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Feedback on EFL Indonesian Students' Theses: Students' Concerns and Needs

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Article information	
Abstract	Feedback is necessary for English language Teaching (ELT) students due to their difficulties while writing theses. Presently, limited research has been conducted on students' preferences and perspectives regarding feedback received on the thesis. Many undergraduates extend or discontinue their four-year studies due to thesis advisers' unprecedented expectations, which discourage timely responses to feedback. Therefore, this research examined students' opinions regarding the types of feedback preferred during thesis preparation. This research used a case design and recruited participants from groups of students completing their theses under the supervision of seven doctoral-level advisers. Key findings were that thesis advisers' feedback on students' research projects was insufficiently detailed as opposed to the significant amount anticipated. In this case, the advisers may have been unaware of the amount of significant feedback required on initial and subsequent drafts. Besides, advisors provided more feedback on linguistic than content issues, as opposed to students of undergraduate level due to limited research capacity. The results showed that students are expected to have written and oral feedback in the one-to-one consultation.

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1. Introduction

Foreign language learning is generally aimed at achieving better language competence, especially in writing courses, where several strategies, such as feedback, have been formulated to accomplish this objective to enhance students' proficiency (e.g., Bitchener, 2019; Zhao, 2010). Feedback is a written or oral response to a task, which is a crucial element in students' work because it helps to identify their strengths and weaknesses, as well as encourages improvement for greater effectiveness (Plaindaren & Shah, 2019).

In certain Indonesian universities, undergraduate students are required to conduct research, also referred to as a "thesis", before graduation. However, writing a thesis in English can be academically and linguistically challenging for those from non-English-speaking backgrounds (Ma, 2021; Wang & Li, 2008). Feedback is inevitably provided to address students' numerous difficulties in writing research. Yu and Lee (2016) described this activity as an essential task for teachers known as "thesis supervisors or academic advisers", who review and grade students' papers and provide suggestions, revisions, and comments on language and content errors. According to Berzsenyi (2001), teachers provide feedback, corrections, or comments on assignments to symbolize their understanding of student writing, identify errors, and provide satisfactory remarks for essays that meet the intended message. Ellis's (2017) seminal work showed that correcting errors helps students, especially adult learners, recognize the role and limitations of linguistic forms. Bitchener and Knouch (2009) also stated that students who received written corrective feedback performed better than those who did not.

Therefore, this recent research points out that understanding the ways thesis advisers provide feedback and the difficulties undergraduate EFL students face in its understanding is worth attention.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Issues of Thesis Writing in Many EFL Contexts

Difficulties encountered by non-native English students in thesis writing have attracted considerable attention in the last two decades. However, most of the previous research on this topic has given priority to language-related/linguistic

problems with a focus on international students studying in L1 contexts (e.g., Bitchener & Basturkmen, 2006; Chang & Strauss, 2010; Park, 2016).

In more recent research, many academic EFL advisers try to incorporate technology such as Automated Writing Feedback (AWF) into their advisory process practice due to some challenges they face in giving feedback and corrections (Nguyen, 2011; Suwannasom, 2010). But still, the second language writing development cannot be guaranteed.

Second, much research on feedback is on graduate level of students pursuing their Master's or Doctoral study, who also experience difficulties in understanding the academic adviser's feedback with a non-shared understanding of the specific correction procedures (e.g., Brown, 2007; Kaur, 2000; Shukri, 2014; Yu, 2019; Zhu, 2016).

Yu (2019) investigated postgraduate students' learning perspectives and experiences by offering comments on thesis/dissertation writing. Original, amended, and finished theses, written peer evaluation, semi-structured interviews, and stimulated recollection were all used to collect data. In the Macau EFL environment, this case study explores how and to what degree seven master's students profited from providing comments on their peers' theses. The data analysis revealed four themes of student learning including (1) raising awareness of the thesis/dissertation genre, (2) improving academic writing skills, (3) becoming a more skillful learner by seeking external assistance, and (4) becoming a more reflective and critical academic writer.

More recent studies (Can & Walker, 2011 & 2014; Celik, 2020) on the doctoral degree perceptions of the feedback given by the thesis supervisor is similar to the finding of Bitchener and Knoch (2009). This research emphasized the importance of making expectations clear to students at the beginning of the writing process to ensure clarity and avoid frustration.

