback, students' response, teacher's problems*

#### Abstrak

Penelitian ini berdasarkan fenomena yang terjadi di sekolah dimana banyak siswa mendapatkan kesulitan dalam menulis. Siswa tidak tahu apakah tulisan mereka benar atau salah karena mereka malu untuk bertanya kepada guru saat mereka menghadapi masalah. Selain itu siswa juga kurang antusias dalam belajar menulis karena kelasnya kurang atraktif. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui tuisan umpan balik guru dalam tugas menulis siswa dan faktor-faktor umpan balik tertulis yang baik yang diberikan oleh guru, hambatan guru dan respon siswa terhadap umpan balik tertulis pada siswa semester dua kelas 10 di SMA Islam Athirah 1 Makassar tahun ajaran 2021/2022. Penelitian ini adalah penelitian kualitatif. Penelitian ini melibatkan

kelas 10 di SMA Islam Athirah 1 Makassar. Sampel dari penelitian ini sebanyak 32 siswa dari kelas X IPA 2. Instrument penelitian menggunakan wawancara, kuisisioner, dan dokumen ujian. Berdasarkan data analisis, guru jarang memenuhi semua aspek. Banyak hambatan yang di hadapi guru pada saat memberikan umpan balik tertulis dan kurangnya tanggapan siswa pada siswa semester dua kelas 10 di SMA Islam Athirah 1 Makassar.

**Kata kunci:** umpan balik tertulis guru, respon siswa, masalah guru

## INTRODUCTION

Writing is seen as a skill that helps people improve their spoken language. Because the words and thoughts may be permanently recorded on paper, stone, or in a computer file, writing differs from speaking. According to Fromkin, Rodman, and Hyams (2003), writing is a skill which can make a permanent record of what has been said. So, written thoughts may be read and revisited by others as many times as they want. People also think that writing is the last form of communication that they need to learn thoroughly after speaking. A child learns to speak a language just by being around it, while learning to write is something they have to work at. Hammil and Bartell (1975) are right when they say that writing is the highest and last form of communication to be mastered. This is because writing lets people put their thoughts, feelings, and ideas on paper (Irmalia, 2016).

Depdiknas (in Hidayanti, 2013) says that most Indonesian students and many other students who learn English as a second language still have trouble using English in their writing. Students often have trouble writing in English in a good way and in the right form. Many students have trouble putting their ideas into writing. Students need to know how to write in order to learn and teach English. Writing is one of the four skills that students must learn in elementary and middle school. In writing, especially in elementary school, simple sentences should be able to be formed by students and paragraphs that are correct and grammatically correct. However, they still make mistakes when they write sentences or paragraphs as homework. According to Mastan and Maroof (2014), writing is a hard skill for students to study. So, the teacher gives students feedback on their writing so they can learn from their mistakes.

It is important to students to get teacher's feedback because it is part of how teachers learn. Feedback is also important for students because it can help them improve their writing and make better sentences or paragraphs. Teachers' feedback can be given orally or in writing, depending on the teacher. According to Brookhart cited in Rismawati (2018), Feedback is a crucial tool for instructors and students to assess how well pupils are performing in relation to the learning objectives set in the classroom. Harmer (2004) stated that planning, drafting, editing, and writing the final version are the "wheel of writing". As part of the writing process, editing is thought to be very vital. Siswanti (2013) thinks that students who get feedback from their teachers are often more motivated to edit and raise the standard of their writing than writers who don't get comments. In conclusion, feedback is vital for students after writing so that they understand where their mistake. From the mistake, students can learn how to improve their writing.

Feedback is a dialogue or exchange between the teacher and the learner. It doesn't go one way. Feedback is a very important part of learning. It helps learners make the most of their abilities at different stages of learning, become more aware of their strengths and areas where they need to improve, and figure out what they can do to improve their performance. So, feedback is given to ask for more information, give

directions, make suggestions, or ask for something to be changed. To give students new information that will help them study and to say good things about what they've done. As most students indicate a need for feedback that is broader and uses many feedback types, such as written, peer, verbal, digitally recorded and automated (Henderson et al., 2019).

