Exploring EFL Students' Perception in Using Guided Questions for Giving Feedback

Karolis Anaktototy
English Education Study Program, Pattimura University Ambon, Indonesia

Abstract
Feedback has a crucial role in increasing the quality of writing. By getting the precise feedback, a writer can do the proper revision to perfect his writing. However, giving and getting the right feedback is not easy for students who are learning to write. They need something which can be used as a guide to give feedback. One of the alternatives to do this is by delivering questions as a guide. Thus, this research was aimed at finding out the students' perception in the use of questions as a guide to give feedback. This study was followed by 35 students of the English Language Education Study Program at Pattimura University who enrolled in Academic Writing class, academic year 2019/2020. Survey method was used as research method. The data was collected using questionnaire as research instrument. Data collected was analyzed using descriptive data analysis. From data analysis result, it was found that students have positive perception in using guided questions for giving feedback. The positive perception was because the guided questions have given direction and assisted the students to stay focus during the feedback process. It means that the guiding questions were proven to be beneficial in helping students giving the right feedback to increase the quality of their classmates' writing.
Keywords: Students' perception; guided questions; feedback
DOI: 10.7176/JEP/12-5-05
Publication date: February 28th 2021

1. Introduction
Feedback has an essential role in increasing the quality of writing. Feedback can be done orally, in writing manually, or through several electronic devices. Whatever the ways used are, as long as the feedback is proper, a writer can benefit from that feedback to fix his writing (Bakla, 2020). In the context of writing lessons, feedback from a teacher will help students to find the weakness of their writing. It means that they can revise their writing to be a better one (Ismail, Maulan, & Hasan, 2008). So, the students who are having a more active interaction with their fellow students to achieve feedback usually have more possibilities to become a better writer than those who are less active (Zhang & Hyland, 2018).

Teachers' ability to motivate their students while giving feedback is also able to influence the students' success in increasing their writing quality (Bahous, Bacha, & Nabhani, 2011). Therefore, it is hoped that teachers can give feedback and motivation at the same time for the students. The teacher must ensure that the students can fix their writing. On the other side, when teachers need to check the students' writing in a massive amount, it means that they need to spend a lot of time. Sometimes, when teachers are tired enough, the quality of feedback given is decreasing (Ekşi, 2012). When the feedback is not right, especially feedback that makes a student feels unable to finish the writing, it will trigger the negative influence for students related to their writing result and motivation to write (Yu, Jiang, & Zhou, Investigating what feedback practices contribute to students' writing motivation and engagement in Chinese EFL context: A large scale study, 2020).

Besides, feedback can also be given from student to student or *peer assessment*. The implementation of *peer assessment* is a proven ability to help students in increasing their academic ability (Double, McGrane, & Hopfenbeck, 2020). Specifically, it is also related to increasing the writing ability of the students. The peer assessment implementation can make students have better writing skills (Baker, 2016). Through the peer assessment, students can know their writing's weakness without the need to feel ashamed of the teacher (Gupta, Abdullah, Li, & Xueshuang, 2019). This is important because sometimes the feedback given is not straightly understood by the students. It needs a further discussion about that feedback (Kleij, 2020). On the other side, peer assessment makes students feel more comfortable in discussing their writing (Fathi, Yousefi, & Sedighravesh, 2017).

Furthermore, feedback is essential for the whole writing process because students can learn from the feedbacks given by their teachers or partners in class. In addition, through feedback giving process, students can control their learning and make them learn between one and another (Hyland F. , 2000). If a writer doesn't find any feedback, they can lose a substantial chance to increase their job (Murray & Moore, 2006). Students can exchange ideas about the possible solution for their writing by giving feedbacks (Bitchener & Ferris, 2012). Besides, when a student reads his classmate's feedback, he will activate his knowledge about the topic and his linguistic competence to evaluate and mark his paper critically (Rollinson, 2005). When students give input for their classmate's essays, the truth is that they are learning how to write. The students increase their writing skill by transferring their ability when reviewing their friends' text (Sotoudehnama & Pilehvari, 2016).

Although the implementation of peer assessment has been proven in helping students to improve the quality of their writing, the implementation of peer assessment also sometimes experiences some obstacles. The main obstacle that is usually found when implementing peer assessments is that many students find it challenging to provide proper feedback for their friends' writing (Alzaid, 2017). It is because students' abilities are different so that the quality of feedback given by students also varies according to the abilities of these students (Divjak & Maretíc, 2017).