2.2 Types of Feedback for Academic Writing

Many language teachers have shown interest in studies about feedback in English Language Teaching (ELT) in the past two decades. In 2003, Ferris (2003)

discovered direct written corrective feedback, which involves correcting an incorrect linguistic form or statement structure. This includes inserting or deleting an unnecessary word/morpheme/phrase and stating the correct structure. Other forms include metalinguistic explanations, which involve providing grammatical rules and examples at the end of a student's script, referencing where the error occurred. Conversely, indirect written feedback is provided by highlighting the error with circles or lines to indicate its location, noting the number per line in the margin, and using a code to indicate its type. This form of feedback allows students to self-correct and fix the errors with guidance rather than simply copy corrections.

The options of indirect or direct written feedback on student essays have been discussed extensively in ELT. According to preliminary research, indirect written correction feedback is more effective than the correction for long-term English as a Foreign Language (EFL) improvement due to its significant importance in improving students' writing (Ji, 2015; Lu, 2010). In indirect feedback, learners are expected to process the code, understand the mistakes highlighted by teachers, and seek different solutions (Tang & Liu, 2018). Eslami (2014) stated that indirect written corrective feedback facilitates autonomous learning and leads to greater improvement for EFL students in Iran. Meanwhile, direct written corrective instructions improved their writing skills (Eslami, 2014). Furthermore, Van Beuningen et al. (2012) reported that groups participating in indirect feedback are in more form-focused activities than their counterparts. Rahmawati (2017) also reached a similar conclusion in an Indonesian study.

Several research has shown that learners prefer direct written corrective feedback (e.g., Li & He, 2017; Saragih et al., 2021; Westmacott, 2017). For example, Khanlarzadeh and Nemati (2016) stated that this feedback improved revised drafts.

2.3 Factor Impacting the Feedback

Numerous factors influence teachers' decisions to use one type of written feedback over another. Therefore, this research examined the second language acquisition theory regarding teachers' decisions. The result confirmed that numerous individual variables affect students learning performance, which influences their decision to use a particular form of feedback for written tasks.

When providing indirect or direct written feedback, the advisers should consider learners' performance level (Lee et al., 2021). Chandler (2003) and Ferris (2011) stated that learners with some second language proficiency benefit more from indirect feedback. Meanwhile, Sheen (2007) found that indirect feedback is more effective for learners with better analytical skills. Bitchener (2012) also reported that “learners at a lower level of language may not have an extensive linguistic knowledge” (p. 355). Furthermore, Bitchener (2012) reported that learners with little or no linguistic knowledge benefit from direct feedback.

In the EFL context, thesis advisers' level of English competence may also affect the choice of feedback. Din and Saeed (2018) stated that the less satisfied the students were, the worse their academic accomplishments. Therefore, satisfaction is related to the overall achievement of English proficiency achieved through teacher feedback. Research on the relationship between student satisfaction and a particular aspect of their academic learning experience with teacher feedback has not been conducted. However, according to Butt and Rehman (2010), many elements are related to and are strong predictors of student satisfaction, such as the thesis adviser's competence, courses offered, learning environment, and classroom facilities. Teachers' feedback is one of the components of the "adviser's competence" element. Poulos and Mahoni (2008) reported the value of feedback offered and its legitimacy, which was founded on the preferences brought to the classroom and students' views of the lecturers. The general competency of the thesis advisers influenced the credibility of their contributions.

Since the dispute over whether direct or indirect corrective feedback is more beneficial to EFL students has not yet been resolved, it is difficult to say whether the teachers' English proficiency level affects the type of feedback used. This issue requires careful investigation.

2.4 Students’ Perspectives Toward Feedback

Feedback to students, in indirect or direct form, is not the only goal of EFL sessions. Apart from that, students' opinions and feelings on the thesis advisers' feedback techniques are often considered important. Salteh and Sadegi (2015) reported that learners are individuals with different perspectives on the world.

Therefore, understanding learners' perspectives is critical to adopting or implementing appropriate techniques. Generally, teachers are commonly recognized as having teaching abilities and experience while understanding the learners' psychological needs. Several research have examined the effects of different types of teacher feedback on student writing quality. However, teachers' ability to understand student perspectives and attitudes provides a shared knowledge of the goal of specific correction procedures.