Teacher's written feedback is meant to help students rethink and rewrite their work. To make sure that all of the teacher's suggestions are taken into account and used, we must convince students to think about and act on the feedback we give them, even if we have to force them to do so. This is due to research showing that the majority of students only make a mental note of the grade, correction, and comment when they receive feedback. So, it's important to remind the students how important it is to go back over their work. The students' rewriting is the key to turning the instruction of teachers into the success of students' own writing. So, before the following class, the teacher has provided the students with meaningful critique on both the format and substance of their pieces, he should be in charge of keeping track of and checking the students' work on the assignments. If the students don't want to edit their own work, they will be encouraged by the fact that they won't get a grade for the assignment until they have tried to fix it themselves (Wen, 2013, p. 430).

A key step in training students to write is responding to their work. Similar to this, a crucial component of learning to write is students' ability to acquire instructor feedback and their successful use of it. Developing appropriate writing skills is nearly difficult in writing classes when the teacher's pedagogical approaches do not include giving feedback or where students are unable to understand the feedback they receive from the teacher on their writing. According to Agbayahoun (2016), in the areas of ESL and EFL writing, where both English language teaching contexts, particularly in classrooms, the teaching of writing is process-oriented, teachers and students have recognized the crucial value of the teacher written feedback, a significant body of research has largely attested to the teacher written feedback importance. When this occurs, teachers make an effort to reply to students' writing in an appropriate manner in order to help them develop their writing abilities. Yet, Other EFL contexts exist when instructors instruct writing using a product-oriented strategy for two reasons: first, some of them are just unaware of the process approach to teaching writing or have little awareness of it. Due to several context-related limitations like a strict time-based curriculum, a product-oriented assessment system, and huge class sizes, others—the majority—resort to the product approach.

Recently, there has been a significant increase in interest in education in how students interact with feedback (Han & Hyland, 2015; Handley, Nash, Parker & Rowntree, 2017). This is due to the fact that feedback is not as important to learning as student engagement with it. When feedback "feeds-forward" beyond the revision of a current text to affect the student's following assignments and future performance, it is most successful since it serves a larger purpose. According to research, engagement is necessary to fully realize the potential for improved student learning (Zhang & Hyland, 2018).

A constructive judgement of a text, or an assessment that looks ahead to the student's future writing and the growth of his or her writing processes, might be included in teacher feedback on student writing (Hyland & Hyland, 2019). In the conventional product-oriented approach to writing, teachers offer feedback on discourse level form, mostly in the form of grades or other kinds of writing corrective feedback (WCF), such as focused/comprehensive WCF and direct/indirect WCF (Lee, 2019). Yet, in process methods and genre-oriented approaches to writing,

teacher comments might take into consideration the writer's processes, the audience, and the aims of the writing rather than placing more importance on linguistic correctness than on context and texts at the discourse level (Lee, 2017). Instructors can also employ cutting-edge feedback techniques to assist students to monitor, control, and examine their own writing, like focused writing corrective feedback and peer and self-feedback (Lee, Mak, & Burns, 2015; Mawlawi Diab, 2016). Both teachers and students have access to a variety of feedback delivery methods for writing situations, including audio, video, textual, electronic, and oral (Yu et al., 2020).

It's simple to provide students feedback in the classroom by adding a few remarks to their essays, English assignments, quizzes, etc. By having their writing edited and rewritten or being instructed on how to discover the right answer, students may better comprehend the topic, understand why they made a mistake, and know how to remedy it. Feedback should be used in every school since it is a crucial part of today's classrooms (Norlin, 2014, p. 12).

Based on what the writers seen, the tenth-grade students at SMA Islam Athirah 1 Makassar do not have a good grasp of vocabulary and do not understand grammar well enough, so they have not reached the goal in terms of their writing skills. The English teacher in the class wrote back to the students. In class, the students get written comments or are called on by the teacher to give comments. Some students do not understand what their teachers mean when they correct their work. They frequently misunderstand what the instructor meant or what they should do to fix their errors. In their writing, students often do not know how to respond to what the teacher says. This can be a big problem if what a student does not understand has a big effect on what he or she writes later. This teacher at SMA Islam Athirah 1 Makassar, who teaches students in the tenth grade, finds it interesting that she corrects her students' mistakes and gives them code and comments on their mistakes so they can see where they went wrong and fix them later. This is a very good thing for the writing skills of students. Therefore, the researcher is interested in doing research at SMA Islam Athirah 1 Makassar because based on the preliminary observation conducted by the researcher, the teacher currently uses teacher's feedback on students' writing skill. So, the researchers conducted research to analyze the Teachers' Written Feedback on Students' Writing skill and the students' response.