Therefore, teachers need a way to assist students in providing feedback so that feedback would be usefull and beneficial for students' writing performance. In providing feedback, both in pairs and in groups, students need to be provided with prompts that will help them provide useful and substantial feedback. In other words, students should be given guidelines (Gebhard, 2006). Besides, before students read each other's drafts, the teacher must provide an appropriate response model for student drafts. It is intended to build students response skills and to focus their attention on relevant issues (Hyland K., 2003).

One way that can be done to facilitate students in providing feedback for their classmates' writings is through the use of guided questions. With the availability of guides in the form of questions, students can understand what should be checked and become a focus in providing feedback on the writings produced by their classmates.

A list of 15 questions was given to students to use as a guide when reading their classmates' writing products. Questions related to the purpose of writing the essay would lead the students to understand the content direction of the essay. Moreover, by understanding the purpose of writing the essay would enable students to evaluate the essay to find out whether the essay was well written or not. The questions were also directed to open up students' mind on giving feedback related to organization, development, and content of the essay. It is because so far when students are given chance to give feedback to their classmates' essay they just focus on surface mistakes such as grammatical mistakes.

When studying students' feedback on the feedback sheet, it was clear that each student wrote down the purpose of writing of his classmate's essay and other comments related to the organization of the writing as well as the content of the essay. Obviously, the questions have triggered the students to think in order to give feedback for their classmates' essay. Samples of students' feedback are provided in the following table.

Table 1. Sample of Students' Feedback

No	Guided Questions	Students' Feedback
1.	According to you, what is the aim of this writing?	*To argue that early age is the best time in learning English*
2.	Is the aim of the writing well described?	*-Yes, it is described well* *-there is not enough description*
3.	Is the writing well organized? If not, why?	*No, the writing is not seen as an argumentative essay, it looks like a persuasive essay*
4.	According to you, what is the most vital point of this writing?	*The reason why the writer says that early age is good to learn English*
5.	Is there any part of this writing that is not clear? Why?	*Introduction, too short, and the background of the topic are not well described.*
6.	Is the argument given in the writing supported by clear evidence or facts?	*-Yes, it is supported by clear evident* *- No supporting details or evidence*
7.	How should the writer support his argument?	*-You do not use other writer's opinions; you just use your opinion.* *-balance experts ideas with your own opinion* *-please give example*
8.	Does the writer use a valid source of information?	*-Yes,*
9.	Is the fact or evidence proposed by the writer can convince the reader?	*-Yes, but less,*
10.	Does the writer begin his writing with a clear introduction and thesis statement?	*Not clear introduction* *No thesis statement*
11.	Do the writes write an effective conclusion?	*-Yes, but it is too simple* *-write a more robust conclusion,*
12.	Does the writer use appropriate vocabulary or diction in this writing?	*Yes*
13.	Does the writer use effective and well-structured sentences?	*Yes*
14.	Is there any part of the writing that needs additional explanation?	*Yes, especially in the introduction and conclusion*
15.	What is the additional suggestion that you can give to the writer?	*Producing an argument on your writing from negative and positive will look like an argumentative essay.*

The questions above have provided a systematic way of giving feedback that students have never experienced before. Students read their classmates' essays and simultaneously read the questions to ensure that their essays meet several criteria such as objectives, introduction, thesis statement, main ideas, details, and conclusions. The sample feedback written on the feedback sheet above indicated that students have made good use of the questions to provide feedback for their classmates' essays. Feedback such as "*insufficient description, no supporting information or evidence, please give examples, balance expert ideas with one's own opinion, write stronger conclusions, etc.*" were evidence that the questions have provided the focus for students to read the classmate's essay and provide feedback for the essay. These feedbacks were discussed between the student writer and the feedback provider to ensure that they have the same perception before revising the essay. It can be said that for most students, peer review was considered a useful technique.

Based on the above description, it is a fact that so far, there has been no research that has evaluated students' perceptions on the use of guided questions in assissting them to provide feedback for their classmates' writings. Therefore, by considering the importance of giving feedback through questions, this study was aimed at exploring students' perceptions in the use of guided questions for providing feedback in Academic Writing class.

2. Methodology

This research was an evaluative study with a survey approach. This study was attended by 35 students of the English Education Study Program who enrolled in Academic Writing class for the 2019/2020 academic year. The data collection instrument used in this study was a questionnaire. The collected data were analyzed using descriptive statistics data analysis.

In the implementation of this research, students were asked to choose a topic to be written following the writing process approach procedure, namely pre-writing, writing the first draft, and revision. After writing the first draft, the students were divided into small groups to interact easily. A list of questions was given to students to use as a guide for providing feedback to each group's members. Each student should read the group member's first draft and wrote down any ideas he might think have based on the question. After writing responses, students shared or discussed them to ensure that the ideas or input were appropriate for improving the first draft of the essay. In addition, before giving feedback to each member in their respective groups, students were trained to understand and use questions in order to give effective feedback.

