How Do EFL Students React to the Native English-speaking Teacher’s Feedback Anyway?*

Myung-Hye Huh  
(Korea University)  
Inhwan Lee  
(Korea University)  
Minkyung Kim†  
(Korea University)


This study investigates the relationship between a native English-speaking teacher and EFL students in the response-and-revision process. The data consisted of drafts and revisions produced by three students in response to teacher comments and interviews with students. In order to examine how EFL students react to the feedback, teachers’ written feedback on the papers was evaluated by calculating frequency counts on the same types of feedback. We then examined the extent to which students made use of teacher feedback in their revisions. In addition, we supplemented our interpretations by extracting aspects of the students’ views through analysis of the interview data. All three students believe that only native speakers can correct language errors in their writing. Furthermore, the students prefer or indeed demand native English-speaking teachers as writing teachers. In fact, dissimilar student reactions to native English-speaking teacher feedback probably arise from whether and how they positioned themselves as a writer in the EFL writing classroom.

**Key words:** EFL writing, teacher feedback, student response, NEST

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† Myung-Hye Huh: First author, corresponding author; Inhwan Lee: Co-author; Minkyung Kim: Co-author*
1. INTRODUCTION

For many students, the feedback they receive from teachers may be the most significant component in their successful development as writers (Ferris, 2003). Most research involving student response to teacher feedback has focused on student preferences and expectations (e.g., Cohen, 1987; Diab, 2005; Ferris, 1995; Hedgcock & Lefkowitz, 1994, 1996; Leki, 1991), and there have rarely been any attempts to link student reactions to actual teacher feedback in specific contexts (Lee, 2008). Clearly, if students can be and should be active and autonomous agents in the feedback process (Hyland & Hyland, 2006a), the relationship between teacher and student needs close examination "to avoid ... potentially demoralizing students" (Scott, 1996, p. 106).

Related to student response to feedback, researchers need to carry out a research agenda that addresses the most critical questions still surrounding the distinction between native English-speaking teachers (NESTs) and non-native English-speaking teachers (non-NESTs). As noted by Moussu and Llurda (2008), research on student responses to teacher feedback in EFL context needs to investigate the relationship between a native (or non-native) English-speaking teacher and students that might influence how teacher comments are provided and interpreted in the student's revision (see Lee & Schallert, 2008a, 2008b), because NESTs and non-NEST can bring interesting and useful insights about their perceived differences, strengths, and weaknesses.

Within the framework of the native/non-native division, students' beliefs that NESTs are superior to non-NESTs have been widespread in Korean society (Park, 1999). Thus, EFL students might follow the NEST's comments closely by merely rewriting their texts to reflect their teachers' preoccupations. Of course, sensitive NESTs would try not to couch their feedback in overtly appropriative or threatening ways. However, as far as "[t]he basic assumption is that NESTs and non-NESTs are two different species" (Medgyes, 2001, p. 434), teachers' belonging to either category can have an impact on feedback and revision. It is necessary, then, to explore "the response-and-revision dynamic" (Ferris, 2003, p. 134) between the NEST and EFL students in the feedback process.

In this light, we explore how NESTs working in an EFL school context respond to student writing, and how EFL students attend to teacher responses and utilize them in their revision. More specifically, we will, through retrospective interviews of EFL students and an analysis of their first and second drafts, investigate the reactions of students to their teachers' feedback. Our discussion centers particularly on how the teacher's "native speakerhood" (Medgyes, 2001, p. 430) has influenced student reactions. We hope that

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1 Native speakerhood is an intricate concept. In this study, we use the term, "native speakerhood" as a practical token of the people who speak English as a native language.
How Do EFL Students React to the Native English-speaking Teacher's Feedback Anyway?

this study will contribute to existing feedback research by offering a new perspective on the interaction of EFL students and the NEST in student writing.

2. TOWARDS CONSIDERATIONS FOR RESPONDING TO STUDENT WRITING

There is no doubt that feedback occurs between teachers and students in particular interpersonal relationships. However, most early studies on second language (L2) teacher feedback were "too decontextualized, looking at the student paper and teacher feedback in isolation without considering anything else about the writing class or the relationships between teachers and students" (Ferris, 2003, p. 120). Clearly, they overlooked the relationships between teachers and students that might influence how teachers read and interpret student texts and how students attend to and address their teachers' feedback in their revisions (see Anson, 2000; Goldstein, 2005; Ferris, Pezone, Tade, & Tinti, 1997; Lee, 2008; Mathison-Fife & O’Neill, 2001; Reid, 1994).

Most importantly, student reactions may be influenced by the factors of who the teachers are and how they interact with students during the feedback process. Hence, looking only at what and how teachers respond to student writing without examining how students react to and make sense of their teacher's comments would limit the conclusions one could draw about the response-and-revision dynamic in L2 writing classroom. Over time, a number of L2 researchers began to point out that the response-and-revision dynamic was far more complex than reported in previous research (Ferris, 2003). Other researchers have highlighted the need for research that examines the complexities involved in the issue of feedback by examining interpersonal aspects of response (Goldstein, 2005; Hyland & Hyland, 2006b).