## **RESEARCH METHODS**

The descriptive qualitative method is used by the researcher to collect and analyze the data. The goal of this research is to find out how teachers give written feedback, what gets in the way of giving written feedback, and how students respond to feedback. According to Creswell (1994) says that descriptive is qualitative research because the process, meaning, and understanding that are acquired through words or images interest the researcher. This method was chosen since the study's goals were to inform rather than to forecast. It simply discusses the issue at hand.

In this research, there was 32 students of the 10th grade at SMA Islam Athirah 1 Makassar in the 2021/2022 school year and their teacher. In analyzing the data, the researcher used documentation review, interview and questionnaire. The documentation and interview were used to find out how the teachers' written feedback on students' writing. While, questionnaire was given to the students to find out how the students response on the teachers' writing feedback. Then, in validating the data, triangulation is applied which were data collection, data reduction, data display and conclusion.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

### Results

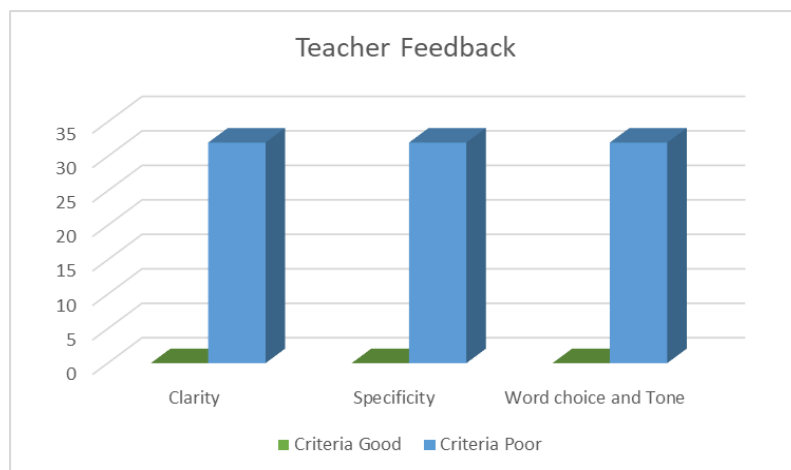
After collecting and analyzing the data, the researcher came up with the following information, which is talked about in more detail in the next section.

#### 1. Documentation Review

The researcher did a review of the documentation to find out what good written feedback from a teacher looks like. From November 7-11, 2022, the review of the documentation was looked at. The researcher looked at the written assignments of the students to figure out what was good about the written feedback from the teachers. He or she did this by examining the signs of effective written feedback from teachers that Brookhart had come up with. On the documentation review form, based on the direction the research was taking, the data that had been reduced were divided into certain categories.

**Table 1.** Teacher's feedback

Ways	Criteria	
	Good	Poor
Clarity	0	32
Specificity	0	32
Word choice and Tone	0	32



**Figure 1.** Teacher's feedback

Based on the documentation review, the researcher found that Brookhart's written feedback was good in three ways: it was clear, specific, used the right words, and had the right tone. The researcher looked at the parts of good teacher written feedback and found that the teacher wasn't using the good parts in the right way. For clarity, simple words were used by the teacher and assumed that the students knew what the feedback meant. It is clearly seen on the table and chart show that there were 32 feedbacks in the bad criteria while, none of feedback was in good criteria. As for specificity, the teacher always corrects any mistake the students make, and she makes comments that keep the students from getting confused. As in the table and chart noted 32 bad criteria and none good criteria. Then, the teacher doesn't use the right words or the right tone to get the students excited about writing better. It is clearly seen that the table and chart showed 32 bad criteria and none for good criteria. It's

clear that the teacher needs to focus on the written feedback aspect of being a capable teacher so that he or she can give good written feedback to the students. Written feedback needs to be clear so that the students do not get confused, and it needs to use words that motivate students.

