**Effects of Writing Corrective Feedback**

**on Students’ Linguistic Error**

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**Abstract:** The research aimed at finding out (i) Whether corrective feedback could minimize students’ linguistic error; (ii) Which type of corrective feedback had more permanent effect on students’ writing accuracy. The research applied single-subject experiment design. Data analysis in single-subject research typically was based on visual inspection and analysis of graphic presentation. The step are writing test, ratio, scoring and compare. In this study, six treatment groups and no control group were used. All treatment groups received in different types of CF on their writing tests. Treatment 1 (T1) received Direct CF, treatment 2 (T2) received indirect CF, treatment 3 (T3) received metalinguistic CF, treatment 4 (T4) received reformulation CF, treatment 5 (T5) received focused CF, Treatment 6 (T6) received unfocused CF. The findings indicated that (i) CF could minimize students’ linguistic errors except focused CF on vocabulary; (ii) Based the result of the data analysis using analytic rating scale and composite rating scale showed that direct CF could be categorized having more permanent effect on students’ writing accuracy. This findings could be proved by the result of the data analysis (please see Table 1). Direct CF had the most effective in minimizing students’ linguistic error in vocabulary, language use and mechanics than the other types of CF and direct CF also could be suggested for using long-term to the teacher and students.

Key words: Writing; linguistic errors; corrective feedback (direct CF, indirect CF, metalinguistic CF, reformulation CF, focused and unfocused CF)

# Introduction

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# Writing is the most complex and difficult skills than another three language skills (listening, speaking and reading) because writing process has several steps. In expressing and delivering information from mind into piece of paper, writing needs process of thinking systematically. This mean that when you first write something down, you have already been thinking about what you are going to say and how you are going to say it. Then after you have finished writing, you read over what you have written and make changes and corrections. Linguistic is incredible complexity of language and very important to improve students’ writing accuracy. Writing corrective feedback (CF) is one of effective methods in minimizing students’ linguistic error. A number researchers have investigated different aspects of corrective feedback such as the effects of writing corrective feedback (WCF) on students’ linguistic accuracy. The drawbacks of all research I had read that most studies had investigated and compared between direct, indirect and meta-linguistic CF and focused and unfocused CF. There was only one researcher who has investigated the effect of six types of CF but he has done research in practitioner for IELTS writing test 2 program. They found different results so there were no certain types of WCF could suggest for the most beneficial to use long-term to ESL learners especially in University level. So it was a novelty in my research. The purpose of this research is to find out whether corrective feedback can minimize linguistic errors and to find out the types of corrective feedback that have more permanent effect on students’ writing accuracy. This study was quantitative method. Quantitative was based on a single-subject experimental design using alternating treatments design, which involved six experimental groups.

# Review of Literature

# *The effects corrective feedback (CF) on learners’ linguistic accuracy.*

# Bitchener & Knoch (2009) had investigated the relative effectiveness of different types of direct written corrective feedback in low intermediate ESL learners in Auckland, New Zealand. The results of this study showed that there were no difference in effect upon accuracy was found between the three treatment options.

# Diab (2015) had investigated effectiveness of written corrective feedback. The study examined the effect of form-focused corrective feedback (FFCF) on students’ ability to reduce pronoun agreement errors and lexical errors in new essays. Types of CF were direct error correction along with metalinguistic feedback, and only metalinguistic feedback, respectively; while the control group self-edited their errors. The results showed that students who received both direct and metalinguistic feedback were decrease significant on the grammatical (rule-based) Pr. Agr. Error. Metalinguistic feedback alone may foster knowledge development and increased linguistic accuracy of grammatical structures. It was given more time and practice.

# Sheen (2007) had indicated the effect of focused written corrective feedback and language aptitude on ESL learners’ acquisition of Articles. This study examined the differential effect of two types of WCF namely, direct-only correction and direct metalinguistic correction. Target linguistic accuracy was articles. The results showed that WCF targeting a single linguistic feature improved learners’ accuracy, especially when metalinguistic feedback was provided and the learners had high language analytic ability.

# Survey results indicated that explicit and indirect WCF were more effective than direct and meta-linguistic WCF to increase learners’ linguistic accuracy.

*The effects of types of six writing corrective feedback (WCF) on learners’ linguistic accuracy*

Norman, Evans, Hartshorn & Krause (2011) had investigated the efficacy of dynamic written corrective feedback for university - matriculated ESL learners. This study was to compare between traditional process writing instruction/focused WCF and dynamic WCF which was based on the concept that feedback must focus on the most immediate needs of the learner as demonstrated by the specific errors the learner produced using experimental group design ANOVA (pre-test and post-test). Results showed significant improvement in the linguistic accuracy of their L2 writing.

