

Beyond Correction: Vocational Students' Perceptions of Teacher Feedback in Project-Based Learning

Amaradita Wulan Prianto^{a,1*}, Rahayu Kuswardani^{b,2}

^{a,b}English Education Department, Universitas Negeri Surabaya, Indonesia

¹amaradita.22075@mhs.unesa.ac.id, ²rahayukuswardani@unesa.ac.id

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates vocational students' perceptions of teacher feedback during Project-Based English Learning. The study applies a qualitative method including a close-ended questionnaire answered by 35 students and semi-structured interviews conducted with 10 vocational students from 11th grade of Visual Communication Design class. The questionnaire examined students' overall perceptions of feedback practices, while interviews provided deeper insights into students' experiences during project-based activities. The findings show that students view teacher feedback as an essential tool that guides their learning development. Students reported that feedback was clear, specific, and aligned with project goals, enabling them to understand areas for improvement and apply feedback effectively. Moreover, feedback which given regularly helped students develop critical thinking skills, which enabled them to comprehend the feedback purpose, and improved confidence in using English. Also, students perceive that continuous feedback improved their English skills, which included speaking, vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation development according to teacher feedback. In addition, students exposed that they utilized feedback to solve their problems, revise their work, and maintain their focus on project goals. The findings provide deep understanding of how vocational students perceive teacher feedback during project-based English learning, particularly in terms of how they understand, interpret, and respond to feedback throughout the project process. They also offer further insights into students' perspectives on the role of feedback within project-based learning, an area that has received limited attention in vocational EFL contexts.

I. Introduction

Feedback is an effective aspect in the teaching and learning process by the reason it can impartially define students' learning development and help them examine their work to increase academic performance. The presence of feedback guides students to evaluate their learning performance and identify whether they have met the learning objectives [1]. In the context of language learning, the use of feedback generally applies during students' learning assessment, specifically for formative assessment—the evaluation or judgment of the progress of learning work, assignment, project, performance—which is the underlying part for it learning activities [2].

Hence, feedback is one of the key components in conducting PjBL activities, which teachers should monitor and assess to track students' progress on their projects. In creating meaningful projects of PjBL activity, proper guidance should be implemented to reduce students' struggles to stay on track, manage time effectively, or meet learning objectives. Teacher feedback plays a crucial role in bridging this gap by providing direction, clarification, and constructive evaluation throughout the project process. Through continuous feedback, teachers help students refine their ideas, improve problem-solving strategies, and enhance the quality of their final products [3]. Moreover, feedback also promotes reflection, enabling students to identify their strengths and areas for improvement, which fosters deeper understanding and self-regulated learning.

Understanding that, the researcher aims to investigate this study based on the case study related to teacher who apply feedback in the project-based English learning process at one vocational school in Sidoarjo. Thus, teacher feedback yields convenient outcomes for vocational students' English performance, such as improving language quality, clarifying feedback objectives, assisting students in successful error correction, and enhancing academic goals by guiding students to revise their work [4]. Several studies have explored students' perceptions of project-based English and their views on teacher feedback to improve their language skills. In general, the research indicates that both project-based or teacher feedback have significant effects on students' self-regulation, self-improvement, self-evaluation, engagement in learning, motivation, the development of speaking and writing skills, critical thinking abilities, and fostering a growth mindset [5], [6], [7].

Nevertheless, most existing studies have primarily examined the general advantages of project-based methods, with some studies briefly recognizing teacher feedback as a supportive factor in the PjBL approach. However, no specific study has explored teacher feedback during the PjBL activity. To know in-depth about the implementation of teacher feedback in project-based English learning, this study investigated vocational students' perceptions of teacher feedback in such contexts. Additionally, the findings of this study might have significant implications for language educators, especially within vocational settings where students are preparing for hands-on careers to meet real-world professional demands. This study seeks to address the following research question: How do vocational students' perceptions of teacher feedback during project-based learning activity?