In a recent study, Lee and Schallert (2008a) argue that establishing a trusting relationship between teacher and students may be fundamental to the effective use of feedback in revision. They found that one student who had built a trusting relationship with his teacher utilized teacher feedback effectively in revision, thereby improving his drafts, whereas the other student who had difficulty trusting his teacher reacted negatively to teacher feedback. As a consequence, his drafts did not improve as much as those of other students. This study highlighted the relationship between teacher and student as playing a critical role in how a teacher responded to student writing and in how the student responded to teacher feedback (also see Lee & Schallert, 2008b).

The relationship between students and a teacher is traditionally asymmetrical. When the teacher is a native speaker of English in teaching EFL writing, such an asymmetrical relationship tends to be more marked because those who speak English as their native
language have the primary advantage over those for whom it is a foreign language. Thus, non-native speakers of English find it difficult to compete with native speakers on equal terms, and these linguistic deficiencies apply to non-native teachers of English as well (Medgyes, 2001). By extension, student responses are affected by the dynamics involved in relationships between a native English-speaking teacher and EFL students.

Although there is a lack of substantial evidence to support the position that native-English-speaking teachers (NESTs) are better teachers, they enjoy a privileged position in English language teaching (Canagarajah, 1999; Holliday, 2005; Jenkins, 2000; Pennycook, 1998; Phillipson, 1992). However, a significant body of literature on non-native speakers has been devoted to showing the inappropriateness of using a dichotomous approach by which NESTs and non-NESTs are viewed as two different and clearly distinguishable constituencies (Moussu & Llurda, 2008). Nayar (1994) quite rightly attributes the perseverance of the native/non-native dichotomy to linguistic imperialism:

[T]he native-non-native paradigm and its implicational exclusivity of ownership is not only linguistically unsound and pedagogically irrelevant but also politically pernicious, as at best it is linguistic elitism and at worst it is an instrument of linguistic imperialism. (p. 5)

Yet, despite objections to the existence of a native-nonnative speaker (NS-NNS) divide, some researchers have acknowledged the practical convenience of maintaining the distinction between native speakers and non-native speakers. In fact, Árva and Medgyes (2000) say that “the term native speaker as opposed to non-native speaker is as widely used in the professional jargon of both teachers and researchers today as ever” (p. 356). Further, “even though a dichotomy vision of the NS-NNS discussion does not appear to be linguistically acceptable, it happens to be nonetheless socially present” (p. 316), as Moussu and Llurda (2008) argues.

We now believe that the NS/NNS dichotomy is potentially meaningful as an area of research on student response to teacher feedback. At the same time, in this study we need to accept the division between NS and NNS only because the English teachers in Korea fall into two fairly clear-cut categories: native English-speaking teachers (NESTs) and non-native English-speaking teachers (non-NESTs). It is also assumed that NEST student feedback clearly represents a different response dynamic from non-NEST student feedback.
3. THE STUDY

This study investigates the intricate relationship between the NEST and EFL students in response-and-revision process and how student response to teacher feedback is affected by this relationship in constructing revisions of texts. Our research questions were thus formulated as follows:

1. How do EFL students react to the feedback provided by their native English-speaking teacher?
2. Has native speakerhood of the teacher influenced the response-and-revision dynamic in the feedback process?

3.1. Participants

Three students were selected to provide an in-depth interview about how they responded to teacher feedback as a case study. These students voluntarily participated in the study. Two students were male, 23 and 24 years of age, respectively, and the third was female, 22 years of age. They were all majoring in English Language Education at a leading research-intensive university in Korea. They had never lived in English-speaking countries. The students, Sung, Jong, and Kyong (all names are pseudonyms) took a course entitled “English Reading and Writing.” They had roughly equivalent writing proficiency, as determined by a holistic evaluation of all the papers each had written during the semester. According to the ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines 2012, they were listed as “Advanced” for their development of EFL writing.

Professor M (pseudonym), the native English speaker who had been teaching EFL writing for six years, taught this class. He made reading an integral part of the writing class to help his students become familiar with the organizational flow of different types of English discourse. In the course, students wrote four papers during a 16-week semester: narrative, compare and contrast, cause and effect, and argumentation essays. They wrote their writings out of class. Once they finished their first drafts, students engaged in peer response activity. Professor M implemented peer response as a regular fixture in his classroom. However, he left peer response largely unstructured and allowed students to set their own agendas. After peer response, students turned in draft after draft, and the teacher commented on each draft, encouraging students to revise for improvement but not evaluating the writing directly. Evaluation occurred solely on the final writing portfolio.