According to Poedjiastutie et al. (2018), classroom practices that contradict learners' learning expectations can lead to anger and inhibit learning. Instructional practice based on a standard practice created solely from the thesis advisers' ideas must be flexible enough to incorporate the preferences and desires of language learners. Disagreement and confusion over using different types and amounts of corrective feedback, as well as a perception gap between students and advisers, present pedagogical obstacles. When students are dissatisfied with a particular type of corrective feedback, using it becomes difficult and consequently, students may refuse to do revisions offered by thesis advisers. Therefore, consensus between advisers and students about the constituents of meaningful feedback is critical.

2.5 Context of the Study

Many students in the English Department (ED) of the University of Muhammadiyah Malang (UMM), Indonesia, extend or drop out of their four-year degree program because thesis advisers have such high expectations that they are unable to respond to feedback in a timely manner. The last year of undergraduate ED students were considered participants for this research. The undergraduate research project takes into account approximately 10% of the 140 credit courses in their four years of study. For fulfillment of the research project components, students were equipped with some courses, such as grammar (three semesters), essay writing (argumentative, expository, descriptive, and narrative), thesis writing (one semester), Quantitative Analysis or Statistics (one semester), and research methods for foreign language (one semester). Many ED students complain that writing a thesis is challenging. Yet, despite the difficulty it presents to almost all undergraduate students, they have not been given alternative assignments to choose from those that are appropriate to their level of research. Thesis writing is

considered a requirement for obtaining a bachelor's degree. In the preliminary interview, some students expressed feeling anxious after submitting their thesis draft as they have to defend it in front of two internal examiners assigned by the department. Moreover, some students said that they felt safe when they were supervised by teachers who provide strict feedback and comments.

Knight and Yorke (2003) stated that students who lack confidence in their abilities require more face-to-face training and frequent feedback. In a survey highlighting the importance of constructive feedback, it was discovered that noncompletion students reported a lack of confidence as the major factor in their decision to drop out at the end of the first year. Since students' attitudes and perspectives about the types of feedback are deemed necessary, this research aims to examine their perspectives and preferences regarding the feedback given by thesis advisers. This research report adds to the current corpus by providing a fuller picture of students' perceptions of feedback, particularly undergraduates, who face difficulties due to a lack of experience in research literacy and academic writing.

Although several studies have distinguished between comment and feedback, Dohrer (1991) elucidated a similarity between both expressions: "Comments here means any marks made on students' writings to facilitate communication, including statements, grades, punctuation marks, checkmarks, and questions" (p. 48). Accordingly, both expressions may be used interchangeably in this study.

3. Methodology

3.1 Research Design and Participants

This research used a case study involving groups of students who conducted their thesis under the supervision of seven doctoral advisers without generalizing the findings to a larger domain. ED UMM comprises a total of 32 lecturers with 25 master's degree holders and seven doctorate holders. There were two student cohorts for a research project, with the first under the supervision of master's degree holder advisers assigned to four/five students. Meanwhile, each doctoral holder supervised two to three students who were invited to participate in the program. Students work and perspectives were examined by their

supervisors, who possess doctorate qualifications with numerous years of teaching experience and a good understanding of feedback. Fourteen out of twenty students between the ages of 20 and 22, were selected using the convenience sampling technique who were willing to participate. Three of these students opted out due to incomplete thesis documents.

3.2 Research Instruments

Document analysis was the first step in understanding and identifying the types of feedback provided by advisers. The first research question of this study was regarding the type of feedback supervisors provided to students. Responses to this question were obtained from the participants who were required to revise the thesis draft reviewed and commented on by their supervisors. The documents containing the written feedback were fully furnished from beginning to end, according to the number of consultations with thesis advisers. Furthermore, the documents were analyzed, which is the first step in understanding and identifying the types of feedback provided by the advisers.

The second research question concerned learners' responses to feedback from their advisers. For this aspect, Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) were used to determine the students' feelings regarding advisers' comments or feedback, with data collected for shared understandings from participants. This study used semi-structured interviews which, according to Ary et al. (2010), are applied to a selected area of interest with pre-written questions that can be modified during group interviews. Each focus group was limited to seven students, considered the optimal number of participants in this process (Fraenkel et al., 2012). Two times of Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) deliberately achieved a saturation point. Moreover, The Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) conducted in Indonesia were transcribed and translated by an expert.

