

Students' Perception of Teachers' Feedback in Writing Activities

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Abstract

The aim of this research was to explore students' perception of teachers' feedback in writing activities. This research took place at MTs. Sains Al-Gebra Kota Sorong. This research Employed a qualitative approach, the research utilized in-depth interviews as the main data collection method. A total of 10 students, consisting of 5 female and 5 male participants, were selected based on their academic performance in writing, representing low, medium, and high achievement levels. The interview instrument was designed to elicit detailed responses about students' experiences and perceptions of teacher feedback. The Results indicate that students' perceptions vary based on their achievement levels and personal preferences. High-achieving students generally appreciated detailed feedback and viewed it as a tool for improvement, while lower-achieving students sometimes found extensive feedback overwhelming. Most students expressed a preference for balanced feedback that highlights both strengths and areas for improvement. The research also revealed that the manner in which feedback is delivered significantly impacts students' receptiveness and motivation to apply the suggestions. These findings provide valuable insights for enhancing feedback practices in writing instruction at MTs. Sains Al-gebra Kota Sorong, potentially leading to more effective and student-centered approaches in teaching writing.

Keywords: students' perception; teacher Feedback; writing activities

Introduction

This study focuses on one of the four essential language skills that plays a crucial role in the English language learning process, particularly in the context of teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL). Writing is considered a complex and challenging skill, as it requires students to simultaneously manage grammar, vocabulary, organization, and content (Graham & Perin, 2007). Writing skills become one of the main focuses that need to be mastered by students, and English teachers at the school

frequently employ various feedback strategies to support students in developing their writing abilities.

The feedback strategies commonly used is peer feedback, where students provide comments and suggestions on each other's writing. This practice has been widely recognized as effective in helping students identify the strengths and weaknesses of their writing, while also encouraging collaboration, interaction, and the development of critical thinking skills (Rollinson, 2005; Cho & MacArthur, 2010). Through peer feedback, students are not only positioned as receivers of feedback but also as active evaluators, which can deepen their understanding of writing quality and standards. This dual role makes peer feedback a particularly valuable pedagogical tool in writing instruction. Many students face difficulties in expressing their feelings, thoughts, and opinions (Wael et al. 2025)

However, based on initial observations and discussions with several English teachers at MTs Sains Al-Gebra Kota Sorong, it was found that there were notable variations in students' perceptions of peer feedback practices. Some students appeared to have less confidence in the feedback provided by their peers, while others found it quite helpful and motivating. This difference in perception was also observed between male and female students, where female students tended to be more open and responsive to feedback from their peers, while male students appeared more skeptical and hesitant to accept peer comments (Chong, 2017; Yu & Lee, 2016). These variations in perception are an interesting and important phenomenon to investigate further, as students' perceptions may significantly influence how they respond to and make use of feedback to improve their writing skills.

If students hold negative or skeptical perceptions toward peer feedback, they are likely to ignore or fail to make optimal use of the feedback they receive, which can ultimately hinder their writing development and progress (Cho & MacArthur, 2010; Chong, 2017). On the other hand, students who perceive peer feedback positively are more likely to engage meaningfully with the feedback, apply suggested revisions, and experience greater improvement in their writing over time. Therefore, understanding students' perceptions of peer feedback is essential for teachers and educational practitioners who seek to maximize the effectiveness of feedback practices in the classroom.

Previous research has identified several factors that can influence students' perceptions of peer feedback, such as cultural background, motivation, self-confidence, skills in giving and receiving feedback, and the overall quality of the feedback itself (Chong, 2017; Yu & Lee, 2016; Cho & MacArthur, 2010). While these studies have provided valuable insights, most of them were conducted in the context of Western and East Asian countries. Research exploring students' perceptions of peer feedback in the

Indonesian context remains considerably limited, creating a significant gap in the existing literature that needs to be addressed.

By understanding the perceptions of students at MTs Sains Al-Gebra Kota Sorong toward teacher feedback in English writing activities, teachers and educational practitioners can design and implement feedback activities that are more effective, meaningful, and contextually appropriate for students. This can help maximize the benefits of feedback practices in improving students' writing skills, which in turn will contribute to improving the overall quality of English language learning at the school. Furthermore, this study can also make a broader contribution to the field of teaching English as a foreign language, particularly in the Indonesian context, by enriching our understanding of how teaching strategies such as feedback can be adapted and accepted by students from diverse cultural backgrounds.