## 2. Interview

The teachers were interviewed by the researcher. The interview was done on November 1st, 2022. Five questions were asked by the researcher for the teachers. The interview's primary objective was to get the teacher's perspective on feedback. Finding out how the instructor provided written feedback and what the teacher looked for while providing written feedback was the second goal of the interview. Finding out what teachers found challenging about providing written feedback to the students was the interview's third objective. Finding out the teacher's opinion of the students' written responses to criticism was the interview's fourth goal. The interview's last section focused on the teacher's problem-solving process for providing written feedback.

The researcher came to the conclusion that the instructor encountered some issues while providing written feedback based on the results of the interview. One of the issues was about the grammar. The teacher said that *“the grammar always become what I focused on in giving feedback to the students writing”*. Furthermore, the teacher also gave an overemphasizing comment as what the teacher said in the interview that *“I directly give comment on the student writing who made a clear mistake by write phrase like write more or please, turn it into paragraph”*.

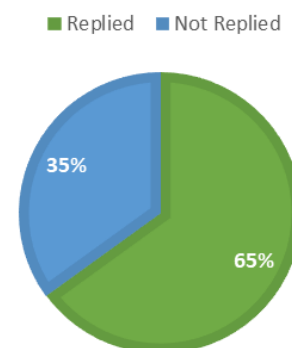
## 3. Questionnaire

A questionnaire was given to the students to check the data from the review of documentation. On November 14, 2022, the questionnaire was filled out. The researcher asked the students a total of ten questions. The researcher used an open-ended questionnaire for this study. Based on the results of the survey, 65% of the students replied to the teacher's written feedback when asked to explain why their answers were wrong. While 35% of students did not give written feedback to the teacher because they were too shy or nervous to speak up.

**Table 2.** Students' Response

Students Response	Frequency	Percentage
Replied	21	65%
Not Replied	11	35%
Total	32	100%

STUDENTS' RESPONSE



**Figure 2.** Students' Response

## Discussion

In this section, the researcher would like to talk about the results of research based on the documents, interviews, and questionnaires. The researcher talked about the results in relation to the research questions.

### **1. The Teachers' Written Feedback**

The researcher saw that the teacher edited the writing of the students. In order to encourage the students to edit their papers, the corrections were written feedback that included a code for the student's error and the same comment. The researcher examined the research results on how the teacher provides written comments on the students' writing to those from earlier studies to see if there were any patterns. In the previous study, Aslamah (2017) research was entitled Teacher's Written Feedback on Students' Writing focus on how a teacher gives written comments to students on their writing. The study's found that By marking and circling students' errors in their work without offering the appropriate explanations, teachers give students indirect corrective feedback and textual feedback.

According to Brookhart (2008: 31), a study revealed every component of effective written teacher feedback. There are 3 parts which is clarity, specificity, word choice, and tone. Clarity refers to how understandable the teacher's written criticism is. Also, specificity is gauged by how basic the words are that are utilized in written feedback. The teacher does not let people make comments that are so specific that they confuse the students. The last part is choosing the right words and tone. This is also important because the teacher needs to be able to support and encourage students to write better by using her/his own words. The teacher can ask questions, offer information, and speak in a way that seems the students are doing the learning.

#### **a. Clarity**

This part of written feedback from a good teacher was done by the teacher. There was 32 times in the bad criteria while, none in the good criteria. It was mentioned as a good criterion when the teacher employed straightforward language and sentence construction, wrote or spoke at the level of development of the students, and made sure the students understood the feedback the teacher gave. On the other hand, When the instructor provided feedback, it was noted as poor criterion when the teacher wrote to demonstrate what the teacher knew rather than what the students needed and assumed the students comprehended the comments. "I don't think it makes any sense." In the example above, instead of using a term that the students required, the teacher selected one that demonstrated what teacher knew. Students need to understand how the teacher meant for the feedback to be used. Clarity is about how clear the writing is for each student, since each student has a different vocabulary and comes from a different background.

#### **b. Specificity**

The teacher used this element 32 times for bad criterion and 0 times for positive criteria. When a teacher explained a topic or criterion and a potential learning technique using several nouns and descriptive adjectives, it was referred to be good criteria. On the other side, it was said to as poor criteria when the instructor overused pronouns, copyedited or repaired each error, and offered nebulous advice. For instance, "write more" From the example above, it's clear that comments like "write more" on the students' assignments don't tell them much. "What exactly?" In these circumstances, students who have the best of intentions but desire to implement their lecturers' advice may wind up making unhelpful decisions.