Following the Focus Group Discussions (FGDs), a brief satisfaction survey was administered to determine the nature of supervisory feedback. To this end, the participants were asked to circle an option on a scale ranging from 10 to 100 where 10 represented “not satisfied,” 50 “satisfied,” and 100 “extremely satisfied.” Before analyzing the data, the text was read repeatedly to gain an initial but thorough impression, followed by manually color-coding the emerging themes to

achieve a more accurate view. Consequently, only direct answers to the study questions were retained (Fraenkel et al., 2012).

3.3 Data Analysis

Qualitative data were analyzed using an iterative procedure. Consequently, the researcher alternated between data gathering and analysis. The first step of analysis consisted of repeatedly reading the text data to form an initial yet complete impression of the material. The themes that emerged were then manually color-coded in order to obtain a deeper impression of the data and get a good understanding of it. This research was directed by the constructivism quality standard to ensure dependability through the use of two quality control methods, namely transferability and conformability (Guba & Lincoln, 1989; Bryman, 2012).

Transferability refers to the process of collecting data from numerous sources using a range of instruments. In this study, data was gathered through document analysis (theses), Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) transcriptions, and satisfaction surveys. According to Fraenkel et al. (2012), "transferability is increased when a result is backed by data acquired from many instruments" (p. 458).

Conformability Guba and Lincoln (1989) defined conformability as data consisting of constructs, assertions, and facts that are traced back to their sources, along with the logic used to assemble the interpretations into a structurally coherent and corroborating whole that is both explicit and implicit in a case study. The usage of the recording device in Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) necessitated this data tracking for confirmation purposes during clarification.

4. Results

4.1 Document Analysis

The thesis drafts submitted by the students were divided into five parts for analysis, including feedback on the introduction chapter, theoretical foundations, methodology, results and discussion, as well as conclusion and pedagogical implications. Furthermore, the supervisors' feedback was divided into two parts, namely content and research language. Table 1 summarizes a complete description of the thesis.

Table 1

Feedback of Content

Part of the Thesis	Feedback in Content	Lecturer
The Introduction Chapter	Indirect Feedback	5
	Direct Feedback	2
	No Feedback	0
The Theoretical Foundation	Indirect Feedback	1
	Direct Feedback	2
	No Feedback	4
The Methodological Chapter	Indirect Feedback	3
	Direct Feedback	2
	No Feedback	2
The Result and Discussion Chapter	Indirect Feedback	1
	Direct Feedback	3
	No Feedback	3
The Conclusion and The Study Implication	Indirect Feedback	0
	Direct Feedback	1
	No Feedback	6

Table 2 summarizes the complete thesis language description used in this research.

Table 2

Feedback of Language

Part of the Thesis	Feedback in Content	Lecturer
The Introduction Chapter	Indirect Feedback	3
	Direct Feedback	3
	No Feedback	1
The Theoretical Foundation	Indirect Feedback	4
	Direct Feedback	3
	No Feedback	0
The Methodological Chapter	Indirect Feedback	3
	Direct Feedback	4
	No Feedback	0
The Result and Discussion Chapter	Indirect Feedback	4
	Direct Feedback	2
	No Feedback	1
The Conclusion and The Study Implication	Indirect Feedback	0
	Direct Feedback	0
	No Feedback	7

4.2 Focus Group Discussions (FGDs)

In the introductory chapter, the participants stated that thesis advisers need to explain ways to construct reliable and convincing opinions and arguments related to the importance of this research. This is in addition to explaining the research questions, the purpose of the study, its importance, its scope and limitations, and the definition of key terms. When interviewed, students felt that many advisors focused mainly on explaining how to build up the background of the research and its associated questions but not on the other four elements, which are the easiest in the introductory chapter. Although students may refer to a previous thesis submitted by their senior peers, their advisers focused on correcting minor grammatical errors, such as adding s and/or ed, without providing comments on whether a connection exists between one element and another in the introductory chapter.