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2 See the descriptions for writing in the ACTFL Proficiency Guideline published in 2012 by the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages, Alexandria, VA.
3.2. Data Collection and Analysis

The data collected consisted of drafts and revisions produced by students in response to teacher comments, and reflective interviews with students. In addition to analysis of students’ drafts and revisions, we also used in-depth semi-structured interviews with students as a supporting data source, that is, as one method to triangulate information or cross-check data (Cohen et al., 2000). Thus, we administered an interview individually to each student on one occasion only. Students’ drafts were readily available for clarification purposes during the interviews. The interviews were conducted in Korean, transcribed immediately, and later translated into English for quotation here. These interviews were designed to explore the issues raised in our research questions. To these ends, the interview included questions about students’ backgrounds, and their attitudes and preferences toward NESTs/Non-NESTs in EFL writing classrooms.

The interviews began with an informal conversation in the first author’s office when audio recording began. Before the interviews, we had examined students’ first drafts with teacher comments and revised drafts. We had identified several teacher comments we wanted to discuss with the student, choosing ones the students ignored, and then asked the extent to which they had followed their teacher’s comments in revision. Although, as mentioned above, certain questions from our interview related specifically to identifying student responses to teacher feedback, we found that students also made comments pertaining to these themes in the interview.

In order to examine how EFL students react to the feedback provided by their native English-speaking teacher, teacher’s written feedback on the papers was evaluated by calculating frequency counts on the same types of feedback: content, organization, vocabulary, grammar, and mechanics. We then examined to what extent students made use of teacher feedback in their revisions. In addition, we supplemented our interpretations by extracting aspects of the students’ views through analysis of the interview data. We basically followed an iterative approach to identifying and refining recurrent focal themes (Miles & Huberman, 1994) of whether native speakerhood of the teacher influenced the response-and-revision dynamic in the feedback process.

4. RESULTS

We first briefly report the type and frequency of written feedback the students received. Professor M focused almost exclusively on sentence-level errors, and he simply corrected sentence-level errors by rewriting while making only a few comments on content. Organization, in particular, was found to receive the least attention. As for the comments
that Professor M actually made, most comments concerned grammar and mechanics, some
dealt with vocabulary and organization, and little attention was given to content, as we can
see in Table 1. Thus, Sung received only 4 comments, dealing with organization and
content, Jong received 7, with 2 of them on organization and 5 on content, and Kyong
received 4, with 3 of them on content (see Table 1).

In general, teacher feedback was well received by Sung, Kyong, and Jong. Jong and
Sung incorporated almost 100% of their teacher’s feedback, following the teacher’s
comments verbatim in rewriting their essays. Kyong used most of the teacher’s feedback
(90%) in her revision. Nonetheless, students never ignored teacher feedback on sentence-
level errors in their revision. While these students did not undertake major reformulation of
their writing, they went about revising and editing in different ways. We now turn to the
students—Sung, Kyong, and Jong—who not only exemplify the more general trends
seen among them but also provide interesting contrasts with one another.

4.1. Sung: Strategic Compliance with His Native English-speaking Teacher

Sung played a passive role in the feedback process. He accepted almost every comment
given by the teacher, incorporating the teacher feedback verbatim into his final drafts
because “Professor M certainly had a much better command of English than [Sung] did.”
As already noted, Professor M gave high priority to sentence errors. He directly corrected
sentence-level errors on the spot without locating the error or identifying the located error
with a grading symbol. For example, Professor M directly corrected misused articles and
occasionally wrote an insertion symbol (‘‘”’’) to draw Sung’s attention to the missing article.
Likewise, he responded to other sentence-level errors precisely where Sung made errors.
Nevertheless, Sung seemed not to pay attention to these kinds of corrections and always
made the same error again. He actually committed some serious and persistent language
errors in his writing, reflecting his EFL status. Although Sung was, for the most part,
able to follow directions in order to “approximate the teacher-evaluator’s Ideal Text”
(Brannon & Knoblauch, 1982, p. 162), there was little evidence in his subsequent
writings that he had learned or internalized the rules. As for Sung, his revision is merely
mechanical rewriting.
TABLE 1
Teachers’ Comments and Students’ Handling of Teachers’ Comments

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Genre</th>
<th>Language</th>
<th>Content</th>
<th>Organization</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>G  V  M</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Feedback</td>
<td>26  2  2</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sung</td>
<td>Accept</td>
<td>26  2  2</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Feedback</td>
<td>42 12 7</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Accept</td>
<td>42 12 7</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Feedback</td>
<td>31  7  1</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Accept</td>
<td>31  7  1</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Feedback</td>
<td>34  9  1</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Accept</td>
<td>34  9  1</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kyung</td>
<td>Feedback</td>
<td>9   2  -</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Accept</td>
<td>9   2  -</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Feedback</td>
<td>15  3  1</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Accept</td>
<td>15  1  1</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Feedback</td>
<td>15  7  1</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Accept</td>
<td>15  7  1</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Feedback</td>
<td>12  6  2</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Accept</td>
<td>11  5  2</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Feedback</td>
<td>18  4  -</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jong</td>
<td>Accept</td>
<td>18  4  -</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Feedback</td>
<td>24  3  -</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Accept</td>
<td>22  3  -</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Feedback</td>
<td>12  5  -</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Accept</td>
<td>12  5  -</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Feedback</td>
<td>27  17 2</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Accept</td>
<td>27  17 2</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note 1. G: grammar; V: vocabulary; M: mechanics

Note 2. A dash indicates that no comment was given.