3. Results

The data about students' perception in the use of guided questions in feedback giving collected through the questionnaire is shown in table 2 below.

Table 2. Students' Perception in Using Guided Questions for Giving Peer Feedback

No	Statement	Agree %	Strongly Agree %	Disagree %
1.	The teacher often asked me to give feedback to my classmates' essay	20.00	77.14	2.85
2.	In my previous writing class course, the teacher gave a list of question to guide me in giving feedback	28.57	62.85	8.57
3.	This is my first time of using questions as a guide in giving feedback	40.00	11.42	48.58
4.	The questions helped me to give useful feedback to my classmates' Writing	34.28	65.72	0.00
5.	Before using the questions, I do not know how to give feedback effectively	37.14	17.14	45.71
6.	Before using a question for giving feedback, I mainly correct grammatical mistakes found in my classmates' essay	51.42	42.85	5.71
7.	The questions help me to evaluate the aim of writing the essay	25.71	68.57	5.70
8.	The questions helped me to consider the completeness of information in the essay	40.00	57.14	2.85
9.	Through the questions, I can give feedback to the organization of the essay	51.42	45.71	2.85
10.	Through the questions, I was guided to look at every aspect of the essay that needs to be improved	31.42	65.71	2.85

The results showed that giving feedback is a ritual in writing activities. It is because more than 97.14% of the students agreed that lecturers used feedback as part of writing activities. Surprisingly, 91.42% of students admitted that their lecturer had used questions during feedback activities in previous writing lessons. In contrast, 51.42% of students stated that this was the first time they had used the questions to provide feedback to their classmates' written products, and 48.58% of students disagreed that they had used the question as a guide for providing feedback. All students acknowledged that the questions helped them provide feedback to their

classmates. It turned out that 54.28% of the students did not know how to give feedback effectively before using questions as a guide for giving feedback. More than 90% of students admitted that when providing feedback for their classmates' writing, they focused primarily on grammar mistakes and ignored the content and writing organization. Besides, 90.28% of students stated that the questions given to them were beneficial for evaluating their classmates' writing goals. The questions also helped them to consider the completeness of the information in their classmates' writing product. Indeed, through these questions, students were required to read and evaluate every aspect of their classmates' writing.

Providing feedback for EFL students' essays appears to be a regular activity in teaching and learning writing skills. It has become a standard for training students on how to write. This formula emerged as an answer to the fact that most students agreed that giving feedback was not their first time, but had provided feedback for the products of their previous classmates' writing. If giving feedback has become one of the rituals in the writing process, then there must be other ways to enable students to provide feedback.

4. Discussion

From the explanation of the research results above, it can be understood that students understand the importance of feedback in improving their writing quality. Their understanding of the importance of feedback in improving the writing quality was in line with the results of research conducted by several previous researchers. Research conducted by Lee (2020) found that the application of focused / comprehensive corrective feedback has a significant effect on students' writing ability and results in studying English as a second language in Hong Kong. Similarly, the results of research conducted by Zhang (2020) indicated that giving feedback can increase student engagement to be more active in improving their writing results. Furthermore, implementing peer assessment will also help students to become independent learners and be more critical in assessing something (Yu, 2019).

Furthermore, a research done by Tian & Zhou (2020) found that feedback obtained from teachers, fellow students, or automatic feedback from the system has a positive effect on improving the quality of students' writing. However, based on research by Cao, Yu, & Huang (2019), several things affect the results of the activity of giving and receiving feedback to improve the quality of writing. This includes student motivation and involvement in the process of giving and receiving this feedback. Besides, the interaction between the giver and recipient of feedback will also affect the peer assessment's success to improve student writing (Zhao, 2018).

From the explanation of the results of this study, it can also be seen that the lecturer understands that the process of giving good feedback to a piece of writing is not easy. So, students must be guided when providing feedback for the writings produced by their friends. Moreover, students' learning abilities and motivations vary. For that, in implementing peer assessment, especially in providing feedback, a tool for students to assess the work of their friends is very vital. In previous research, several researchers have researched the use of assessment criteria in implementing peer assessment to teach writing skills. The example is research conducted by Gupta, Abdullah, Li, & Xueshuang (2019), which uses an assessment rubric to help students assess and provide feedback on their friends' writing. Omar, Shahrill, & Sajali also found the successful use of the scoring rubric as a tool in implementing peer assessment (2018). The use of an assessment rubric in implementing peer assessments helps students focus more and can provide feedback as expected. Besides, the use of tools in the form of an assessment rubric can also help students increase their participation in the teaching and learning process. It is because they do not understand what to do according to the guidelines. So, they have a discussion with the teacher or with their friends (Tiew, 2010).