Therefore, for theoretical foundations, the feedback should include whether the theories were built on recent similar research and the criticisms raised by students. The survey revealed that many thesis advisers overlooked this critical element due to various reasons. Some advisers stated that the undergraduate research project was incomparable to the postgraduate projects because students were still learning, and they considered it a preliminary step. Students were allowed to search and write the theory from reference books. Some advisers argued that the theoretical framework should be built up in sufficient detail and the ideas presented in a well-organized manner for publication. Students said publishing the research project in a journal is only an option for high-performing students whom advisers supervise with high integrity.

The methodology chapter includes the research design, participants, instrument, data collection procedure, and analysis. Furthermore, many students were concerned about advisers focusing solely on linguistic forms. Some focused on selecting research participants, how to address those taking part for the first time, and whether to withhold their consent. Others felt it was cumbersome to elaborate on the Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) or interview questions. Meanwhile, some students stated that it was difficult to formulate questions for the survey and that they received very little feedback on these questions. In

summary, participants in this study felt that the methodology chapter was the most challenging because they relied on previous work for guidance.

According to most participants, the results and discussion chapter were demanding and complicated, with difficulties in presentation tactics. However, one must be able to present the information related to the research findings coherently and cohesively, hence extensive feedback from thesis advisers is required. This is especially needed by ED students who describe themselves as a novice with difficulty in creating themes and subthemes for qualitative results. The participants did not know whether the theme and subthemes represented the content that they tried to elaborate. Moreover, dealing with large amounts of data as a result of transcribing interviews or Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) is challenging and often unmanageable. Additionally, students lacked the right strategy to separate the necessary from the unnecessary data because they felt it contains only repetitive information from the results section. The lack of critical thinking in pedagogy degraded the quality of research.

The conclusion and pedagogical implications are usually the most overlooked of the other chapters in students' final thesis. Some thesis advisers felt that their review of the first or rough draft was sufficient to improve and prepare students for their final thesis. Furthermore, students need to provide often a very short recommendation or implication that will attract the examiners' attention and provide answers to more questions during the thesis defense. Consequently, ED students became apprehensive about not being able to clarify when supervisors provided insufficient feedback.

Furthermore, the Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) also revealed students' opinions about types of feedback as elaborated below.

4.2.1 Written indirect feedback

Participants alluded to receiving indirect feedback from advisers circling, underlining, or marking incorrect words without providing the correct one to promote student awareness and independence. According to the interviews and document analysis, two teachers used this form of

feedback which students indicated was difficult to read and understand. An excerpt from the interviews stated the following:

> "He only shows us the pattern and requires us to find the correct answer. In my opinion, I need feedback that is easy to understand and revise".

This suggests that students were expected to apply their critical thinking skills and figure out the causes of errors, but they became increasingly confused instead. Seeking clarity from the thesis advisors was also challenging because of overlapping deadlines. Although the first interviewee felt that this feedback method promoted independence, not having a supervisor for guidance kept students from promptly revising and completing their projects. Students preferred a combination of indirect feedback and verbal explanations, which was possible through advising sessions to facilitate understanding. The questionnaire results showed that participants' satisfaction with this type of feedback was between 40% and 50%.

4.2.2 Written direct feedback

Written direct feedback was provided by four of the thesis supervisors. According to the participants, their corrections concerned grammatical errors and word choice. The following is an excerpt from the Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) who is a student:

> "I usually email my work back with corrections from the teacher that include deletions or underlining of answers with comments on better ways to present assignment solutions".

Some advisors pointed out the correct or better use of linguistic forms by providing clear, constructive feedback and hints which is very helpful. However, some teachers did not do this extensively when grading assignments, causing students to repeatedly go back and revise.

The results of the questionnaire and the Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) participants were in agreement, as 10 out of 12 participants were

satisfied with this type of feedback. Satisfaction with the feedback ranged from 60% to 70%.

4.2.3 Oral direct feedback

Oral feedback consisted of important clarifications and corrections to ensure students could write good paragraphs or sentences. According to the Focus Group Discussions (FGDs), two participants preferred this type of feedback because they understood and were satisfied with the corrections.