Of particular interest is that Sung willingly embraced teacher feedback on content without any reservation. For example, when the teacher said, “State exact statement using three reasons (in the thesis statement),” Sung tried to include all three reasons in the thesis statement. He stated all three main reasons succinctly in the thesis statement of his argumentative writing (see Table 2). However, when he received a comment, saying “the title could be more creative,” Sung could not have a clear idea of how to handle it. As
Cohen (1987) found, such a remark has a limited impact because the student felt that teacher comment was uninformative. For Sung, the comment rarely provided an inherent reason to revise. Such comments could frustrate, and otherwise disempower Sung.

Table 2 illustrates Sung’s original version of the argumentative essay (left) with his teacher comments and the later version revised (right). Words added and revised by Sung are underlined.

### TABLE 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Excerpt of Sung’s First Draft and Rewrite of Argumentative Essay</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>First draft commented by the teacher</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It has not been so long time that people started recognizing the serious influences of smoking on health in the Korean society... Do you have the experience to of walking behind the smoker despite you are being a non-smoker? Maybe your answer is yes. What kind of feeling comes up from into your mind when you are in that situation? Most people will say it is uncomfortable. However, there are even more serious effects if you walk behind the smoking person. Now I will talk about why the smoking should be banned in the public places.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Revised rewrites</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It has not been so long that people started recognizing the serious influences of smoking on health in Korean society. ....Do you have the experience of walking behind the smoker despite being a non-smoker? Maybe your answer is yes. What kind of feeling comes into your mind when you are in that situation? Most people will say it is uncomfortable. However, there are even more serious effects if you walk behind the smoking person. Here are three reasons why the smoking should be banned in the public places. Smoking in the public places can harm other people’s health. It can also lead adolescents to follow the smokers’ behaviors. Lastly, smokers in public areas can infringe upon non-smokers’ rights around them.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note. Underlining: revision based upon teacher feedback*

Sung always incorporated his teacher’s feedback on errors verbatim into his papers. Sung’s uncritical acceptance of teacher feedback, however, yielded some unintended consequences. For example, the teacher intended to change the ring so called Exam war to the boxing ring of the so called Exam War. However, Sung’s correction was the boxing ring of the Exam War (see Table 3). He even deleted the correct phrase, “so called” and just copied the teacher’s corrections carelessly on his final draft. Even though the teacher directly corrected the error by rewriting, Sung was not capable of dealing successfully with this correction.
TABLE 3

Excerpt of Sung’s First Draft and Rewrite of Comparison and Contrast Essay

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>First draft commented by the teacher</th>
<th>Revised rewrite</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Paragraph 5</td>
<td>Paragraph 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>As you can see, Korea students are actually spending too much time only on studying. These educational environments knock out students on the boxing ring of the “Exam War.”</td>
<td>As you can see, Korean students are actually spending too much time only on studying. These educational environments knock out students on the boxing ring of the “Exam War.”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Underlining: revision based upon teacher feedback

Again, Professor M responded to the content and wrote, “quote source who?” in an attempt to elicit the specific source of data, but Sung took it as two comments, “quote source,” and “who” as a relative pronoun he should add. As a result, he specified the source of statistic data and added “who” where he should not have (see Figure 1). It should be also noted that the teacher’s handwritten comment may have caused some misunderstanding, which was not helpful to Sung’s revision process. We argue that such a comment took Sung’s attention away from his own purpose in writing the particular text and focused his attention on the teachers’ comment.

FIGURE 1

Excerpt of Sung’s First Draft of Cause and Effect Writing.

First Draft with Teacher Comments

intellectual development of young children. In recent survey, the rate of the Smartphone users who consider themselves as addicts among college students were revealed as 48%. The more children use Smartphone, the deeper they will be bound to the Smartphone when they’re grown up. Once they fall

Revised Rewrite

the intellectual development of young children. According to YTN news report, the rates of the Smartphone users who consider themselves as addicts among college students were revealed as 48%(YTN News, 27 May 2012). The more children who use smartphone, the deeper they will be bound to the Smartphone when they’re grown up.
Furthermore, Sung continued to struggle with English organizational patterns. In responding to content, Professor M pointed out that in English Sung must get straight to the point. In fact, Sung was using thinking and organizational patterns he had transferred from Korean to English. Yet the indirectness gives a native English-speaking teacher the impression that his writing is disorganized. He encountered some difficulty in learning to write English discourse. Sung had to comply with English discourse because he thought that his English writing was contaminated by Korean rhetoric. Sung also portrayed his professor as an expert who teaches English rhetorical structures because he is a native English speaker: As he put it, “One of the important roles of native English speaking teachers in teaching writing is to let students practice appropriate English rhetorical structures. And English rhetorical structures are different from ours.” To quote Sung further:

_Whenever I write in English, I state my points at the end of my writing. This is my style. However, Professor M said, I have to state my points clearly in English. Well, that’s different from my writing style. I mean, when writing in Korean, I may not state my points directly. Professor M said to me, Avoid veering off the topic! Never go around your points indirectly! (laugh)._ 

When he followed the English organization that his teacher emphasized, Sung definitely believed that it was necessary to conform to it despite his displeasure at doing so. This was because he thought that his teacher’s feedback on organizational patterns he had transferred from his native language to English was imperative for improving his writing ability. Despite some difficulty in learning to write English, Sung mentioned that it is inevitable to follow English rhetorical structures because he wrote in English that he did not have any ownership of. In time, Sung perceived his teacher as the only reader of his writings and he felt he had to incorporate his teacher’s suggestions in order to receive a good grade:

_I felt a little uncomfortable with changing my writing style, but English is belonging to native speakers, not me (laugh)....Eventually I have to master the logic of English in order to be accepted by an English discourse community. And for good grade....I have some difficulty in learning to write English discourse....I thought the only reader of my writing was the teacher and my grade was solely determined by his criteria. Thus, I had not dared to defy his comments._

Given that the instructor is a native speaker of English, Sung seemed to hand over the ownership of his writing to him and highly appreciated his comments as being absolutely
accurate and highly beneficial for him to improve his English writing skills. Sung expected and appreciated the kind of feedback that he received from his native English-speaking teacher because he strongly believes that the native English-speaking teachers are “more useful for [his] learning of speaking and writing skills.” Although the native English-speaking teachers are “the expert resource concerning academic prose and discourse communities” (Reid, 1994, p. 289), Sung probably would have to be responsible in large part for his own writing rather than depending solely on the comments of a native-English speaking teacher.

4.2. Kyong: Disillusionment Regarding Teacher’s Comments on Content

Kyong started to write in English in junior high school. During her high school years, drills, reading, and grammar exercises occupied most of the class time. However, for the university entrance exam, she prepared for the TOEFL test at home. As she put it, “Writing in English always brings me joy. Since middle school, I have kept a diary and have enjoyed it much. . . . Even writing in English is more enjoyable than writing in Korean.” In addition, Kyong has a strong sense of herself as a writer. By extension, she was more open to positioning herself as a good writer in this EFL writing classroom.

Several times during the interview, Kyong spoke at length about her experiences of being a writer. She felt confident in writing in English because she had received writing instruction during the high school years. In addition, to be admitted to the university, she had learned Korean essay writing at a private institute for a few months. Kyong has achieved certain level of writing proficiency in Korean, and thus, she presented herself as a confident writer in Korean, saying that she liked to write in Korean. Kyong also revealed her strong desire to express her ideas in English, and this desire mediated her agency to take this course:

\textit{Since I started writing in English, um...for the TOEFL test in high school. At that time, I learned how to organize an essay with the structure like, introductions, bodies, and conclusions. I want to express my ideas in English with grammatically sound sentences...I write good essay introductions and body but my conclusion is weak. Writing in English always brings me joy. Since middle school, I have kept a diary and have enjoyed it much. Since I started writing in English, um,... writing in English has become one of my favorite hobbies. I love to express my ideas in English. When I was in high school, I learned English writing for the TOEFL. At that time, I learned how to organize an essay with the structure like, introductions, bodies, and conclusions.}
Kyong reported that her teacher usually gave much attention to mechanics, grammar, and vocabulary on her writing. She was very concerned about grammatical errors. As Kyong received responses to her written work, errors were changed outright by her teacher. Indeed, she thought that it was the native English-speaking teacher’s job to correct her errors. However, the following excerpt shows that Kyong took an active role in analyzing her own problems with errors instead of incorporating the teacher’s corrections verbatim into her paper (see Table 4).

**TABLE 4**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Excerpt of Kyong’s First Draft and Rewrite of Argumentative Essay</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>First draft comment by the teacher</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The time is too early to adopt an education system which doesn't adapt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>corporal punishment. We hear many cases of side effects of the recent law that bans</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>corporal punishment.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note. Underlining: revision based upon teacher feedback; Shading: revision by student*

As for teacher response on content, Kyong pointed out that although she attempted to follow her teacher’s suggestions, she lacked a clear idea of how to handle them. She argued that most teacher comments were vague and did not provide specific reactions to what she had written. Thus, she accepted only one out of the four comments, although reluctantly. Thus, Kyong expressed doubts as to the usefulness of teacher comment:

*I accepted his feedback because I thought it was right and I just agreed with it. Sometimes when I could not understand why what I wrote was wrong, I could not figure out how to revise my writing based on it, so I just did nothing with it. And I did not accept some teacher feedback because I felt I had to revise my essay from the beginning and, as you know, that was a little tiresome to me. (pause) Sometimes, I thought teacher comment was wrong, not appropriate. And sometimes, I thought teacher feedback was right, but I did not know how to deal with it. Umm, He said I had a problem in organization, but that comment was a little vague, and I could not figure out the problem. And after I read my essay again, I thought that the organization of my writing was good and had no problem.*

Kyong recalled that there were some comments that did not provide specific reactions to what she had written. For instance, describing her feelings when she got lost in a train...
station during a family trip to Europe, she depicted her frustration and fear in detail, and then wrote about how she reacted to the accident and finally solved the problem. As the teacher responded to content in an end comment, he wrote, “Try to describe the local Swiss environment and station more.” Indeed, Kyong expressed a lack of interest in such a reaction to the content of her writing and even rejected such a comment out of hand. It was difficult to have to change details after the teacher’s comment. Kyong thought it was better to leave the writing as it was (see Table 5). In the following excerpt, Kyong responded to the comments on form and ignored the end comment on content.

**TABLE 5**

Excerpt of Kyong’s First Draft and Rewrite of Narrative Essay

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>First draft comment by the teacher</th>
<th>Rewrite</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Arriving on the platform we were shocked to realize that our parents and our tour guide weren’t there. Panic swept across the dumbfounded faces as it dawned on us that we must have got off at the wrong place. We couldn’t see how it could have happened as we could see the sign with “Basel” printed clearly in front us. Then again, our guide must have known better. She hadn’t exactly said that the name of the station we should have got off was named Basel. As we analyzed these things, I was at a loss to know to know what to do. We had no money on us. Neither did we have passports because our parents took them for safe-keeping. On top of that, all our cell phones were in an out of service area since none of us had applied for a roaming service. I was the oldest and the only one who knew enough English to communicate with other people. The fate of our little group depended entirely on me.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arriving on the platform we were shocked to realize that our parents and our tour guide weren’t there. Panic swept across the dumbfounded faces as it dawned on us that we must have got off at the wrong place. We couldn’t see how it could have happened as we could see the sign with “Basel” printed clearly in front us. Then again, our guide must have known better. She hadn’t exactly said that the name of the station we should have got off was named Basel. As we analyzed these things, I was at a loss to know to know what to do. We had no money on us. Neither did we have passports because our parents took them for safe-keeping. On top of that, all our cell phones were in an out of service area since none of us had applied for a roaming service. I was the oldest and the only one who knew enough English to communicate with other people. The fate of our little group depended entirely on me.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Suggestion (End comment): *Try to describe the local Swiss environment/station more.*

*Note.* Underlining: revision based upon teacher feedback

In her comparison and contrast writing, the teacher made two comments on content, one
in the margin and the other in an end comment (see Table 6). Kyong did not accept the teacher’s suggestion regarding organization problems, while she accepted the marginal comment, “State the title of the books.” Kyong expressed unwillingness to surrender the organization of her writing to the teacher. She spoke of resenting the teacher’s comment about “some organizational problems” of her writing. She could not accept his comment because then she would “have to change the whole thing.” Kyong said, “It would require too much time to reorganize the essay.” And further, “The teacher said I had a problem in organization, but after I read my essay again, I thought the organization was okay and had no problem.” Kyong submitted the final draft without solving “some organizational problems” of her writing.

Unfortunately, she felt uncomfortable including comments about content and organization in her revision. Kyong said, “The revision was at best no more successful than the original.” Although the teacher made an investment in providing feedback on Kyong’s writing, this investment at times imposed control over Kyong’s writing, and as a consequence, Kyong resisted teacher feedback and took control of her own writing. At this point, we will not draw hard and fast conclusions about whether this may be due to flaws in the suggestions she had received. Indeed, Kyong seemed to gain resolve in asserting her own ownership over her writing.

**TABLE 6**

Excerpt of Kyong’s First Draft and Rewrite of Compare and Contrast Essay

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>First draft comment by the teacher</th>
<th>Rewrite</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Have you ever had a friend who wasn’t real but felt as though they were? You may be wondering what that means. Two of my favorite fictional characters, Anne Shirley and Laura Ingalls existed only in books. However, their characteristics are so unique that I regard them as real people in my imaginations. Although they have some similarities, they are different from each other in their existence, and in their residential and social backgrounds.</td>
<td>Have you ever had a friend who wasn’t real but felt as though they were? You may be wondering what that means. Two of my favorite fictional characters, Anne Shirley and Laura Ingalls existed only in books. However, their characteristics are so unique that I regard them as real people in my imagination. Although they have some similarities, they are different from each other in their existence, and in their residential and social backgrounds.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Suggestion (End comment): *Some organizational problems. Some of introductory ideas about background details of women should be in the introduction.*

**Note.** Underlining: revision based upon teacher feedback
4.3. Jong: Naive Acceptance of His Teacher’s Feedback

Jong appreciated the kind of feedback that he received from his teacher. As for teacher feedback, Jong had distinct expectations of his teacher. For Jong, “there seemed a tendency…to wish for ‘more’ from the teacher” (Lee, 2008, p. 151). Jong believed that he was writing to practice English and he equated improvement in writing with teacher feedback. As he put it, “Just after I finished military service, I came back to school. Because I did not use English for a while, my English ability would have declined. So I have to practice English and I am accustomed to using English. So I relied on teacher commentary.” Jong believed that he benefited from his teacher’s feedback. In actuality, he gained a clearer understanding of his writing proficiency by receiving comments on what he had written.

