

Feedback in The Learning Process on Indonesian Master's Degree Experience Studying Abroad

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Abstract

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Studies on the perception of Indonesian master's degree students from various universities abroad on satisfaction with feedback in the learning process are still limited. This study aims to explore the perceptions of college students related to feedback and how the feedback enables students to sharpen and improve practical skills in the learning process. Researchers in this study uses a case study method included in qualitative research. Researchers interviewed 32 participants who were selected using the snowball sampling technique which consisted of master degree students from four countries: Indonesia, the United Kingdom, the United States of America, and Australia. The questions in this study focused on responses to various types of feedback based on the question and delivery, student expectations, and how feedback affects academic performance. This study found four major themes, namely the importance of being explicit in providing feedback, variations in giving feedback, comprehensive feedback students expect for lecturers in Indonesia, and using feedback to improve students' academic performance.

Keywords:

master's degree, university, feedback, learning

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INTRODUCTION

Providing feedback for students is one of the most crucial factors in the teaching and learning process (Oagaz, Schoun, & Choi, 2022). Feedback plays a pivotal role in detecting students' awareness as well as their strengths. Four points which pictured the benefit of providing feedback towards student's learning are: (1) improving their knowledge, (2) supporting their skills, (3) developing professional judgment, and (4) helping them to create self-reflection (Kourgiantakis, Sewell, & Bogo, 2019). Equally significant, McCarthy mentioned that there is no "one size fits all" feedback type when it comes to evaluation in the universities (McCarthy, 2015). When lecturers apply a specific type of feedback, it is important for them to take into consideration factors such as the field of study, the student type (age, local or international, visual/hearing impaired), and the existence of student resources and staff, including internet access and so forth. The feedback for learners which provided by lecturers remains one of the most crucial factors of motivation students to improve their performance academically. Furthermore, applying different types of feedback, along with when and how they are conveyed, are potentially promising point to maximize the process of teaching and learning at higher education.

A case discussed is that “delivery” of feedback by educators to their students has been a priority in many literature at higher and professional education setting (Boud & Molloy, 2012). Giving feedback on students’ assignments in the university context is an academic atmosphere created by lecturers or even lecturers’ assistants. This is absolutely true that feedback is able to produce an ample impact on students’ academic performance during the learning process. Teachers, lecturers, instructors and tutors produce feedback such as grades, scores, and comments for students to apply in an adaptive way in order to improve their upcoming performance. A priceless insight, effective feedback, is very helpful for learners to make their academic performance even better. Some aspects which relate to the effectiveness of feedback including specificity, complexity and length, and the timing of feedback (Yuan & Kim, 2015). Elwood and Bode arranged a study of university student in Japan, particularly for those who attending writing classes (Elwood & Bode, 2014). Then two types of feedback were classified such as direct and indirect feedback. Direct feedback relates to the action done by lecturers to write some corrections towards linguistic patterns or structures, for example, deleting unnecessary words/phrases, or putting a missing word/phrase directly into students’ work. As to grammatical corrections, Bitchener and Knoch found that corrective feedback offers a positive practice for ESL students to develop their accuracy of such usage in new pieces of writing (Bitchener & Knoch, 2008). While indirect feedback refers to the action by lecturers who only inform the students that there are some errors in their work with locating them specifically. Also, large-scale research both in Australia and the United Kingdom depicts that several aspects caused students to be dissatisfied with the feedback provided, such as its accuracy, timeliness, and the consistency of feedback information (Ott, Robins, & Shephard, 2016).

Different approaches had been implemented to examined the perception of students with feedback at university levels. The result is almost uniformly inconsistent in terms of how students’ response it, however, students’ expectations of feedback provided by lecturers at university will enhance their academic performance. One research as to undergraduate student’s expectations of feedback informed that they expect feedback will inform their future assessments and give explanations that will help them (Small & Attree, 2016). Moreover, one point that makes them excited is that the use of feedback as a tool for self-reflective. In addition, appreciation of feedback occurs when it is clear as well as instructive. Another research found that majority of students expect to have a face-to-face sharing of ideas with their lecturers, and even suggested that it should be routine every week (Brannon & Knoblauch, 1982; Skinner, 2014). Interpretations and use the comments provided, they will see the feedback as being of limited use and proclaim their dissatisfaction.

