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An Analysis of Written Feedback on ESL Students' Writing

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Abstract

This paper provides an analysis of written feedback on ESL students' written assignment to shed light on how the feedback acts as a type of written speech between the lecturer and student. It first looks at two sources of data: in-text feedback and overall feedback written by the lecturer on the students' written assignment. Looking at how language is used in its situational context, the feedback was coded and a model for analysis was developed based on two primary roles of speech: directive and expressive. Based on this analysis, the paper discusses the type(s) of feedback that benefit students the most. This study provides insights as to how the student felt with each type of feedback. It also provides insights into the possibility of developing a taxonomy of good feedback practices by considering the views of the giver and receiver of written feedback.

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Keywords: Written feedback; ESL students; taxonomy of good feedback

1. Introduction and literature review

Since the early 1980's, researchers and reviewers have been investigating response to high school students' writing undergraduate students' writing (Brannon & Knoblauch, 1982; Faighley & Witte, 1981; Hillocks, 1986; Ziv, 1984). These studies reported that written feedback provides a potential value in motivating students to revise their draft (Leki, 1991; Saito, 1994; Zhang, 1995) and in improving their writing (Fathman & Whalley, 1990; Ferris, 1995; Ferris et al, 1997). As a result, written feedback is the most popular method that teachers use to interact and communicate with students (Cohen & Cavalcanti, 1990; Fathman & Whalley, 1990; Ferris, 1995, 2002; Hyland & Hyland, 2001). It has been suggested by Straub (2000) that teachers should create the feel of a conversation by

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