Ulper & Cetinkaya (2014) had investigated identifying the students’ corrective textual actions towards teachers feedback. This research was to analyze deal of requirements that middle and high school students’ fulfillments towards the teachers’ feedback comparatively. The results showed that students required assistance when correcting. Besides, the students performed a higher rate of acceptable corrections for topic requiring less cognitive effort such as paper layout, mechanic properties.

Montgomery & Baker (2007) had investigated teacher-written feedback: Student perceptions, teacher self-assessment, and actual teacher performance. Results indicated that teachers provided more feedback on local (i.e., spelling, grammar, and punctuation) than global (i.e., ideas, content, and organization) issues throughout the writing process. Teachers’ self-assessments and student perceptions of teacher-written feedback coordinate well, between teachers’ self-assessment and actual performance was generally not as strong.

Sanavi & Nemati (2014) the effect of six different corrective feedback strategies on Iranian English language learners’ IELTS writing task 2. The ultimate goal of this study was to discover how International English Language Testing System (IELTS) candidates could be helped to perform better in the writing component of the test with the feedback they get. Types of CF were direct, indirect, metalinguistic, focused/unfocused, and reformulation. Target structures of this study were focused on a global change to grammatical accuracy. The findings proposed that reformulation strategy was the most effective one. The learners in reformulation group outperformed all those in other groups.

Survey results indicated that CF was needed to improve learners’ linguistic accuracy on writing and reformulation is more effective than other types of WCF (direct, indirect, metalinguistic, focused/ unfocused).

*Types of corrective feedback*

Ellis (2009) has classified six major categories types of CF in writing namely: direct, indirect, metalinguistic, focused/unfocused, electronic, and reformulation. Corrective feedback was effective to improve students’ writing quality.

# The study

*Aims*

This study aimed to analyze the effectiveness of writing corrective feedback (WCF). To study the effectiveness of the different WCF, the researchers posed two questions as follows:

1. Could corrective feedback minimize students’ linguistic errors?

2. Which type of corrective feedback had more permanent effect on students’ writing accuracy?

*Participants*

The study was conducted in English Departement students of the academic year 2015/2016 of Muhammadiyah University Makassar especially for class 3.J with thirty-six participants or six participants for each group.

*Target structures*

This study was limited on linguistic errors in vocabulary, language use and mechanics. Linguistic errors based on linguistic error categories by Politzer, B. & Ramirez, A. (1971) as follows:

1. Language Use
2. Morphology: Articles (definite/indefinite), possessive case, third person singular verb, simple past tense (regular and irregular past tense), past participle and comparative adjective/adverb.
3. Syntax
4. Noun phrase: Determiner, nominalizations, number, use of pronoun, use of preposition.
5. Verb phrase: Omission of verb, use of progressive form, agreement of subject and verb.
6. Verb-and verb construction
7. Word order
8. Some transformation: Negative transformation, question transformation, three transformation, subordinate clause transformation.
9. Vocabulary
10. Mechanics: Use of full stop, use of comma, use of apostrophe, quotation marks, use of semicolon, use of capitalization.

*Methodology*

This research used quantitative method. Quantitative was based on a single-subject experimental design using alternating treatments design. This method was chosen to investigate the comparative effectiveness of six types of CF (direct CF, indirect CF, metalinguistic CF, reformulation CF, focused CF and unfocused CF) in reducing students’ linguistic error and improving students’ writing quality in vocabulary, language use and mechanics. The data collection was analyzed through the following techniques:

1. *Writing test*

The data was obtained through writing test which consisted of four writing tests.

1. *Ratio*

Students’ linguistic errors was made by ratio using symbol as follows:

Total Errors (TE) X 100%

Total Words (TW)

Total errors (TE) was divided to total words (TW) to get presentage of the students linguistic errors.

1. *Scoring*

In scoring students’ writing test, researcher used analytic rating scale and composite rating scale. Analytic rating scale was used to analyze students’ writing score on vocabulary, language use and mechanics. The result of four students’ writing tests was analysed by manual. The composite rating scale was used to analyze students’ writing score in composite. The data of analyzing students’ linguistic errors by using analytic rating scale and composite rating scale (please see Table 1).

For scoring, the researcher scored the students’ writing test based categories of scoring system by (Heaton, 1988).

1. *Compare* Writing test Writing test

Students’ linguistic errors and score were measured by using six types of corrective feedback. To investigate the effects of corrective feedback on students’ writing, the researcher compared the students’ linguistic errors and score using analytic rating scale and composite rating scale (please see Table 1).

