



UNIVERSITI PUTRA MALAYSIA

**TYPES OF WRITTEN FEEDBACK ON ESL STUDENT WRITERS'
ACADEMIC ESSAYS AND THEIR PERCEIVED USEFULNESS**

TEE PEI LENG @ KELLY

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**TYPES OF WRITTEN FEEDBACK ON ESL STUDENT WRITERS'
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By

TEE PEI LENG @ KELLY

**Thesis Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies, Universiti Putra Malaysia, in
Fulfilment of the Requirement for the Degree of Master of Arts**

May 2011

To my beloved parents, Tee Kim Ming and Katherine Tee,

To my wonderful siblings, Karyn, Krystle and Kenneth,

And, to my dearest one, Ee Tuck.



Abstract of thesis presented to the Senate of Universiti Putra Malaysia in fulfilment of the requirement for the degree of Master of Arts

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Chairman: Associate Professor Dr. Vijay Kumar Mallan

Faculty: Modern Languages and Communication

Feedback is essential for the development of a student writer in an academic context. The feedback that lecturers provide on students' writing is essential to encourage and develop students' writing. However, there are limited studies which look at feedback as a form of communication. This study investigates the types of written feedback that lecturers provide to their students. The written feedback was analysed using a speech act theoretical model in order to understand how feedback acts as a communicative act between the lecturer and student writers.

The data employed in this study were students' written drafts, questionnaires, and interviews with the students and the lecturers. Looking at how language is used in its

situational context, the feedback was coded and a model for analysis was developed based on two aspects of speech acts which are directive and expressive. Based on this analysis, the study discusses the types of feedback that the writers found useful in their essay revision.

The results indicate that directive and expressive feedback were the most favoured type of feedback among the student writers as the related lecturer comments were clear, direct, and information loaded. A second finding is that the student writers valued content feedback more compared to surface level feedback because it helped them understand their strengths and weaknesses and it provided them clear directions on how to improve their writing.

The study concluded that it is important for lecturers to be aware of the impact of feedback and the types of feedback they provide to their students. The study also suggests a possibility of developing a taxonomy of good feedback practices for teachers/lecturers.

Abstrak tesis yang dikemukakan kepada Senat Universiti Putra Malaysia sebagai memenuhi keperluan untuk ijazah Master Sastera

**JENIS DAN KEGUNAAN MAKLUM BALAS BERTULIS TERHADAP ESEI
AKADEMIK PENULIS PELATIH “ESL”**

Oleh

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Pengerusi: Professor Madya Dr. Vijay Kumar Mallan

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Maklum balas adalah penting untuk perkembangan seorang penulis pelatih dalam konteks akademik. Maklum balas yang diberikan oleh pensyarah terhadap penulisan pelajar adalah penting untuk menggalakkan dan mengembangkan penulisan. Namun demikian, hanya terdapat kajian yang terhad dalam melihat hubungan antara maklum balas dengan lakuan bahasa. Kajian ini menyelidik tentang jenis-jenis maklum balas bertulis yang diberikan oleh pensyarah kepada pelajar. Model lakuan bahasa digunakan untuk menganalisis maklum balas bertulis bagi menjelaskan bagaimana maklum balas memberi kesan kepada komunikasi antara pensyarah dengan pelajar.

Sumber data yang digunakan dalam kajian ini adalah draf penulisan pelajar, soal selidik, dan wawancara dengan para pelajar dan pensyarah. Dengan meneliti cara bahasa yang digunakan dalam konteks situasi, maklum balas dikodkan dan satu model untuk analisis dikembangkan berdasarkan dua aspek lakuan bahasa yang berhaluan serta ekspresif. Berdasarkan analisis ini, kajian ini membincangkan jenis-jenis maklum balas yang didapati bermanfaat oleh penulis dalam semakan esei mereka.

Keputusan dalam kajian ini menunjukkan bahawa maklum balas yang berhaluan dan ekspresif merupakan jenis maklum balas yang paling disukai oleh penulis-penulis lantaran komen yang diberikan adalah jelas, tepat, dan berinformasi. Penemuan yang kedua adalah para penulis lebih menghargai maklum balas yang berkaitan dengan isi kandungan berbanding dengan maklum balas yang berkaitan dengan pembetulan kerana ini membantu mereka memahami kekuatan dan kelemahan penulisan mereka serta memberi hala tuju yang jelas bagi memperbaiki penulisan mereka.

Kesimpulannya, kajian ini mencadangkan bahawa pensyarah harus menyedari kesan daripada maklum balas dan jenis maklum balas yang diberikan kepada pelajar mereka. Kajian ini turut mencadangkan bahawa wujud satu kecenderungan untuk mengembangkan satu taksonomi untuk guru/pensyarah supaya memberi maklum balas yang baik.

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I certify that a Thesis Examination Committee has met on 24 May 2011 to conduct the final examination of Tee Pei Leng @ Kelly on her thesis entitled “Types of written feedback on ESL student writers’ academic essays and their perceived usefulness” in accordance with the Universities and University Colleges Act 1971 and the Constitution of the Universiti Putra Malaysia [P.U.(A) 106] 15 March 1998. The Committee recommends that the student be awarded the Master of Arts.

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DECLARATION

I declare that the thesis is my original work except for quotations and citations which have been duly acknowledged. I also declare that it has not been previously, and is not concurrently, submitted for any other degree at Universiti Putra Malaysia or at any other institutions.



TEE PEI LENG @ KELLY

Date: 24 May 2011

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