II. Method

This study employed a qualitative research design to explore students' perceptions of the role of teacher feedback during project-based English learning. A qualitative method is a research approach focused on investigating and understanding how individuals or groups attach significance to social or human issues. The participants of this study were selected using purposive sampling to ensure the quality of the data. The participants in this study were 11th graders from SMK Yapalis Krian, specifically selected from a designated class, which includes 35 students from grade 11 of Visual Communication Design class, to collect the questionnaire results. From a class of 35 students, 10 were selected for an interview. The selection was based on some criteria, which were: active participation in class activities; students' levels of academic achievement (high, medium, and low) to receive diverse perspectives; willingness to participate in the interview and demonstrate enthusiasm to share their experiences; the representative of each member of the group in the interview to maintain the fairness for every group.

This study applied two qualitative research instruments which are semi-structured interviews and close-ended questionnaires. The instruments were developed and designed using Hattie & Timperley's Feedback Model (2007). The close-ended questionnaire distributed to 35 students from grade 11 of Visual Communication Design class through Google Form. The questionnaire consisted of 20 items and focused on the general students' perceptions of teacher feedback during the project-based learning activity. Moreover, the interview guide was to gather comprehensive information toward the vocational students' experiences and opinions of the teacher feedback they received during finishing the project, consisting of 15 questions. Moreover, this study employed thematic analysis adapted from Braun and Clarke 2006 which are (1) Transcription, familiarizing with the data, and selection of a quotation, (2) Generating initial codes, (3) Begin analysis with a coding process, (4) Theme development, (5) Conceptualization, (6) Producing the report. First, confirm that you have the correct template for your paper size.

III. Results and Discussion

Teacher feedback in this study was implemented during project-based English learning, where students were assigned to create a procedure text video project related to their vocational background and daily experiences. The results from both close-ended questionnaire and interview were organized into 4 themes which were:

A. *Students' Perceptions of Teacher Feedback Quality in PjBL*

The result from questionnaire and interview indicated that teacher feedback was given regularly and students viewed feedback to help them understand the project's purpose and the learning

process. The questionnaire result is inserted below:

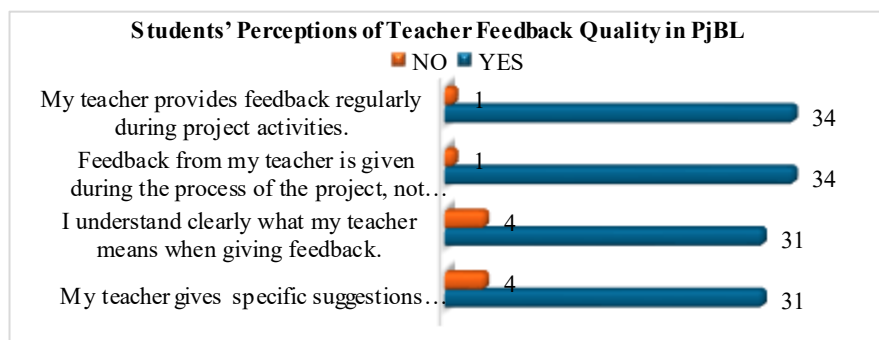


Fig 1. Chart of Students' Perceptions of Teacher Feedback Quality in PjBL

The result showed that most of the students agreed that the teacher given feedback regularly and specific during the project, and they understood what the teacher's feedback meant. Students said about the quality of teacher feedback provided which was alignment with the project goals:

(P1, P2, P6, P10): "Yes, it's very easy to understand... the teacher gives me ideas and also tells me if there are any mistakes in vocabulary and pronunciation".

(P4, P8): "Very helpful, the teacher explains in sufficient detail what parts need improvement. The explanations are also very easy to understand, not complicated, and don't use language that's difficult for today's youth to understand".

The results showed most of the students agreed that the feedback they received was easy to understand. Students also perceive teacher feedback to help them structure their project progress:

(P1, P6, P9, P10): "It's very helpful for creating the text and the video flow, wouldn't have known where the mistakes were.".

(P5): "It's very helpful because it provides clear guidance throughout the production process. Provide clear directions, and if anything comes up, provide solutions".

According to the students who emphasized that they received meaningful teacher feedback in shaping both scriptwriting and the flow of ideas in the video, as it enabled them to recognize errors and provide solutions toward project challenges to make production time more efficient.

B. Students' Perceptions of Teacher Feedback in Supporting Their Learning Performance and Behaviour

This theme analyses how students' perceptions of teacher feedback support students' learning performance and behaviour.