Therefore, this study seeks to explore in depth the perceptions of MTs Sains Al-Gebra Kota Sorong students toward teacher feedback in English writing activities, as well as the factors that influence these perceptions. By employing a qualitative approach, this study aims to provide a rich and comprehensive picture of students' experiences and perspectives regarding feedback practices, thus offering valuable insights for teachers, educational practitioners, and researchers in the field of English language teaching in Indonesia.

Method

This study employed a qualitative research design using purposive sampling technique to select informants who were relevant to the research objectives. A total of 10 students (5 male and 5 female) from MTs Sains Al-Gebra Sorong City were selected as research participants based on the highest and lowest scores in grade 8. The informants were chosen based on specific criteria, including good writing skills, active involvement in writing activities, and willingness to be interviewed in depth. This selection was carried out to ensure that the data collected came from credible sources and provided an accurate picture of students' perceptions of teacher feedback in writing activities.

The main instrument used in this study was open-ended interviews, which were selected due to their ability to generate rich, contextualized, and in-depth data in line with the case study approach adopted in this research (Creswell, 2014). The interviews consisted of 7 main guiding questions designed to elicit information relevant to the research objectives, while still allowing flexibility to explore topics that emerged during the interview process. This approach enabled the researcher to capture the nuances and complexities of students' perceptions of teacher feedback (Kvale, 2007).

Data collection was conducted through recorded group interviews held in Indonesian to facilitate understanding among participants. The data collection procedure involved several stages, including obtaining permission from participants, gathering

participants in one place for the interview session, and recording the conversation for accuracy. Once collected, the data was transcribed, identified, and classified for further analysis. The research procedure consisted of four main stages, namely the preparation stage, data collection stage, data analysis stage, and report writing stage. During the preparation stage, the researcher conducted a literature study, prepared a research proposal, applied for a research permit, and developed the interview instrument through expert validation and pilot testing. In the data collection stage, the researcher conducted in-depth interviews while taking notes and recording responses to ensure completeness and accuracy. The data analysis stage involved transcribing interview results, coding and categorizing the data, and analyzing it thematically to draw conclusions (Creswell, 2014; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). The final stage involved compiling the research report, which was validated through triangulation techniques and member checking to ensure data credibility and trustworthiness (Moleong, 2017). All collected data was analyzed using the Interactive Analysis Model proposed by Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña (2014), which involves three interrelated and cyclical components. The first component, data reduction, involved selecting, simplifying, and focusing on relevant data. The second component, data presentation, involved organizing data in narrative, chart, or matrix form to facilitate interpretation and identify patterns among themes. The third component, conclusion drawing and verification, involved interpreting the data, drawing preliminary conclusions, and verifying them by referring back to raw data and relevant theories. These three components operated continuously and iteratively throughout the entire data analysis process.

Results and Discussion

Result

1. Types of Feedback Received

The findings revealed that students received various forms of teacher feedback during English writing activities. Teachers employed direct correction on written work, positive reinforcement, and specific grammatical guidance. Students confirmed receiving corrective feedback where teachers explicitly pointed out errors and provided correct forms, as expressed by one participant: "*the teacher corrects my English writing, whether it is correct or not correct.*" Another student noted that teachers also applied positive reinforcement by praising correct writing and providing additional marks, while also guiding students on grammatical structures such as verb usage in sentences. This comprehensive feedback approach combining direct correction, positive reinforcement, and grammar guidance created an effective learning environment that supported students' writing development (Hyland, 2003; Ellis, 2009).

2. Teachers' Feedback Delivery Methods

The study found that teachers utilized multiple feedback delivery methods to communicate evaluations and suggestions to students. These methods included direct written corrections on assignment papers using colored pens to highlight mistakes, verbal feedback during class discussions, one-on-one consultations, and written notes in students' notebooks. One participant described this multimodal approach by explaining that the teacher "gives comments directly on my assignment paper, tells me where there are grammatical errors or words that don't fit, uses colored pens to mark mistakes, and sometimes also tells me directly during class discussions or one-on-one conversations." This combination of written and verbal feedback methods reflects Ferris' (2014) findings on the effectiveness of multimodal feedback delivery in supporting students' writing improvement.