Jong indicated that he paid attention to and valued his teacher’s comments on all aspects of his writing. Jong took his teacher’s comments very seriously, and then he incorporated them verbatim into his papers. His teacher was the sole audience and judge for his writings in the classroom. Jong welcomed the feedback because of the benefits that he received from it. Most crucially, Jong has come to rely on his teacher’s feedback because his teacher was a native English speaker. He assumed that a native English speaker was an idealized teacher who represented the English discourse community. Jong summed up his teacher as three “incompatible personas” (Leki, 1990, p. 59): teacher as real reader, teacher as coach, and teacher as evaluator:

*I had trust in my professor. He was a native English speaker. I think native English speakers represented an idealized teacher. Um, and he had power over me. I mean, he was an assessor and I was a non-assessor. Almost absolutely, I think he had nearly every power to control my writings. Because he determined whether my writings were good or not, and what I was most concerned about was the grade on my writings.*
TABLE 7

Excerpt of Jong’s First Draft and Rewrite of Narrative Essay

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>First draft comment by the teacher</th>
<th>Rewrite</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Paragraph 1</strong>&lt;br&gt;I once was on the TV news due to heavy rain in summer. In 2006 when I was a high school student, my class made a group tour to Gangwon-do on the summer vacation. We enjoyed ourselves playing soccer and swimming on the beautiful beach. It really was a nice trip until we heard the heavy rain would fall severely.</td>
<td><strong>Paragraph 1</strong>&lt;br&gt;When people think about rain, some of them come up with various topics related to is such as romance or relaxation hearing drizzling rain. What comes first to my mind when I see rain is nothing related to those emotional or soulful things; I just think of TV since I once was on the TV news due to heavy rain in summer. In 2006 when I was a high school student, my class made a group tour to Gangwon-do on the summer vacation. We enjoyed ourselves playing soccer and swimming on the beautiful beach. It really was a nice trip until we heard the heavy rain would fall severely.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Paragraph 3</strong>&lt;br&gt;We stayed night in that school hearing the rain pour in despair. Everyone felt tired after sleeping in the uncomfortable classroom. Teachers were busy calling school what had happened to us, and students looked hopeless...</td>
<td><strong>Paragraph 3</strong>&lt;br&gt;We stayed the night in that school hearing the rain pour in despair. Everything was full of darkness and invisible except only when thunder lit the classroom. Everyone felt tired after sleeping in the uncomfortable classroom. Teachers were busy calling school what had happened to us, and students looked hopeless...</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note. Underlining: revision based upon teacher feedback*

Jong would most likely be able to handle teacher’s feedback on content. He had never felt unpleasant or thought that his teacher unfairly controlled his writings. In fact, he highly appreciated his teacher because of teacher’s perceived superior knowledge. The teacher’s suggestion to “more description of the destruction of the storm in the first paragraph will make this essay more memorable” was very helpful as Jong was working on a narrative description. Jong did indeed write more on his rewrite, as indicated in Table 7. The increase in the number of words between the original and the rewrite was large when feedback from the teacher was given on content. This would indicate that teacher feedback affects the quantity of writing.
TABLE 8
Excerpt of Jong’s First Draft and Rewrite of Compare and Contrast Essay

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>First draft comment by the teacher</th>
<th>Rewrite</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>However, there is a difference between two movies in specific figures of box-office record. According to Internet Movie Database (IMDB), the total earnings of Titanic are 1.8 billion dollars and its overseas grosses are 1.2 billion dollars. On the other hand, Avatar earned 2.7 billion dollars all over the world, and its foreign grosses are more than 1.9 billion dollars. The remarkable differences in overseas grosses between two movies is in China and Russia. In China, the box-office record of Titanic is 430 million dollars, while Avatar recorded 120 million dollars. The total gross of Avatar in Russia is twenty times more than that of Titanic; while Titanic earned only 5 million dollars, Avatar earned more than 100 million dollars. The main factor of this difference is that the market of these two countries is not more open and expanded compared to that of the past when Titanic was released. Also, the total income gap between the two movies is due to inflation and the development of technology. A ticket of a movie now costs two times more than that of twelve years ago. Moreover, most people watched Avatar with 3-dimensional, which is more expensive than 2-dimensional, and it caused the total box-office income to grow more.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Underlining: Parts deleted based on teacher feedback; Shading: Revision by student

