



Types of Written Commentary Feedback on EFL Students' L2 Writing

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to investigate types of lecturer commentary feedback on EFL students' L2 writing through online class (Schoology) in writing class at one of universities in southern part of Sulawesi. This study is conducted to classify types of commentary feedback which can help students to revise their own writing. Besides, this study is expected to ease another researcher or teacher to express their comments using these types of commentary feedback as a reference. This study utilized students' draft as the instrument. To obtain the data, the researcher used qualitative research design. In analyzing the data, the researcher gathered students' draft which contained lecturer commentaries feedback that has been submitted in online classroom (Schoology) through their writing lecturer. The commentary feedback is classified by coding the data to get the result. The result of this study reveals that there are five types commentary feedback that the lecturer applied to the students those are directive-instruction comment, directive-clarification comment, directive-suggestion comment, expressive-approval comment, and expressive-disapproval comment.

Keywords: *Commentary Feedback, EFL Students, L2 Writing, online classroom.*

INTRODUCTION

Feedback is specific information that the teacher provides to their students related to the task or learning process (Wahlstorm & Amneslaraprogrammet, 2014). Feedback can be presented in oral or written feedback where there are many types of it. In this study, written feedback becomes the focus since it found that there are a lot advantages when using it, such as studies by Bitchener and Knoch (2008), Ellis at al (2008), van Beuningen, de Jong, and Kuiken (2008), and Frear (2009) who found that written feedback is effective in helping ESL students improve the accuracy of their writing. Pishkar and Sarvestani (2015) also claimed that written feedback helps students to enhance their writing skill during using direct written corrective feedback.

In terms of commentary feedback, Bitchener and Ferris (2012) pointed out that Commentary feedback is considered as an essential part in the classroom since the students expect teacher to comment on global issues (content, organization, and purpose) and local issues (sentence structure, word choice and grammar); and students feel frustrated when they do not receive any of them. The primary goal of teacher commentary feedback is promoting students' abilities as writers and increasing their self-efficacy in creating product (Wiltse, 2002).

For many years, study about commentary feedback had conducted over many researchers. From those researches, it was found that commentary feedback is less forgettable since it is written down and students can access it time and again, helping students to clarify and



simplify their ideas and to avoid future mistakes (Al-Sawahla, 2016; Mahfoodh & Pandian, 2011), helping students to improve their ability as writer and to justify the grade they have been given (Hyland, 2003; Alamis, 2010), easing students to locate the source of a problem (Ferris & Hedgcock, 2005), providing advice and suggestions, not just correction (Ferris, 1997), building students' confidence (Mahfoodh & Pandian, 2011), increasing students motivation, engagement, and interest (Treglia, 2008; Srichanyachon, 2012), and giving students new understanding and another point of view (Mubarak & Jusmaya, 2018).

Based on the previous studies above, the researcher attempts to investigate types of commentary feedback that the lecturer gave to the students in their writing. In giving feedback, the lecturer specifically ask students to write a recount text where in the text, the lecturer only focused to comment the content of the text. Regard with the comments, then the researcher identify those comments types.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study applied qualitative research to get more information about a phenomenon. It also allowed researcher relied on the participants to offer responses to questions about how they have constructed their experiences (Jackson, Camara, & Drummond, 2007). This study focused on types of lecturer commentary feedback on students recount text that only focused on the title, thesis statement, topic sentence, supporting idea/paragraph, and the conclusion. The participants of this study were 14 students of semester 4 of an English education major at one of universities in southern part of Sulawesi, Indonesia that consist of 9 females and 5 males.

Students' drafts that consist of two drafts became the instrument of this study. The drafts were gathered by the researcher in which the first draft contain lecturer commentary feedback that is given by online classroom (Schoolology). Meanwhile, the second draft was the result of students' revision and become the final draft. The data that has been assembled then coded by the researcher to classify lecturer comments based on each error that students made. Then, the researcher built interpretation that refer to types of commentary feedback from Leng, Kumar and Abdullah (2013) to categorize each lecturer commentaries on students writing. Finally, the result was reported on research paper form.

RESULTS

The finding of this study reveals that there are 5 types of commentary feedback the lecturer gave the students. The types of commentary feedback are directive-instruction comment, directive-clarification comment, directive-suggestion comment, expressive-approval comment, and expressive-disapproval comment.

Directive-instruction comment

Directive-instruction comment is a types of commentary that written in imperative feedback (Leng, Kumar & Abdullah, 2013). This comment shows that the lecturer ask students to make a change or revision on their writing where in those comments indicate an imperative sentence. The comments that the lecturer gave on this study is showed in the following table.

Table 1 Directive-instruction comment

<i>Name</i>	<i>Comments</i>
S13	<i>You need to do in this draft is paying more attention on some grammatical mistakes and the appropriateness in choosing vocabulary.</i>
S8	<i>I can see your ideas here, but you need to reformulate your sentence into a simple thesis statement.</i>
S2	<i>I can see the point of your main idea here and it is relevant to your thesis statement, but you need to make it into a full sentence making it a clear topic sentence.</i>
S1 & S10	<i>Revise based on the topic and thesis statement that you make.</i>
S4	<i>Your conclusion needs to be revised.</i>

Directive-clarification comment

The type of this comment is a commentary that form in a question commentary, but somehow some of them in the form of statements (Leng, Kumar & Abdullah). In this kind of commentary feedback, the researcher found some feedback that questioning or asking clarification of students writing. The example can be seen in the table 2.