Results

1. Errors dealing with vocabulary

Students’ vocabulary errors for all groups were fluctuation and their score were stable. The students’ vocabulary errors only decreased slightly. Indirect CF had the highest percentage (1.86%) in minimizing students’ linguistic errors on vocabulary than the other types of CF from the first writing test (1.90%) to the fourth writing test (0.72%). Based the data analysis above, indirect CF was the most effective in minimizing students linguistic errors on vocabulary than the other types of CF (please see Table 1).

1. Error dealing with language use

The present study showed that direct CF had the highest percentage in reducing students’ linguistic errors on language use from the first writing test to the fourth writing test than the other types of CF. The students’ errors percentage in direct CF from the first writing (31.66%) to the fourth writing (8.79%) decreased sharply 22.87% and the score increased sharply from 19 (average) to 24 (excellent). It mean that direct CF was the most effective in minimizing students’ linguistic errors (please see Table 1)

1. Error dealing with mechanics

The students’ errors percentage in direct CF from the first writing (38.61%) to the fourth writing (11.62%) decreased sharply 26.99% and the score increased from 4 (good) to 5 (excelent). Direct CF showed the highest percentage in reducing students’ errors on mechanics than the other groups. It mean that direct CF feedback was the most effective in minimizing students’ errors on mechanics than the other types of WCF (please see Table 1).

1. Error dealing with composite

The students’ errors percentage in Direct CF from the first writing to the fourth writing decreased sharply 26.99% from 17.20% to 5.41% and the score increased sharply from 17 (very good) to 19 (excellent). Direct CF showed the highest percentage in reducing students’ errors using composite rating scale than the other groups. It mean that direct CF feedback was the most effective in minimizing students’ errors on mechanics, language use and mechanics using composite rating scale than the other types of WCF (please see Figure 1, Figure 2 and Table 1).

Figure 1 Graphic line of alternating treatment design comparing treatments T1, T2, T3, T4, T5, and T6 on students’ vocabulary, language use and mechanics errors using composite rating scale

Figure 2 Graphic line of alternating treatment design comparing treatments T1, T2, T3, T4, T5, and T6 on students’ vocabulary, language use and mechanics scores using composite rating scale

Table 1 Table of students’ linguistic error and score in vocabulary, language use and mechanics using analytic rating scale and composite rating scale

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Linguistic  Categories | Direct  CF | Indirect  CF | Metalinguistic  CF | Reformulation  CF | | Focused  CF | Unfocused  CF |
| Analytic Rating Scale | | | | | | | |
| Vocabulary |  |  |  |  |  | |  |
| W1 Error  Score | 1.90%  20 | 2.5%  20 | 0.87%  20 | 1.04%  20 | 0%  20 | | 1.73%  20 |
| W2 Error  Score | 0.53%  20 | 0.24%  20 | 1.05%  20 | 2.04%  20 | 0.09%  20 | | 0.61%  20 |
| W3 Error  Score | 0.99%  20 | 0.73%  20 | 0.93%  20 | 1.91%  20 | 0.39%  20 | | 0.33%  20 |
| W4 Error  Score | 0.72%  20 | 0.64%  20 | 0.59%  20 | 0.55%  20 | 0.04%  20 | | 0.72%  20 |
| Declining  Percentage  W1 to W4 | 1.18% | 1.86% | 0.28% | 0.49% | + 0.04% | | 1.01% |
| Language Use | | | | | | | |
| W1 Error  Score | 31.66%  19 | 17.30%  22 | 14.99%  23 | 17.16%  22 | 5.88%  24 | | 20.61%  21 |
| W2 Error  Score | 11.07%  23 | 9.93%  24 | 15.95%  22 | 13.27%  23 | 7.71%  24 | | 9.91%  24 |
| W3 Error  Score | 17.04%  22 | 11.16%  23 | 13.32%  23 | 13.80%  23 | 13.12%  23 | | 11.78%  23 |
| W4 Error  Score | 8.79%  24 | 11.19%  23 | 1.46%  25 | 11.20%  23 | 8.06%  24 | | 13.26%  23 |
| Declining  Percentage  W1 to W4 | 22.87% | 8.12% | 13.71% | 5.96% | 2.18% | | 7.35% |
| Mechanics | | | | | | | |
| W1 Error  Score | 38%  4 | 33.96%  4 | 22.83%  4 | 25.49%  4 | 29.26%  4 | | 39.16%  4 |
| W2 Error  Score | 20.41%  4 | 32.55%  4 | 22.47%  4 | 15.76%  5 | 20.91%  4 | | 34.70%  4 |
| W3 Error  Score | 15.64%  5 | 18.77%  5 | 19.48%  5 | 8%  5 | 23.89%  4 | | 17.31%  5 |
| W4 Error  Score | 11.62%  5 | 18.14%  5 | 14.34%  5 | 9.19%  5 | 10.61%  5 | | 12.54%  5 |
| Declining  Percentage  W1 to W4 | 26.99% | 15.82% | 8.49% | 16.3% | 18.65% | | 26.62% |
| Composite Rating Scale (Vocabulary, Language Use and Mechanics) | | | | | | | |
| W1 Error  Score | 17.20%  17 | 11.19%  18 | 8.55%  19 | 11.12%  18 | 5.03%  20 | | 13.17%  18 |
| W2 Error  Score | 6.82%  19 | 6.82%  19 | 8.88%  19 | 7.93%  19 | 4.40%  20 | | 7.61%  19 |
| W3 Error  Score | 18.36%  17 | 7.20%  19 | 8.27%  19 | 8%  19 | 7.18%  19 | | 7.38%  19 |
| W4 Error  Score | 5.41%  19 | 7.30%  19 | 6.61%  19 | 6.36%  19 | 4.26%  20 | | 7.89%  19 |
| Declining  Percentage  W1 to W4 | 11.79%% | 3.89% | 1.94% | 4.76% | 0,77% | | 5.28% |