3. Students' Understanding of Teacher Feedback

The findings indicated that students generally found teacher feedback clear and easy to comprehend. Several factors contributed to this positive understanding, including the use of concise and straightforward language, systematic review of previous material, and the provision of specific examples. One student emphasized that "the feedback given by the teacher is very easy to understand because the teacher gives the feedback with words that are not wordy or convoluted, so it's to the point." Another student appreciated the teacher's practice of repeating previous material and conducting quizzes before introducing new topics, stating that "this method makes me remember the material better." A third student valued the use of clear explanations combined with specific examples and direct clarification when needed. These findings align with Bitchener's (2008) emphasis on the importance of explicit and clear feedback in improving student understanding and engagement.

4. Impact on Writing Skill Development

The data revealed that teacher feedback had a significant positive impact on students' writing skill development. Students reported improvements in grammatical accuracy, vocabulary use, organization of ideas, and overall awareness of common writing errors. One student acknowledged that "the feedback made me able to distinguish between correct and incorrect English writing," while another noted that "after being given feedback, we understand better and can correct our English writing skills." A third participant further highlighted the comprehensive nature of the feedback, explaining that

"the teacher reviews our assignments by correcting the grammar, pointing out where our mistakes are, and explaining how to correct them," which significantly contributed to their writing development. These findings are consistent with Ferris and Roberts' (2001) assertion regarding the long-term benefits of consistent and structured feedback on students' writing improvement.

5. Student Expectations and Suggestions

The findings revealed that students held clear expectations and suggestions regarding teacher feedback practices. In terms of timing, students consistently expressed a preference for prompt and regular feedback delivery throughout the writing process, emphasizing the importance of having sufficient time to implement corrections between assignments. Regarding feedback content, students valued detailed explanations that went beyond simple error marking, specifically requesting examples of correct usage alongside corrections and clear correction symbols. They also appreciated positive reinforcement alongside corrective feedback, as this balanced approach helped maintain their motivation to improve. In terms of support mechanisms, students suggested more opportunities for one-on-one consultations, regular review sessions focusing on common errors, and structured practice exercises targeting specific problem areas. One student confirmed that clear explanations with specific examples and direct clarification "make me understand better," while another appreciated the systematic review approach as it enhanced material retention. These expectations strongly align with Goldstein's (2005) research on student preferences in feedback reception, suggesting that students at MTs Sains Al-Gebra share similar needs with students in broader academic contexts regarding effective writing feedback.

Discussion

This study investigated students' perceptions of teacher feedback in English writing activities at MTs Sains Al-Gebra Kota Sorong. The discussion below interprets and connects the key findings with relevant theoretical perspectives and prior research to provide a deeper understanding of how teacher feedback influences students' writing development.

The first finding concerning the types of feedback received demonstrated that teachers employed a multifaceted feedback approach that combined corrective feedback, positive reinforcement, and grammatical guidance. This finding is particularly noteworthy as it suggests that teachers at MTs Sains Al-Gebra go beyond simply marking errors, instead adopting a more holistic approach that acknowledges both students' strengths and areas for improvement. This is consistent with Hyland's (2003) argument that feedback should serve not only a corrective function but also a motivational one,

encouraging students to persist in their writing efforts. Furthermore, the integration of grammatical guidance into feedback practices reflects a conscious effort by teachers to develop students' linguistic competence alongside their writing skills, which Ellis (2009) identified as a critical component of comprehensive writing instruction in foreign language contexts.

Regarding feedback delivery methods, the study found that teachers at MTs Sains Al-Gebra adopted a diverse range of delivery approaches, spanning from written annotations with colored pens to verbal explanations and personal consultations. What is particularly significant about this finding is that it reveals teachers' sensitivity to the varied ways in which students process and internalize feedback. Rather than relying on a single delivery channel, teachers demonstrated an adaptive approach that catered to different learning preferences and needs. This flexibility in feedback delivery resonates with Ferris' (2014) contention that multimodal feedback is more effective than any single method alone, as it allows students multiple entry points for engaging with and understanding the corrections they receive. The personalized nature of one-on-one consultations, in particular, suggests that teachers are invested in ensuring that individual students fully comprehend the feedback and can apply it meaningfully to their writing.