Table 2 Directive-clarification comment

<i>Name</i>	<i>Teacher Comments</i>
S4	<i>If this is your thesis statement, then the supporting paragraphs discuss how Arabic learning is implemented in all faculties and to all students at IAIN Kendari.</i>
S7	<i>Is this your thesis statement? Please revise it and relate it to the topic sentence that you have made in the following paragraph.</i>
S4	<i>If this is your topic sentence, then the paragraph talks about how popular Arabic in Indonesia is.</i>
S8	<i>Is this your topic sentence? If yes, then you should provide next sentences that develop this sentence.</i>

Directive-suggestion comment

Directive-suggestion comment is a type of comments that written in statement form and contain some form of hedging and it is less direct compared to instruction feedback (Leng, Kumar & Abdullah, 2013). The lecturer commentary feedback that is found in this study is shown on the table below; where the lecturer seemed giving suggest or advice about what the students need to do to make their writing better.

Table 3 Directive-suggestion comment

<i>Name</i>	<i>Comments</i>
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S9	<i>I think you need to revise many things in your draft. Please see again the rule to make a thesis statement and topic sentence.</i>
S11	<i>I can see your idea in this thesis statement. You just need to correct the grammatical mistake in order to make the sentence clearer.</i>
S13	<i>I can see your topic sentence here. Just pay attention to some grammatical mistakes.</i>
S5	<i>Good. You can elaborate more in this part. You can also talk more about how netiquette influence the way you communicate to others.</i>
S5	<i>Good, but it will be much better if you can restate your main idea here.</i>

Expressive-approval comment

Kind of this comment is usually written in a statement form and in a two-word and one-word combination (Leng, Kumar & Abdullah, 2013). This comment shows the lecturer's agreement or praise to the students writing without giving any suggest or something. The example is shown on the next table.

Table 4 Expressive-approval comment

<i>Name</i>	<i>Comments</i>
S2	<i>I love reading your essay because you give me a glimpse of your experiences as a student in this campus.</i>
S6	<i>Very good. You've managed to make a clear topic sentence.</i>
S14	<i>Clear topic sentence.</i>
S13	<i>Good concluding sentence.</i>

Expressive-disapproval comment

This commentary types is written in statement which show lecturer's disagreement or disapproval to students' writing (Leng, Kumar & Abdullah, 2013). It is the opposite of the previous types. It is kind of lecturer's comments that show a disagreement, disapproval or a critic which present on the table below.

Table 5 Expressive-disapproval comment

<i>Name</i>	<i>Comments</i>
S1	<i>The title doesn't fit to the task's instruction.</i>
S11	<i>Incomplete sentence.</i>



S12	<i>Not clear.</i>
S9	<i>It is not a concluding sentence.</i>

From the tables above, it can be seen lecturer comments on each part of students’ writing such as in title, thesis statement, topic sentence, supporting idea, and conclusion. However, those lecturer commentaries above are only some comments that is chosen become the representative of each type.

DISCUSSION

This study revealed that in giving commentary feedback, most of lecturer give them those 5 types of commentary feedback where the lecturer expressed their approval or compliments on students writing, also expressed disapproval when the students did not do what the lecturer ask in the instruction. Hence, the lecturer also gives direct suggestion and instruction that have a different in giving it. In giving suggestion, lecturer tends to say “I think you should...” and asking students do something by giving advice. Meanwhile, in giving instruction, lecturer asked students to do something by tell them what they have to do explicitly. Furthermore, lecturer also asked a clarification to students when their writing is misunderstand or making confused the lecturer; but this clarification comments usually following by lecturer’s advice about what students need to do.

Related to the result of this study, the researcher also found that some of those 5 types commentary also can be categorized in another types of commentary feedback from Hyatt (2005) such as developmental-alternative comment, developmental-reflective comment, and phatic comment. Developmental-alternative is equivalent with directive-suggestion comment since it offers alternatives, suggestions and recommendations in place of what the students had written in their work. Meanwhile developmental-reflective comment is considered as same type with directive-clarification comment in which Hyatt (2005) said that it is a comment in form of question for students to make a direct point. The last type is phatic comment that is equated with expressive-approval comment in which the comment generally shows lecturer interest, satisfying, surprise, and so on at what has been written.

CONCLUSION

Lecturer commentary feedback that is given by online classroom fulfill all types of commentary feedback that Leng, Kumar and Abdullah (2013) in which all lecturer comments was appropriate with those 5 types. However, based on the research findings, it can be inferred that although such commentary feedback was categorized in different name, it still have same function i.e. to help students improving their writing skill, to ease students to revise their error, and also to communicate to students indirectly.

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