Discussion

The discussion was based by research questions and the researcher discussed about the answer for research questions as follows:

1. *Could corrective feedback minimize students’ linguistic errors?*

Based my research, corrective feedback could minimize students’ linguistic errors. This finding could be proved by the research finding was taken from the teaching process which consisted of the result of the data analysis (please see Figure 1, Figure 2 and Table 1). Although the result of the students’ linguistic errors (dealing with language use, vocabulary, and mechanics using analytic scale and composite) showed that all groups’ linguistic errors were fluctuation, but almost the percentage of students’ linguistic errors declined except focused CF on vocabulary.

Although the students’ linguistic errors in unfocused CF increased sharply in the third writing to the fourth writing on language use, but the students’ linguistic errors declined from the first writing to the fourth writing. It could be concluded that unfocused corrective feedback could minimize student’s linguistic errors on language use, and focused CF’ errors increased slightly 0.04% from the first writing 0% to the fourth writing 0.04% on vocabulary. It could be concluded that focused CF could not minimize students’ vocabulary errors.

1. *Which type of corrective feedback had more permanent effect on students’ writing accuracy?*

Based the result of the data analysis using analytic rating scale and composite rating scale (please see Figure 1, Figure 2 and Table 1) showed that direct corrective feedback could be categorized having more permanent effect on students’ writing accuracy.

**Conclusion**

There were six types of corrective feedback in assessing students’ writing linguistic errors in language use, vocabulary and mechanics namely direct CF, indirect CF, metalinguistic CF, reformulation CF, focused and unfocused CF. Students’ linguistic errors was measured by using six types of corrective feedback to find out whether corrective feedback could minimize linguistic errors and find out the types of corrective feedback that had more permanent effect on students’ writing accuracy.

Corrective feedback could minimize students’ linguistic errors in language use, vocabulary and mechanics. This finding was the same as that found by Bitcher & Knoch (2009), Diab (2015) and Sheen (2007) the effects of direct, indirect and metalinguistic writing corrective feedback (WCF) on learners’ linguistic accuracy, Bitcher (2008.

The interesting finding was that my research was different from them. They find that indirect CF and reformulation were the most effective in minimizing students’ linguistic errors than other types of WCF (direct, metalinguistic, focused, and unfocused) and my research also is different from Bitcher (2008), Bitcher & Knoch (2010), Ellis, Sheen, Mukarami & Takashima (2008) the effects of focus and unfocused writing corrective feedback (WCF) on learners’ linguistic accuracy who find that direct CF could be effective on writing if it was combined with metalinguistic explanation. In my research, direct CF was the most effective in minimizing students’ linguistic errors than other types of WCF.

Based analyzing students’ linguistic errors on vocabulary, language use and mechanics by using alternating treatment design found that Direct CF could minimize students’ linguistic error and Direct CF was effective in using long-term to the teacher and students. It mean that Direct CF is the most effective in minimizing students’ linguistic error and have more permanent effect on students’ writing accuracy than the other types of WCF. This finding could be proved by the research finding was taken from the teaching process which consists of the result of the data analysis (please see Figure 1, Figure 2 and Table 1).

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