The first participant stated that the supervisor allowed students to correct their assignments before discussing their understanding and ideas about the feedback. This method provided straightforward explanations of the feedback, thereby enabling easy comprehension. The other participant affirmed that oral direct feedback was sufficient and promoted independence, though the corrections were not explained in detail. An excerpt from the FGD with students is reported as follows:

> "Other students can provide their feedback and correction of the writing during class presentations. Therefore, learners with similar mistakes can revise them independently".

> "The feedback on written as well as oral tasks is usually explained. In writing jobs, clues are given for corrections, while details and explanations are given orally".

Participants gave satisfaction ratings of 80% for the feedback.

4.2.4 Combination of oral and written feedback

According to the survey, three advisors provided clarity by crossing out or marking the wrong and correct material and verbally explaining the tasks. An excerpt from the FGD with students stated:

> "Questions related to the drafts are usually asked, followed by modifications or revisions based on the teachers' suggestions".

In the FGD, two learners stated that this feedback is beneficial because their supervisor utilized it to provide opportunities to improve the

projects. The second respondent had a similar view by providing clarity on the feedback, which enabled them to revise the thesis quickly.

Furthermore, both participants gave a satisfaction rating of 90% and acknowledged the regular provision of transparent feedback and numerous suggestions, such as using current books and journals for their project references.

4.2.5 No feedback

The FGD indicated that one supervisor failed to provide feedback despite having received the submitted project for a long time. The following is an excerpt from one of the students:

> "I submitted the draft by email but received no corrections. Instead, the supervisor insisted on continuing without any hint that I was in the right direction. I hope there will be no trouble in the end".

Another participant said:

> "Hence, the feedback cannot be concluded as adequate because I received no correction or explanation".

The survey revealed that the participants hoped for adequate supervision like the other learners and wanted regular meetings and more attention from the teacher for their projects. The first participant was told to keep working without receiving constructive comments. The second expressed disappointment with the supervision of the final project and reported that the teacher's guidance or feedback was not meaningful. This led to anxiety on the next step to defending the final paper, as the participant had received inadequate advice during the project evaluation. Therefore, the learner felt insecure about the project and desired additional coursework to resolve the thesis-related issues. The first and second participants reported 30% and 35% satisfaction, respectively.

In summary, the results of this research reveal several valid points, which will be expounded in more detail in the discussion section. First, it

showed that supervisors use different types of feedback that influence student satisfaction. Second, the perspectives of all participants were linear, which underscores the importance of clarity in feedback. Students expected thesis supervisors to combine oral and written corrections during consultations or class discussions to meet their needs. Finally, advisers and students disagree on the thesis features that need to be emphasized. Students expected numerous feedback in both content and linguistic form. In contrast, teachers strongly advocated paying attention to grammatical errors.

5. Discussion

This research provided the factors that affect how academic advisers provide feedback and how the students perceived the feedback.

5.1 Insufficient Literacy in Academic Writing

To complete a thesis writing project, which is one of the requirements for a final project, learners are supposed to possess two skills simultaneously, namely academic writing and research literacy. According to preliminary academic writing for EFL students, for whom English is not the first language is completely different from those in English-speaking countries. In Indonesia, learners appear to be viewed as knowledge recallers (Shukri, 2014). This is in stark contrast with western rhetorical writers who transform knowledge by synthesizing material into personal and critically relevant concepts (Cumming, 1995). The ability to write effectively and think well are closely related in English-speaking countries.

Hyland (2007) stated that in higher education, students' ability to sustain arguments and summarize ideas when writing in English for academic purposes is critical to their classroom performance. However, students in tertiary institutions find it difficult to write a logical and detailed text. Thesis writing, strongly associated with research skills, has been reported in academic journals starting with L1 contexts, especially at the graduate or master's level. For example, Kaur (2000) noted that most non-native English-speaking international students in Malaysian master's programs must participate in group projects or discussions. Despite this, a few graduate students cannot meet academic literacy expectations.

5.2 The Lack of Feedback Pedagogy

The thesis supervisors are also from the same EFL context and get teaching pedagogy and feedback similar to when they were in college. Besides, these supervisors also possess inadequate academic English and research skills. This means there is a greater tendency for them to provide feedback on previous experiences. Ferris et al. (2013) stated that feedback from L2 teachers on writing theses and projects had little effect on students' writing because the underlining and marking used served only mechanical purposes while preventing revision. In addition, many English lecturers in Indonesian universities, especially at UMM, have little experience in writing both non-academic and academic texts for publication in English. Therefore, they rarely learn about different types of feedback from reviewers and editors.