Regarding to these earlier studies, this study aims to explore the perception of university students as to feedback and how they utilize it in order to sharpen their practical skills during the process of teaching and learning.

As a matter of fact, the whole students in the university context do not acquire the maximum level of satisfaction from feedback given by their lecturers. This should be a serious issue to be addressed by those who really concern about the quality outcomes from universities. In order to obtain a better quality during the

process of giving feedback, lecturers have to recognize that a lack of particular types of information for improvement in feedback created dissatisfaction among learners (Bailey, 2009). Similarly, Jonsson mentioned that most of students do not utilize the feedback they receive, and even do not understand at all the potential of feedback itself (Jonsson, 2013). Some aspects are considered relate to this particular issue such as the teacher, the feedback content, the way of delivery, the timing, and the students themselves. Another point which is able to be recognized as essential, is when students do not see the value of the feedback provided and when they find no correlation between the kind of feedback the kind of feedback they prefer to accept and the types of feedback that the lecturer gives for them. So, to overcome this barrier, Burke proposed that lecturers demonstrate to their students how to use feedback productively, such as by organizing a workshop on the subject, which has become a regular activity in the universities (Burke, 2009).

The limited information or research on student satisfaction of Indonesian master’s degree students studying abroad with feedback at the university level shows the importance of research in this area and the absence of researchers who explore this field. Therefore, this study seeks to increase knowledge by investigating several factors related to feedback at the university level, especially the master’s degree level. This study looks at the experiences of Indonesian postgraduate students with feedback in terms of the type, level of detail, and delivery provided by lecturers at universities in Australia, the United States, the United Kingdom, and Indonesia. This study will empirically investigate how feedback is provided and its impact on students’ academic performance.

METHODS

Study Design and Participants

This study uses a case study method included in qualitative research. According to Bryman (2008) in Jokhio, et al (2020), the fundamental case study needs the specific as well as intensive analysis of a single case, for example a particular community (Jokhio, Raza, Younus, & Soomro, 2020). The researchers collected the data through in-deep interview. The participants were thirty-two Indonesian postgraduate students who are studying a master’s degree in Australia, the United States of America, the United Kingdom and Indonesia. A large number of international students from Indonesia are now studying in the United Kingdom, the United States of America, and Australia. The participants are studying in different fields of study and in different universities as well. The participants were selected using a snowball sampling technique and all of them are postgraduate students. The reason why postgraduate students were chosen is because they have a large percentage of Indonesian students who are studying overseas for the time-being. Demographic data of participants in this study (table 1).

Table 1. Participant’s demographic data

No	Pseudonym	Age	Gender	Country of studying
1	Arman	30	Male	The United Kingdom
2	Belinda	31	Female	The United Kingdom

Table 1. Participant's demographic data (continued)

No	Pseudonym	Age	Gender	Country of studying
3	Budi	28	Male	Australia
4	Bukhari	36	Male	Australia
5	Desi	27	Female	Australia
8	Eka	25	Female	Australia
9	Endang	27	Female	Australia
10	Erbi	37	Male	Australia
11	Fatmawati	31	Female	The United Kingdom
12	Hanah	26	Female	Australia.
13	Heri	36	Male	Australia
14	Iksan	30	Male	The United States of America
15	Indah	25	Female	Australia
16	Indra	24	Male	The United States of America
17	Karimah	26	Female	Australia
18	Marina	35	Female	UK The United Kingdom
19	Mira	37	Female	The United States of America
20	Nia	37	Female	The United Kingdom
21	Nurmala	26	Female	The United States of America
22	Rinintia	21	Female	The United Kingdom
23	Rinto	28	Male	Australia
24	Ruri	26	Female	Australia
25	Santi	38	Female	Australia
26	Shanita	29	Female	The United Kingdom
27	Sugeng	28	Male	The United Kingdom
28	Yanwar	19	Male	The United Kingdom
29	Yayu	26	Female	Indonesia
30	Yuliadin	46	Male	Australia
31	Zafira	27	Female	Australia
32	Zakky	26	Male	The United Kingdom

Procedure

The researchers firstly informed the Head of the Indonesian Students' Association in the four target countries (Indonesia, the United Kingdom, the United States of America, and Australia) about this research in order to determine how the data will be collected. The researchers informed them that the participants in this study are Indonesian students pursuing Master's degrees in Australia, the United States, the United Kingdom, and Indonesia. It could come from any field of study and from any university in the target country. In addition, it took three months to collect data, from March to May 2019.