The result of other research shows that giving guided questions can help students in providing feedback. From the data analysis conducted, it was found that students felt helped by asking questions in conducting examinations and providing feedback on their friends' writings. The results of this study are supported by the results of research conducted by Shen, Bai, & Xue (2020), who found that the use of tools in implementing peer assessments can improve students' learning autonomy abilities. In other words, having a guide enables them to carry out the learning process independently. The better the student's ability to provide reviews, it also means that the student's understanding of the knowledge or skills being learned will increase (Liang & Tsai, 2010).

Furthermore, the more specific feedback students can give, the more it will help their classmates to improve their writing, and at the same time, it shows that they understand writing skills well (Cheng, Liang, & Tsai, 2015). Besides being able to be used as a tool in carrying out peer assessments, guided questions also can be used in carrying out self-assessments. Such as research conducted by Storjohann, Pogge, Peckham, Raney, & Barletta (2019) those who are successful use rubric scoring for the implementation of self-assessment and peer assessment for the implementation of writing learning.

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

The process of giving feedback to develop college students' writing skill needs a systematic way. It is mainly for the student who doesn't know where and how to start. The students may not be able to give any supportive feedback if they are not completed with clues, just like the questions that will help them focus on the different

parts of their classmate's writing. When a question is offered, they are stimulated to think about what needs to be increased because the questions hive them a chance to focus on thinking. Besides that, those questions also help them to track every aspect of their classmates' writing and give the right solution to increase their writing ability. The questions used in the process of giving feedback in Academic Writing class have assisted students to give constructive input for their classmates' essays. The quantitative data analysis result showed that 90% of the students agreed that questions assisted them to give feedback for their classmates' essay. This result also showed that students have good perception of the use of questions to give feedback for their essays.

It is recommended that the teachers use guiding questions as an alternative helping tool for peer assessment in writing lesson. Given the effectiveness of using guided questions on students' writing skills and student writing results, further research on the application of guided questions is necessary. So, it can be confirmed with certainty how the level of effectiveness of guided questions improves students' writing skills.

References

Alzaid, J. M. (2017). The effect of peer assessment on the evaluation process of students. *International Education Studies, 10*(6), 159-173. doi:https://doi.org/10.5539/ies.v10n6p159

Bahous, R., Bacha, N. N., & Nabhani, M. (2011). Motivating students in the EFL classroom: A case study of perspectives. *English Language Teaching, 4*(3), 33-43. doi:10.5539/elt.v4n3p33

Baker, K. M. (2016). Peer review as a strategy for improving students' writing process. *Active Learning in Higher Education, 17*(3), 179–192. doi:https://doi.org/10.1177/1469787416654794

Bakla, A. (2020). A mixed-methods study of feedback modes in EFL writing. *Language Learning & Technology, 24*(1), 107–128.

Bitchener, J., & Ferris, D. (2012). *Written Corrective Feedback in Second Language Acquisition and Writing.* New York: Routledge.

Cao, Z., Yu, S., & Huang, J. (2019). A qualitative inquiry into undergraduates' learning from giving and receiving peer feedback in L2 writing: Insights from a case study. *Studies in Educational Evaluation, 63*, 102-112. doi:https://doi.org/10.1016/j.stueduc.2019.08.001

Cheng, K.-H., Liang, J.-C., & Tsai, C.-C. (2015). Examining the role of feedback messages in undergraduate students' writing performance during an online peer assessment activity. *The Internet and Higher Education, 25*, 78-84. doi:https://doi.org/10.1016/j.iheduc.2015.02.001

Divjak, B., & Maretíc, M. (2017). Learning analytics for peer-assessment:(dis)advantages, reliability, and implementation. *Journal of Information and Organizational Sciences, 41*(1), 21-34. doi:https://doi.org/10.31341/jios.41.1.2

Double, K. S., McGrane, J. A., & Hopfenbeck, T. N. (2020). The Impact of Peer Assessment on Academic Performance: A Meta-analysis of Control Group Studies. *Educational Psychology Review, 42*, 481–509. doi:https://doi.org/10.1007/s10648-019-09510-3

Ekşi, G. Y. (2012). Peer review versus teacher feedback in process writing: How effective? *International Journal of Arabic-English Studies, 13*(1), 33-47.