In terms of students' understanding of teacher feedback, the findings pointed to a generally high level of comprehension among participants, which can be attributed to the clarity, conciseness, and contextual relevance of the feedback provided. This outcome is significant because comprehension is widely regarded as a prerequisite for effective feedback uptake. If students cannot understand the feedback they receive, they are unlikely to be able to act on it constructively, regardless of its quality or specificity (Bitchener, 2008). The teachers' practice of revisiting previous material through quizzes and review activities before introducing new content further reinforced students' understanding by creating opportunities for consolidation and reflection. This pedagogical strategy aligns with sociocultural theories of learning, which emphasize the importance of scaffolding and repetition in supporting students' internalization of new knowledge and skills (Vygotsky, 1978).

The finding related to the impact of teacher feedback on writing skill development is perhaps the most compelling outcome of this study, as it provides direct evidence of the tangible benefits that structured and consistent feedback can yield. Students reported not only improvements in specific writing mechanics such as grammar and vocabulary but also broader developments in their capacity to organize ideas and critically evaluate their own writing. This latter aspect is especially significant, as the ability to self-monitor and self-correct is widely considered a hallmark of developing writing proficiency and learner autonomy (Ferris & Roberts, 2001). The fact that students were able to articulate specific ways in which feedback had contributed to their growth as writers suggests that

the feedback practices at MTs Sains Al-Gebra are not merely surface-level corrections but are instead contributing to deeper and more sustainable learning outcomes.

Finally, the expectations and suggestions expressed by students shed important light on the gap that may exist between current feedback practices and students' ideal feedback experiences. While students expressed overall satisfaction with the feedback they received, their suggestions for more frequent one-on-one consultations, structured practice exercises, and timely feedback delivery indicate a desire for even greater personalization and responsiveness in the feedback process. These aspirations are consistent with Goldstein's (2005) findings, which highlighted that students perform best when feedback is not only accurate and specific but also delivered in a manner that feels personally relevant and supportive. The students' proactive suggestions for improvement also reflect a level of metacognitive awareness and ownership over their learning that is encouraging, indicating that the feedback culture at MTs Sains Al-Gebra has fostered a degree of learner agency that extends beyond passive reception of teacher corrections. Taken together, these findings suggest that while teacher feedback practices at MTs Sains Al-Gebra Kota Sorong are largely effective and well-received, there remains meaningful potential for further refinement and personalization to fully meet students' diverse learning needs and expectations in English writing instruction.

Conclusion

This study investigated students' perceptions of teacher feedback in English writing activities at MTs Sains Al-Gebra Kota Sorong City. The findings of this study demonstrated that students generally held positive perceptions toward the feedback provided by their teachers, recognizing it as a valuable and constructive element in their writing development. Students perceived teacher feedback not merely as a form of evaluation, but as a meaningful source of guidance that helped them identify their strengths and weaknesses, understand their errors, and develop strategies for improvement in their English writing skills.

The study further revealed that the types of feedback received, the methods of delivery, and the clarity of communication all played significant roles in shaping students' positive perceptions. Teachers employed a comprehensive feedback approach that combined direct correction, positive reinforcement, and grammatical guidance, delivered through multiple channels including written annotations, colored pen markings, verbal explanations, and one-on-one consultations. This multimodal and balanced approach contributed to students' ability to clearly understand and effectively apply the feedback they received, ultimately leading to measurable improvements in their writing performance.

Furthermore, the impact of teacher feedback on students' writing skill development was evident, as students reported improvements in grammatical accuracy,

vocabulary use, idea organization, and overall writing awareness. The consistent and structured nature of the feedback provided by teachers at MTs Sains Al-Gebra Kota Sorong appears to have fostered not only immediate writing improvements but also the development of students' metacognitive awareness and capacity for self-correction, which are essential qualities for long-term writing proficiency and learner autonomy.

In addition, students expressed clear expectations and constructive suggestions regarding feedback practices, including the desire for more timely feedback, detailed explanations, and greater opportunities for individual consultation. These suggestions reflect students' active engagement with the feedback process and their strong motivation to continue improving their writing skills. Overall, the findings of this study suggest that effective teacher feedback practices that are clear, consistent, comprehensive, and student-centered play a crucial role in supporting and enhancing students' English writing development in the Indonesian EFL context, particularly at the junior high school level.

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