Data Analysis

The qualitative data in this study was analyzed using the thematic analysis method. The method is a technique for detecting, analyzing, and reporting on patterns (themes) in data. It goes into great detail about the data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Furthermore, Braun and Clarke mention a six-phase guide, which is a framework for conducting thematic analysis, beginning with becoming familiar

with the data; transcribing data to note the initial notion/ideas; and conducting thematic analysis; generating initial codes; coding some interesting features; looking for themes; collating codes into potential themes; reviewing themes; ensuring that the themes work in relation to the coded extracts; defining themes conducting analysis to select specific themes and producing the report; and, finally, writing a report for the analysis (Maguire & Delahunt, 2017).

RESULTS & DISCUSSION

RESULT

The Importance of Being Explicit in Feedback

One issue in postgraduate students' responses was the level of explicitness which was represented by the terms "direct feedback" and "indirect feedback". There are five themes which are able to discussed ahead related to different answers by students based on their experiences in four different countries as well. Those themes mentioned by some graduate students are grammatical corrections (Zafira, Nurmala, and Rinto), content corrections (Karimah and Budi), the need for both types of feedback (Bukhari, Rinintia, Iksan, Mira, Nia, and Heri), lecturer-student interaction (Santi, Ruri, Yanwar and Indah), and stimulated independent learning (Hanah, Heri, Marina, and Nia).

Zafira, a female student, mentioned that she got direct feedback after she sent her assignment through student platform, the lecturer always does that kind of supportive learning. Even though she got the indirect feedback in her assignment paper, direct feedback can be a good way to exactly know what she is still incomprehensive and need to get more insight. To all written mistakes, they just correct them simply. Similar claims came from Nurmala, a female student. She prefers direct feedback, because she will know for sure the mistakes that she made so that she will not do it again. Moreover, Rinto, another postgraduate student in Australia stated that in some cases of his essay, his lecturer gave feedback on language structure which, in his opinion as an international student, the structure does matter. Those statements confirmed that Indonesian students need direct feedback, the linguistic aspect of their assignment, such as grammatical errors and others do indeed need to be corrected.

Furthermore, there are two students in Australia who stated that instead of focusing on the structure (English structure) in presenting essays, papers, and reports, the position of content in their work is much more essential. No matter how perfect the English structure in the assignments is, it will potentially useless if the it does not address the topic which is being discussed in an appropriate way. Karimah, a female student, elaborated that feedback does not really crucial to point out the errors such as incorrect words, just straight to mention the mistake where she can do some corrections later. Also, the existence of the content of the essay is much more crucial based on another student, Budi. The idea is based on a self-awareness of the students themselves.

Bukhari, a male student, said that direct and indirect feedback are really helpful to know what does your minor area and what action need to tackle. This is

similar to what it is said by Rinintia, a female student, that this is best to give both to help the students improve on their assignment. Also, Iksan, a male student, mentioned that if it is wording and coming from native-English speaker, it is very helpful. But if it relates to content, he would say it is better with indirect by giving another possible thought on our own thought. In the same way, several students focus on the type of assignment shared. Nia, a female student, explained that feedback that challenge the origin of arguments, to develop critical thinking is the most satisfying, however diverse style of teaching, assistance, communication may apply. Here, as an additional thought, feedback is expected to stimulate critical thinking skills among students wherever they study.

Moreover, another benefit is the way how students and lecturers interact when giving feedback. It creates positive academic nuance. Santi, a female student, said she got suggestion to revise her work. Then, Indah, a female student mentioned that she prefers that the lecturer using tracker in the word document of her assignment so that she can know which part should be changed or improved. Ruri, a female student, experienced of asking the professor directly as to feedback. This similar to Yanwar, a male student, claimed that the kind of feedback he usually receives is indirect, however, his lecturer usually leaves them on where the lecturer wants him to fix them.