### **c. Word Choice and Tone**

The teacher rehearsed this section 32 times when the criteria were poor and 0 times when they were good. When a teacher assumes that their pupils are engaged learners, ask questions, and share their own questions, this may be seen as a positive criterion. Although it may be seen negatively, teachers should avoid using language that directs or bosses' students, tells them what to do, leaves nothing to their discretion, and assumes that the feedback is the last word and the most authoritative judgment. "Please turn this into a paragraph" From the above example, you can see that due to their usage of the step rather than the paragraph, the students made mistakes in the majority of writing assignments. When the teacher says something like, "Please make this into a paragraph," it's important for students to remember to always be positive, even when the teacher is being harsh. It should say "Your assignment is good, but it could be even better if you turned it into a paragraph".

The results showed that teachers have trouble giving written feedback. When teachers give feedback to students, they run into trouble. The students' English skills are hard for the teacher to understand. Students who like to do their own thing can also be a problem. The biggest problem teachers face is that they don't have enough time to correct and give feedback because giving written feedback can sometimes take a long time.

Yang (2008), backs this up by saying that some of the most common mistakes teachers make are focusing mainly on grammar, making vague comments, and putting too much emphasis on negative points. For feedback to be effective, a teacher should avoid problems that might come up when responding to students' writing. For example, written feedback took a long time, and students sometimes made the same mistakes over and over again. This made the students frustrated, especially if feedback was cryptic like symbols or circles or confusing, like vague or general questions.

The results fit with what had been found in earlier studies. According to Razali (2014, p. 64), most teachers had the same problems. The next sentences gave more information about each of these problems. First, the teacher was focusing mainly on grammar. This was because the teacher doesn't have much time to correct the written work of the students, she mostly looks for mistakes in grammar and vocabulary. Students may not comprehend or never learn about other critical components of effective writing, such as being clear and organizing ideas, since they are taught that effective writing only involves utilizing proper grammar. Second, the teacher was giving vague comments. In red ink, the teachers write some comments or symbols like circles in the margins. Without clear explanations, this could lead to fuzziness and confusion. The last was overemphasizing the negative points. Instead of telling the students what is good about their writing, the teachers only point out what is wrong with it. So, many times, students think their teachers' written comments are negative and critical, which makes them angry.

## **2. The Students' Response of Teachers' Written Feedback**

Based on the research conducted by Anggraini (2018), Some students struggle to fully comprehend the corrections (marks) made by the teacher in their writing. Students prefer to receive feedback from teachers in person so they can better grasp the errors in their work. Some, however, assert that they are comfortable with certain marks in their work as long as the teacher provides clear explanations or notes with the marks so that students can quickly grasp what needs to be addressed.



In this research, the findings demonstrated that the students' questionnaire replies to the teachers' written feedback were present. Based on the results, 65% of students reacted to teachers' written feedback, whereas 35% did not. Students who never reply to their teachers' comments lack the skills necessary to react to criticism. When students receive criticism, they typically inquire as to why they were incorrect or where they erred, as well as what is accurate regarding the critique. In response to comments from their teachers, 80% of students reported feeling anxious and fearful because they were worried about making another mistake or speaking English poorly. For students to respond to teacher criticism or enhance their own writing, it may be crucial for teachers to provide more insightful feedback.

## **CONCLUSION**

Based on the analysis of the data, the researcher came to the conclusion that the teacher rarely did these three things well. More of the bad criteria are met by the teacher than of the good criteria. Good written feedback from a teacher had three parts: it was clear, it was specific, and it used the right words and tone. The researcher came to the conclusion that there were three issues with the teacher's written feedback: the emphasis on the negative aspect, the vague remarks, and the predominant attention on grammar.

The researcher came to the conclusion that when asked why their responses were incorrect, 65% of students responded to the teacher's written feedback; 35% of students did not react to the teacher's written feedback because they were shy and did not want to speak up. More than 75% of students have trouble responding to written feedback from their teachers because they do not understand it well enough.

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