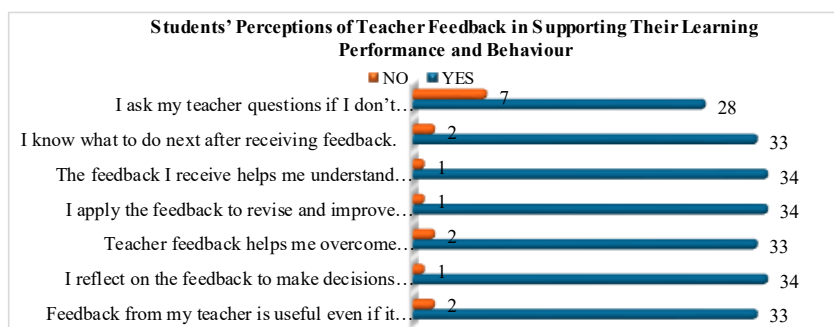


Fig 2. Chart of Students' Perceptions of Teacher Feedback Quality in PjBL

The chart presented that students perceive teacher feedback as a supportive tool for students to determine the next steps, strategies, and actions needed to improve their learning development and

achieve learning goals through project-based methodology. Interview result expressed deeper about students' perceptions of teacher feedback in which part to support their learning performance and behaviour.

In terms of critical thinking skills, students said:

(P3, P5, and P9): "I think about it first, and after understanding it, I start revising my work.....the feedback needs to be understood first so that the revision becomes easier to do, more focused, and effective."

Students perceived teacher feedback as learning guidance, as stated:

(P4 and P8): "It's very helpful, because when we're working on it, we don't know what our mistakes are.....so we ask questions, which is very helpful... and if there are any mistakes, we'll be given a solution and we decide an improvement for our project".

Students thought teacher feedback as a way to develop English confidence:

(P1, P2, P4, P8): "Yes, because the teacher taught me the correct pronunciation, my pronunciation has gotten better.....so it makes me more confident in talking English".

From the result, it can be derived that that teacher feedback served as a cognitive scaffold which motivated students to evaluate their work and determine what changes to make. Moreover, students expressed that teacher feedback enabled students' self-regulated learning, where students were actively applying feedback, deciding on an improvement autonomously and guiding them to develop confidence in speaking.

C. Students' Perceptions of Teacher Feedback toward Their English Competencies

Through this questionnaire and interview result, the researcher wanted to present how feedback influences students' non cognitive aspect, particularly in the context of emotional and motivational learning. The questionnaire result was inserted below:

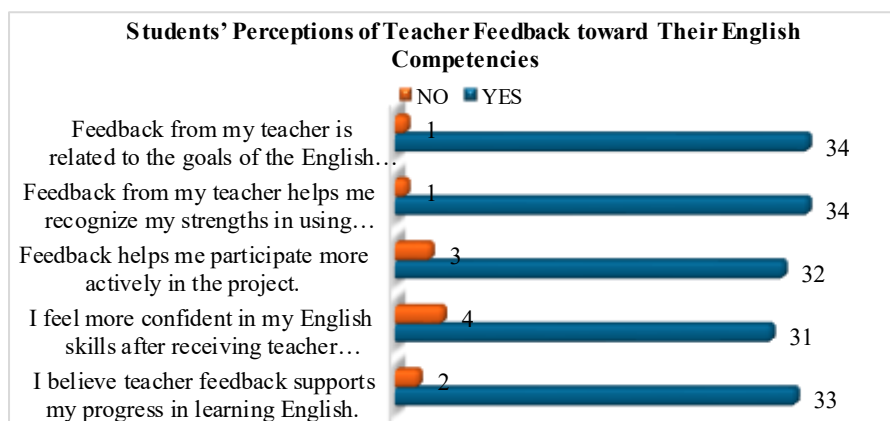


Fig 3. Chart of Students' Perceptions of Teacher Feedback toward Their English Competencies

The questionnaire showed that most of the students were agreed that they perceive teacher feedback as a meaningful tool toward their English competencies. The interview explored that students perceive teacher feedback in PjBL to guide them developed speaking, vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation.