Hannah, a female student, mentioned that students can explore more about many alternative ways to replace their mistake if the lecturers do not tell them directly the answers. In addition, she thinks indirect feedback will allow students to actively seek the correct answer. Heri, a male student, is also stated they can correct themselves. Marina, a female student, stated that it seems to be very childish to expect lecturers to give us feedback all the time.

Variations in Giving Feedback

The lecturers almost never provide handwritten feedback as all assignments are submitted online. Then, some students reported this type of experience in their positive comments. Bukhari, a male student, stated he prefers to receive electronic feedback because it is clearer and easier to follow compare to handwritten format. Other students confirmed that the electronic one is good because they can see and hear the intonation of the lecture in providing feedback. This is a particular characteristic of electronic devices such as audio and video, where students obtain information in a maximal way.

Even if electronic feedback is more convenient and appears to be more helpful, some students pointed out the value of handwritten feedback. Using it provides some sort of benefit. Iksan, a student in the United States of America explained that handwritten feedback will stay as notes so students may always go back. This finding is also confirmed one study conducted by Jackson & Marks that students always read the written feedback and digested it to create strategy for a better future works (Jackson & Marks, 2014). Some students claimed that the handwritten type of feedback is more common among lecturers during the study session and that it is more effective. Other students, on the other hand, believe that giving handwritten criticism may cause problems. For example, if the writing style is intricate, students may find it difficult to read. There may also be issues with the

length of the material in the feedback. A student, Yanwar in the United Kingdom stated that handwritten feedback is usually brief, whereas computerized feedback is more detailed.

Marina, a female student in the United Kingdom emphasized the usage of verbal feedback in addition to handwritten and electronic feedback. She said there is also verbal feedback where student can truly share thoughts with the professor and even address our weakness and strength at the same time.

Comprehensive Feedback Students Expect for Lecturers in Indonesia

While studying in Australia, one female student, Zafira, commented that the feedback she received was better than what she received from my Indonesian lecturer. She said that that is the truth and this is also the lecturer's homework in her country in order to improve the learning environment. Furthermore, Erbi, an Australian student, claimed that he prefers the feedback he receives at his current university to that which he received in his home country. Even a student in the United Kingdom, Shanitia, made a critical point, that the Indonesian system should follow the same procedure as the United Kingdom in providing comprehensive feedback.

The level of detail and how it fits their expectations are important to students. The majority of them are pleased with the level of depth in the feedback. They also gave positive feedback in response to details. Sugeng, an Australian student, claimed that lecturers write feedback that includes what students do well and what they do not. Another student, Indra, observed that detail comments are frequently offered verbally throughout the assignment's completion process. A quick comment is usually made at the end, and the marking is done using a grading rubric. The male student, Indra, in the United States of America brought up an interesting point. This compels him to concur wholeheartedly. Indra also mentioned that the system of hiring teaching assistants among the students made him strongly approve. They are more accessible in a timely manner and are also more willing to assist in detail with any technical challenge, such as checking figures, an excel sheet, or a code. Similarly, Iksan, a student, remarked that the lecturers provided him with feedback on the subject and lend their knowledge to it. Furthermore, Marina, a student from the United Kingdom, stated that the lecturer used to write "excellent job" or "well done" as the marking scheme, but that he occasionally used grades like A, B, and stuffs. Moreover, in the United Kingdom, feedback is supplied for practically all papers and section by section.

Moreover, the Indonesian master's degree students pushed themselves to be more self-assured as international students. Bukhari, an Australian postgraduate, remarked that it is definitely like learning by mistakes. As an international student, the feedback assists him in better coping with the study difficulties. Sugeng, a male student in the same country has a similar point of view. He said that the lecturer writes the feedback, which includes what students do well and what students do not. As a result, it aids the student's confidence in each country. This similar to Narciss mentioned that self-regulated learning point of view, is a necessary information source, especially when the learners deal with challenges or incorrectly proceeds (Narciss, 2008). Students often consider how important it is to know how to

improve academic performance regardless of the grade they receive. Another student, Arman, indicated that he has made a commitment to be a better student who completes homework based on comments from the lecturer.