Precisely because of the hierarchical relationship between the NEST and EFL students, it appears that the teacher’s power or authority is absolute in the eyes of EFL students as presented in this study. Whenever the teacher made directive comments, Jong felt that the teacher’s priorities were more important than what he wanted to say in his writing. Thus,
when Professor M asked him to delete some information which was too statistical, Jong eliminated large chunks of text and painstakingly reorganized the paragraph (see Table 8). Unfortunately, he made unsuccessful revisions by undertaking ineffective changes or deleting useful information rather than revising it. Although Jong attempted to follow his teacher’s comments in revision, he would not be successful in doing so (see Conrad & Goldstein, 1999; Ferris, 2001). Thus far, Jong may appear to cede control of his text to the native English-speaking teacher.

5. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

All three students believe that only native speakers can correct language errors in their writing. Furthermore, the students prefer or indeed demand native English-speaking teachers as writing teachers (see Clark & Paran, 2007). Particularly, Jong believed that he benefited from feedback of NESTs who speak “more standard” English (Luk, 2001, p. 32). Sung most strongly believed that English writing was best taught by NESTs, saying that “non-NESTs are very unlikely to succeed in educating students about English rhetorical structures.” He further added, “NESTs know better how to use the language appropriately.” Kyong’s case is an interesting one. Although she expressed her dissatisfaction with her teacher’s comments on both content and organization, Kyong never imagined relying on non-native English-speaking teachers for error correction.

We observed that Sung overwhelmingly relied on teacher feedback. In her revision, he did not have to decide what to do, only how to do it. Similarly, Jong had a rather reduced level of choice in deciding whether to use the native English-speaking teacher feedback. Sung and Jong had equated improvement in writing with error correction. They believed that their writing proficiency would be improved through the feedback from NESTs who speak more standard English. Such perceptions concur with the belief that white, monolingual English speakers are automatically affiliated with standard English. These two students consider themselves to be non-native speakers of English as well as language learners of English, and these self-attributions in the EFL writing classroom made it impossible for them to take control of their own writing. In fact, Sung and Jong bow down to the native speakerhood of their teacher.

Kyong was very clever about what she expected from the NEST in terms of feedback. Obviously, Kyong saw her native English-speaking teacher as a more experienced language teacher rather than a writing teacher. This is probably because the teacher focused predominantly on language errors in her writings. To be sure, Kyong considered the native English-speaking teacher’s job as correcting such errors, and she relied heavily on the teacher feedback on language. However, she neglected to take feedback on content
seriously enough, not allowing her teacher to interfere with her control over her writing, even if the teacher is a native speaker of English. In fact, dissimilar student reactions to native English-speaking teacher feedback probably arise from whether and how they positioned themselves as a writer in the EFL writing classroom.

The students spoke little about receiving feedback from their non-native English-speaking peers, and what they said was negative. Jong noted that peer suggestions sometimes made his paper worse. Sung and Kyong were uncomfortable with having their non-native English-speaking peers check their writing. At this point, it stands to reason that these students would hold their peers’ suggestions in low regard due to their non-native speakerhood. Thus, the EFL students in this study hoped that in classroom writing situations, NESTs would teach EFL writing to “share the copyright with non-native speakers” (Medgyes, 2001, p. 441) through correcting and editing writing.

It appears that as Norton (1997) argues, “the relationship between [NESTs and non-NESTs] is not only symbolic” (p. 422) in the EFL writing classroom. In fact, “it has significant material consequences” (p. 422). As far as the “Expanding Circle” (Kachru, 1985) is concerned, “the ‘simplistic reduction’ of a complex phenomenon into a NS-NNS dichotomy” (Braine, 2010, p. 20) still persists in the beliefs of teachers and students alike, and in turn, students believe that only native speakers can be ideal teachers of EFL writing. To conclude, we echo an assertion made by a number of ELT experts (Braine, 2010; Medgyes, 2001; Moussu & Llurda, 2008): The ideal teacher is no longer a category reserved for NESTs. Finally, we add the claim that the most important professional duty for non-NESTs is to make linguistic improvements in their English.

REFERENCES


Applicable levels: Tertiary, college

Myung-Hye Huh  
Department of English Language Education  
College of Education, Korea University  
145 Anam-ro, Seongbuk-gu, Seoul 136-701, Korea  
Phone: 02-3290-2355  
Email: myunghuh@korea.ac.kr

Inhwan Lee  
Department of English Language Education  
Graduate School, Korea University  
145 Anam-ro, Seongbuk-gu, Seoul 136-701, Korea  
Cell: 010-4430-5468  
Email: rachel.lee713@gmail.com

Minkyung Kim  
Department of English Language Education  
Graduate School, Korea University  
145 Anam-ro, Seongbuk-gu, Seoul 136-701, Korea  
Cell: 011-9237-2680  
Email: mkkim1114@gmail.com

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