Students' statements were:

(P6, P9): "I think my public speaking. I know how to speak well in the dialogue that I used in the video, because when I use English, it's often convoluted. After receiving feedback, the convolutedness has decreased considerably"

(P1, P3, P10): "Yes... It increases vocabulary, which really helps to learn English more and improve English."

(P2, P3, P5, P6, P10): *"I got a better understanding of my grammar".*

(P7, P9, P10): *"Also, now that I know the correct pronunciation, I'm more confident. My pronunciation has improved, like during introductions and reading scripts".*

From the interview result, students stated that received teacher feedback helped them in increasing their speaking skills, enhancing students' vocabulary knowledge, assisting them recognize grammatical errors that appeared during video production, which led them to revise the video to ensure grammatical accuracy, and giving them the correct pronunciation if there were any pronunciation error.

D. Students' Perceptions of Teacher Feedback toward Emotional and Motivational Learning

Through this questionnaire and interview result, the researcher wants to present how feedback influences students' non cognitive aspect, particularly in the context of emotional and motivational learning. The questionnaire result was inserted below:

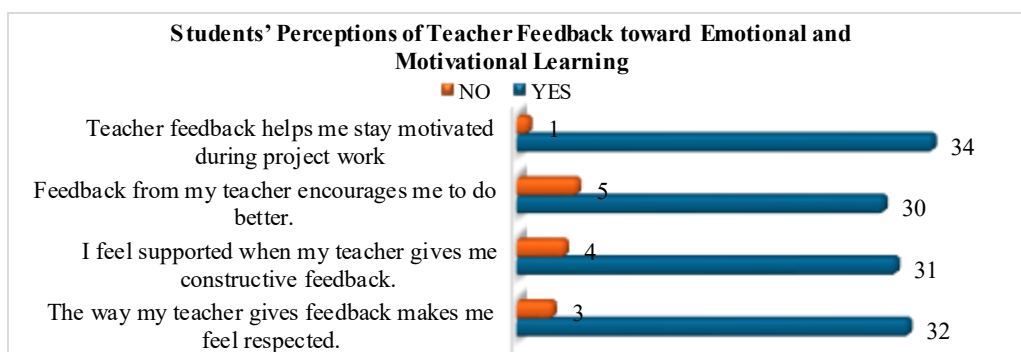


Fig 4. Chart of Students' Perceptions of Teacher Feedback toward Emotional and Motivational Learning

From the data derived, most of the students were confirmed that they were teacher feedback made them stay motivated during the learning process, encouraged them to do better, feeling supported, and feedback given in a respectful way. The interview delivered various perceptions in terms of emotional and motivational learning.

Students viewed positive feedback:

(P6, P7, P8, P9, P10): *"I'm happy, happy, because it turns out my efforts weren't in vain".*

Students viewed critical feedback:

(P7): *"If I receive negative or critical feedback, well... I feel more irritated. Negative, what I mean is that it's more directed at the person, not the learning. If, for example, when giving feedback, the delivery is bad, meaning rude, I don't like it. But if it is still told nicely, "This is where the mistake is," like that, it's still okay."*

Perceive teacher feedback on learning motivation:

(P5, P9, P10): *"I feel very enthusiastic and motivated to continue improving the quality of my videos and my English skills".*

Perceive teacher feedback in the feeling of being appreciated:

(P3, P7, P8): *"I'm happy. I'm definitely happy, I feel more appreciated and supported. And it's like I'm helped by being given solutions, which makes it really easy to do my video project".*

Generally, students mentioned that positive feedback also emerged as a constructive aspect that established their learning motivation and learning performance. Moreover, students expressed

interesting perception on critical feedback which was mentioned by (P7) critical feedback is acceptable when it was conveyed politely and clearly focuses on the mistakes or errors and provide suggestion to enhance learning performance. Also, students highlighted about their motivation to continuously improve their English skills as well as the completeness of the videos increased and teacher feedback made them feel valued, supported, and appreciated.