Using Feedback to Improve Students' Academic Performance

Students' understanding and practical abilities increase as a result of the feedback offered by lecturers at the universities. Students understand the feedback information from their lecturers, including constructive criticism that can be used to improve their academic performance. This is more necessary to master practical abilities, such as writing, than it is to master a theory. When students only receive information through feedback, the information cannot be useful to them unless they can use it. This assists students in learning certain approaches that will be useful when they begin working on academic projects. As a result, students are able to recognize the value of feedback and apply it appropriately. Receiving feedback, according to Karimah, an Australian postgraduate student, helps her to better understand how to complete assignments based on rubrics and requirements for specific tasks. Endang, another student, indicated that she had already stated that her grade was improving after receiving feedback from the lecturer while studying in Australia. Lecturers in Australia have provided her with a lot of feedback that has helped her improve her writing skills. In terms of good advances in practical abilities such as writing skills, one student, Erbi, stated that Australian lecturers have provided him with a lot of feedback that has helped him better his writing. Furthermore, student perceptions of their academic achievement and how they use feedback for the following assignment are essential considerations in the discussion of feedback and academic success. Academic achievement in adults should not be seen as a static pattern, but as a flexible and unique pattern for each individual, according to one of the students, Nia. In another study, self-controlled feedback by students increased perceived autonomy and spontaneous error estimation (Bacelar et al., 2022). Furthermore, students' critical thinking skills increased significantly through peer feedback activities where students could receive feedback from friends and could also provide feedback to their friends (Rodríguez et al., 2022).

DISCUSSION

The position of international students who deal with writing in English as their first-hand experience, it is a common for them to expect that their lecturer to locate errors directly in order to make them familiar with academic atmosphere which sometimes automatically help them a lot. According to Lee, feedback with no target for error pattern specifically in writing tasks seem that teachers do not have a sense of direction as well as sense of purpose in providing feedback (Lee, 2017). It is a compulsory task for the educators to inform the students that errors have been made and let the students find and correct the work by themselves. This can also inspire a pattern for learning independently. Equally important, students have similar views related the important nature of both types of feedback. This must be based on their character and their behaviors. Several students might be independent person while several others are not. This condition influenced them the

most in responding to the feedback. Diab also reached similar conclusion based on the study at error correction in students' writing (Diab, 2006). This is essential for lecturers to put classroom discussion, correction, feedback, and writing all together. This is potential to make them more understand how feedback will affect positively to their performance and why it should be provided in a particular way. Students and lecturers' interaction is the important point as well in the process of teaching and learning. Whether it make a positive and negative context when lecturers form a great positive bond with students, the condition will be supportive; one in which students can engage academically. Also, Albertos and Mareels stated that the environment of where the teacher and student interaction will influence the whole behavior during the interaction itself (Albertos & Mareels, 2010). Planning the teaching is needed to be done by the teacher to meet the curriculum and accreditation expected standard.

Furthermore, lecturers who have positive relationships with their students use them as a secure base from which they can explore the learning process by applying different strategies. Another benefit can be shown when a lecturer did not locate the error or did not give feedback specifically. In fact, this is able to encourage the student to be more independent in their learning. This can a chance for them as well to enjoy the learning process rather than just focus on the goal. Independent learning students are sometimes more aware of their own strengths and weaknesses. Besides, it stimulates a self-critique as well. Several students have some strong opinions related to this matter. Indirect feedback builds their independence and make them learn to find their own mistake without being spoiled. Then, Asian mostly obedient to any feedback by their supervisors, therefore feedback which give open space to develop critical thinking should be more encouraged and applied. As Gould and Day pointed out, promoting cognitive and mechanism to analyze which enable the students in assessing their potential are the purpose of providing feedback (Gould & Day, 2013). Students are hoped to implement a critically reflective approach related to academic business and professional practice.