Fathi, J., Yousefi, L. M., & Sedighravesh, M. (2017). The Impact of Self-assessment and Peer-assessment in Writing on the Self-regulated Learning of Iranian EFL Students. *Journal of Sociological Research, 8*(2), 1-16. doi:https://doi.org/10.5296/jsr.v8i2.11252

Gebhard, J. G. (2006). *Teaching English as a foreign language or second language: A self-development and methodology guide.* Michigan: The University of Michigan Press.

Gupta, S. D., Abdullah, F., Li, G., & Xueshuang, Y. (2019). Peer Assessment in Writing: A Critical Review of Previous Studies. *Journal of Advances in linguistics, 10*(2019), 1478-1487. Retrieved from https://cirworld.com/index.php/jal

Hyland, F. (2000). ESL writers and feedback: giving more autonomy to students. *Language Teaching Research, 4*(1), 33–54. doi:https://doi.org/10.1177/136216880000400103

Hyland, K. (2003). *Second Language Writing.* New York: Cambridge University Press.

Ismail, N., Maulan, S., & Hasan, N. H. (2008). The impact of teacher feedback on ESL students' writing performance. *Academic Journal of Social Studies, 8*(1), 45-54.

Kleij, F. M. (2020). Evaluation of the 'Feedback Engagement Enhancement Tool' to examine and enhance students' engagement with their writing feedback. *Studies in Educational Evaluation, 66*, ID 100907. doi:https://doi.org/10.1016/j.stueduc.2020.100907

Lee, I. (2020). The utility of focused/comprehensive written corrective feedback research for authentic L2 writing classrooms. *Journal of Second Language Writing, 49*, ID 100734. doi:https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jslw.2020.100734

Liang, J.-C., & Tsai, C.-C. (2010). Learning through science writing via online peer assessment in a college biology course. *The Internet and Higher Education, 13*(4), 242-247. doi:https://doi.org/10.1016/j.iheduc.2010.04.004

Murray, R., & Moore, S. (2006). *The handbook of academic writing: Fresh approaches.* New York: Open University Press.

Omar, S. N., Shahrill, M., & Sajali, M. Z. (2018). The use of peer assessment to improve students' learning of geometry. *European Journal of Social science education and Research, 5*(2), 187-206. doi:10.2478/ejser-2018-0047

Rollinson, P. (2005). Using peer feedback in the ESL writing class. *English Language Teaching Journal, 59*(1), 23–30. doi:https://doi.org/10.1093/elt/cci003

Shen, B., Bai, B., & Xue, W. (2020). The effects of peer assessment on learner autonomy: An empirical study in a Chinese college English writing class. *Studies in Educational Evaluation, 64*, ID 100821. doi:https://doi.org/10.1016/j.stueduc.2019.100821

Sotoudehnama, E., & Pilehvari, A. (2016). The Impact of Peer Review on EFL Learners' Writing Proficiency. *Porta Linguarum, 25*, 35-47.

Storjohann, T., Pogge, E., Peckham, A., Raney, E., & Barletta, J. F. (2019). Evaluation of a peer- and self-grading process for clinical writing assignments. *Currents in Pharmacy Teaching and Learning, 11*(10), 979-986. doi:https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cptl.2019.06.003

Tian, L., & Zhou, Y. (2020). Learner engagement with automated feedback, peer feedback, and teacher feedback in an online EFL writing context. *The system, 91*, ID 102247. doi:https://doi.org/10.1016/j.system.2020.102247

Tiew, F. (2010). Business Students' Views of Peer Assessment on Class Participation. *International Education Studies, 3*(3), 126-131.

Yu, S. (2019). Learning from giving peer feedback on postgraduate theses: Voices from Master's students in the Macau EFL context. *Assessing Writing, 40*, 42-52. doi:https://doi.org/10.1016/j.asw.2019.03.004

Yu, S., Jiang, L., & Zhou, N. (2020). Investigating what feedback practices contribute to students' writing motivation and engagement in the Chinese EFL context: A large scale study. *Assessing Writing, 44*, ID 100451. doi:https://doi.org/10.1016/j.asw.2020.100451

Zhang, Z. V. (2020). Engaging with automated writing evaluation (AWE) feedback on L2 writing: Student perceptions and revisions. *Assessing Writing, 43*, ID 100439. doi:https://doi.org/10.1016/j.asw.2019.100439

Zhang, Z. V., & Hyland, K. (2018). Student engagement with the teacher and automated feedback on L2 writing. *Assessing Writing, 36*, 90-102. doi:https://doi.org/10.1016/j.asw.2018.02.004

Zhao, H. (2018). New insights into the process of peer review for EFL writing: A process-oriented socio-cultural perspective. *Learning and Instruction, 58*, 263-273. doi:https://doi.org/10.1016/j.learninstruc.2018.07.010