Discussion

According to the data on research findings, students received teacher feedback regularly and continuously during the project process. This implied that feedback was embedded within every stage of project-based learning, starting from planning, drafting, scriptwriting, revising, producing, and finalizing the project video. A recent study showed that frequent and continuous feedback helped students in recognizing their personal learning progress and increasing their learning actions or strategies toward clearly defined goals [8]. This study also showed that students perceive teacher feedback during the PjBL context as clear, detailed, easy to understand, and tailored to the project goals. Moreover, vocational students also thought of the teacher's feedback given in the form of formative feedback as an essential element supporting the planned and organized progress of the project. According to [4] Charalampous & Darra, formative feedback was the most powerful when it was constantly provided to the students during the performance of the task to allow for adjustments and changes throughout.

Based on the data, this study declared students viewed teacher feedback as learning guidance throughout the project. Moreover, students did not automatically apply the feedback received, but instead reflected and thought comprehensively on its meaning, relevance, and applicability before revising their project. Still, this reflective action indicated that students actively developed their critical thinking skills to self-evaluate and make informed decisions toward their learning performance. This finding aligned with the previous research, which claimed that provided feedback regularly was significant to promote higher-order thinking, where the students were stimulated to be more actively involved in interpreting and applying the feedback rather than only instruction-followed [3]. Thus, research also found that teacher feedback played an important role in boosting students' self-regulated learning by integrating the ability of self-reflection, decision-making, and independent learning development [7].

Furthermore, vocational students reported that teacher was applying feedback and explicitly guided them in both speaking and pronunciation by demonstrating and suggesting how to speak English clearly which enabled students to reduce shyness. The finding was similar with study that mentioned when direct oral corrective feedback was given in a supportive and interactive way, it increased students' speaking accuracy and willingness to speak [9]. Moreover, a research indicated that feedback supported vocabulary acquisition when it embedded in a beneficial learning activity and aligned to students' communicative targets [10]. Also, students stated that they believed more in teacher vocabulary explanations and grammar accuracy during the scriptwriting process rather than automated translation tools since they viewed teacher feedback provided more accurate translation process. This finding corresponded with previous studies that emphasized the increasing ability toward grammatical awareness and supporting language production accuracy were influenced significantly by corrective and regular feedback [11], [12].

Vocational students perceive significant on positive feedback, such as delivering compliments and praise affection enabled students to achieve their target work and stabilize their competence by reinforcing their emotional feeling. In a similar, a study conducted on positive feedback which claimed that affirmation-oriented feedback strongly increased students' emotional readiness to engage with the academic challenges [13]. On the other hand, students perceived critical feedback as a development strategy when the feedback received was fair, task-tailored, and delivered respectfully. Hence, it was important to avoid the way of delivering feedback in a threatening or personalized manner, which can lead to fear and unmotivating feelings on students towards the learning process, to be highlighted that the tone of feedback influenced the learning effectiveness [14].

Therefore, teacher feedback that provided continuously and regularly checked every little detail of the project progress supported students' opportunity in maintaining their enthusiasm, motivation, and feeling of being appreciated toward the project progress and helped students overcome their problems by offered solutions, fostered a sense of task. In addition, a study also asserted that teacher feedback,

which perceived as a sportive and solution-oriented approach, actively builds students' positive emotional responses, allowing students to engage and be motivated in project revision [15], [16]. However, this study involved a small sample from one vocational high school and focused only on the PjBL context, future studies should include larger and more diverse participants as well as examine feedback practices in different instructional approaches.

IV. Conclusion

Ultimately, by using both a questionnaire and interviews, this study explored how students perceive the feedback from the teacher during Project-Based English Learning. The findings showed that teacher feedback is significantly perceived by the students as a powerful and necessary part of the learning process in developing their learning performance, behaviour, and English competencies, particularly when it is given consistently throughout the project and strongly aligns with the project objectives. Students did not regard feedback as a form of evaluative judgment but mainly as a way to get the support necessary for learning improvement.

In addition, the students believed teacher feedback played a pivotal part in their English competencies' development through Project-Based Learning. Teacher feedback was reported for the development of speaking, vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation, especially when the feedback was about both task performance and learning processes. In conclusion, the findings indicate that teacher feedback in PjBL is effective when it is clear, specific, goal-oriented, allowing students to improve their project outcomes and English language skills at the same time. Moreover, further research is recommended to apply longitudinal designs and multiple data sources, such as classroom observations and teacher interviews, to gain a more comprehensive understanding of feedback practices.

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