The participants had been asked their preferences related to two types of feedback delivery, for example, handwritten feedback on paper and electronic feedback such as audio and video. They believe that those kinds of feedback have their own strengths and weaknesses. Many participants claimed that effectiveness is the reason of choosing electronic feedback compare to handwritten feedback (manual feedback). The effectiveness of this type of feedback is essential to promote the learning process. They expect that feedback might be able to be a tool to facilitate them in learning as well as improvement in future assignments. By considering at the lecturers' face or listening to their voice, it can actually help them to comprehend the detail of the meaning. Then, mostly utilize digital feedback through track changes in Microsoft Word. According to Mahoney, et al, feedback which provided through video has become students' preference even though it had not been proved yet fully whether it creates a better improvement at students' learning and performance or not (Mahoney, Macfarlane, & Ajjawi, 2019). Students take feedback in a variety of ways, and lecturers should be aware that the method of offering feedback may be problematic for some of their students. If this occurs, the purpose of feedback, which has become popular as a tool to assist

students in dealing with academic performance, would not be met. As a result, students will discover a feedback approach that is easier to comprehend and leads to a more delightful educational experience.

This has also been found previously in the research by Skinner and Brannon et al. (Brannon & Knoblauch, 1982; Skinner, 2014). Students can also confirm whether there is a misunderstanding in real time with verbal response. This is also regarded as a powerful tool for providing feedback. This finding confirmed the result of similar study by Mathisen (Mathisen, 2012). Video comments are regarded as important because it is precise compared to the written one. In order to complete the future works, this shares such an inspiration as well as motivation for students.

Regarding the right time to provide feedback, one of the studies in educational robotics activities for the development of computational thinking shows that giving delayed feedback is an effective way (Chevalier et al., 2022). In other words, a lecturer in providing feedback can be carried out after the activity is completed by a student where the lecturer does not intervene in the midst of student activities. In addition, the centre of the effectiveness of the design of feedback is determined from the source of learning motivation, attributes, and personality of the students (Maag, Withana, Budhathoki, Alsadoon, & VO, 2022).

Indonesian master's degree students studying abroad hope that their experiences with feedback in their host country would be incorporated in their home country of Indonesia. One of the benefits of studying abroad is the opportunity to sample various educational styles. They will get the opportunity to see a side of their major that they may not have been exposed to in their native country by enrolling in an international study program. Furthermore, the students reacted positively to the feedback, using it as a kind of self-evaluation, expressing their displeasure in various situations, and expressing their expectations for feedback from their professors. One study showed that feedback plays a role in mindset development, motivation regulation, social behavior and metacognition (Xu, 2022). Some students also responded positively to whether feedback was given at the end of the project or during the assignment. Furthermore, feedback from academics at the university level may have aided students in doing self-evaluation. This is one of the most important parts of university learning processes. Students are expected to maintain a high level of self-awareness across time. As Pintrich and Zusho mentioned that it is the ability of the students to do monitoring as to their thinking, learning and academic performance (Pintrich & Zusho, 2002). The feedback's most important impacts are a better understanding of their skills and weaknesses, as well as a better understanding of their duties. When confronted with this question, not all students have the same viewpoint. Some students also mentioned their dissatisfaction with the timing of the feedback they received. The proportion of feedback is the subject of this phenomena. Some lecturers provide thorough feedback and explanations, while others do not. Some courses provide feedback on student work, while others do not.

CONCLUSION

Overall, this study revealed that the component of feedback elicited a number of good responses from master's degree students when they were questioned about their level of satisfaction with the feedback based on their experience studying abroad. Feedback relates to the need for grammar correction, lecturer-student involvement, the need for content correction, or encouragement for independent study. Feedback is in the form of direct and indirect. Both sorts of feedback have a position that refers to the level of detail. Direct feedback refers to actions taken by lecturers in response to linguistic patterns or structures, such as eliminating unneeded words/phrases or directly inserting a missing word/phrase into students' work. Furthermore, the act of providing feedback fosters interactions between lecturers and students. Feedback, according to the majority of students, is critical in the teaching and learning process. The effectiveness of the teaching and learning process will be determined by how well lecturers communicate with their students. Lecturers can use a variety of teaching styles and methods as long as they first build a positive engagement with their students.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

Concerning the research, authorship, and publication of this paper, the authors reported no potential conflicts of interest.

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