5.3 The Advisor's Inadequacy to Use Different Feedback

In this study, both direct and indirect corrective feedback is mostly found, with the majority believing that indirect feedback is critical in helping students develop as independent writers. However, achieving a degree of independence does not happen overnight (Bitchener et al., 2010).

Students scored a high level of satisfaction (90%) when thesis advisers combined written corrective feedback and explained it orally. The learners felt contended with this type of feedback and stated that the thesis advisers provided opportunities to explain their drafts and improve their projects. Combining written and oral feedback gave novices a greater chance to ask about not only the linguistic form of correction but also the ideas and the content of the research project. Besides, participants shared a similar viewpoint, reporting clear comprehension of the feedback and the ability to modify the thesis quickly because of simple corrections in the drafts. According to Bitchener et al. (2010), advisers are experts who help novices comprehend what is expected by the academic community. Consequently, the supervisor's role cannot be understated because it requires insight and understanding of what the student needs and finds most effective at the time of feedback.

Similarly, experts stated that comments should be text-specific and clear, with both constructive criticism and praise (Ferris, 2003; Goldstein, 2004; Hyland

& Hyland, 2006). Gitsaki and Althobaiti's (2010) research also showed that explicit corrections, followed by metalinguistic cues and requests for clarification, were the most common type of oral feedback. Feedback engages learners, builds relationships, and helps avoid appropriation (Goldstein, 2006; Hyland & Hyland, 2006). It is also important in process-oriented classrooms, where students are expected to follow teacher directions and modify or revise their projects. In summary, although feedback can take many forms, such as oral, written, informal, formal, descriptive, evaluative, peer, and self-assessed, its quality is very important.

In the case of no feedback from the thesis adviser, various factors must be considered, such as competence, workload, and time availability. Poulos and Mahoni (2008) reported an interconnection between students and thesis advisers who are good at giving quality feedback. The credibility, impact, and efficacy were interrelated to the thesis advisors' overall skill. However, the lecturers' particular biases detracted from their credibility, and hence feedback was regarded as less effective. The unavailability of feedback shows weak teaching commitment; hence it is strongly recommended that thesis advisers use automated writing evaluation to prevent students from being discouraged. Students believed that any feedback will lead to the improvement of their draft compared to no feedback.

6. Conclusion and Recommendations

The three dialogical factors above made the undergraduate research project at the UMM English Department context is quite challenging. The results of the study imply that transparent feedback will assist novice researchers. In such feedback, teachers gather a lot of information about their student's level of writing competence and show students what conclusions they draw from it. Students will see how the choices they make, or the struggles they face, impact how they are perceived.

Thesis advisors should use feedback that is easily comprehended by the novice researcher. Perhaps, the adviser needs further training on how to utilize understandable feedback. For example, checklists and rubrics that a student can easily interpret what advisers want to convey the intended messages. Besides,

providing one-to-one consultation, students may have opportunities to listen to their advisors' feedback and figure out what needs improvement.

In spite of the fact that they have studied English, students at the college level do not have writing skills that can be considered competent. Students need to be guided through the process of developing the abilities necessary for them to become successful writers through a range of instructional methods. Before students take their final research project, there are certain tactics that need to be used. These strategies include writing clinics, additional academic writing courses, peer writing groups, and teacher-student thesis writing conferences. Can and Walker (2011) state that the majority of these writing support systems place an emphasis on the act of providing students with feedback regarding their writing. There are many different kinds of instructor feedback available, such as written comments and corrections, teacher-student conferencing (Hyland, 2003; Keh, 1990), tape-recorded comments, and electronic feedback, to name a few of the options (Hyland, 2003).

Furthermore, department should provide students with an option to complete other tasks instead of final project. This is due to the fact that the only alternative to assignments – a research project that does not correspond to students' learning levels – may engender anger and hamper learning. The thesis writing activities cannot be based solely on department expectations; they must be adaptive to meet the demands of language learners, as not all continue their education at the master's or doctorate level after graduation.

7. About the Authors

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