Students' perceptions of teacher feedback in EFL English class and their self-regulated learning after receiving feedback

Nanin Verina Widya Putri [1] *, Ahmad Munir [2], Syafi'ul Anam [3]

[1, 2, 3] Postgraduate of Language and Literature Education, Universitas Negeri Surabaya, Surabaya, Jawa Timur, Indonesia

* Email: nanin.19029@mhs.unesa.ac.id (corresponding author)

Abstract

Teacher feedback is useful information for EFL students' improvement. It assists students to know their weaknesses and strengths in English learning. However, students might perceive teacher feedback differently from the teacher's intentions. This study examined students' perceptions of their teacher feedback in English class and investigated their self-regulated learning after receiving feedback. It is a descriptive-qualitative study involving ten EFL students of the senior high school using semi-structured interview questions through online communication. Subsequently, the data were transcribed and analyzed qualitatively using thematic analysis of students' perceptions of teacher feedback and their self-regulated learning. The finding showed that the students perceived teacher feedback as positive and negative. Upon receiving teacher feedback, the students developed their self-regulated learning, such as setting goals, monitoring, self-motivating, seeking-help, adopting, and self-evaluating in English learning. This study offers implications for English teachers and educators to improve their feedback quality in English classroom assessment.

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Introduction

Feedback has a crucial position to accelerate students' learning progress. Feedback is information that could enable students to increase their deeper understanding of learning development (Adie et al., 2018; Hattie & Gan, 2017). Previous studies on teacher feedback (Al-Bashir et al., 2016; Brown, 2000; Grawemeyer et al., 2015) have demonstrated that feedback can improve students' cognitive, affective, psychomotor domains in the process of teaching and learning. Furthermore, Black and Wiliam (2018) asserted that feedback could help students identify and interpret the evidence about their ability, and it could improve their ability for the next performance. This implies that feedback is necessary to maintain students' learning progress.

Many sources of feedback could be sought by students, for instance, from teacher, peer, book, parents, or experiences based on their performance (Hattie & Timperley, 2007). However, among the sources, teacher feedback is the most vital source for students to make them aware of their capability in a certain skill. When a teacher provides students with feedback, it will increase students' awareness of their skills (Black & Wiliam, 2018; Vattoy & Smith, 2019). Therefore, teacher feedback could be seen as an aspect that influences students' level of comprehension.

Teachers are demanded to provide appropriate feedback as the strategies for improving students' learning outcomes. Teachers need to know that their feedback is suitable for students' needs because appropriate feedback will help students' learning progress. Students are expected to understand the teacher feedback to support their learning as the way students interpret the feedback will influence their decision whether they accept the feedback or not (Gamlem & Smith, 2013), and their attitude also influences how they interpret the feedback (Fitriana, 2017). Besides, students understanding the meaning of teacher feedback could increase the teacher-student relationship. For this reason, feedback is a crucial element for teacher and student interaction for achieving the purpose of learning (Gamlem & Smith, 2013).

The provision of feedback by teachers during teaching-learning process enhances students' motivation. As Burner's (2015) study revealed, teacher feedback could motivate students to learn English since it opened up for

dialogue with the student to clarify the meaning of feedback to improve their perfomance quality. Moreover, a study by Carnell (2000) showed that students tended to be motivated when they had opportunities to discuss their work with their partners, and they could support each other when they felt stuck. In the discussion process, possible feedback will appear so that students need someone to support their learning ability. They could help each other when getting difficulties in learning. Since teacher feedback provides judgment, suggestions, or guidance of students' performance, which can improve their next performance, it encourages them to know their own weaknesses and strength in learning.

Meanwhile, students perceived teacher feedback in different ways. They have different perceptions upon receiving teacher feedback because they have a different understanding. According to Gamlem and Smith (2013), students' perceptions of in-classroom feedback could emerge in three themes. Those are feedback valence, relations and honest feedback, and feedback types. Feedback valence covered positive and negative feedback perceived by students. Relations and honest feedback themes emerge when the students perceive feedback as difficult because of lack of trust or potential harm, such as negative comments. Meanwhile, feedback types consist of four types: grade giving, controlling, reporting, and dialogic feedback. Feedback valence is the theme that should be highlighted since it is useful for teachers, among other things, to know students' perceptions about their feedback in a positive and negative way.

Students perceived feedback as positive feedback valence when it provides some approval of performance. After students receive feedback, they will be motivated to learn. Positive feedback influences the quality of students' next performance, and the effort of students could be seen as an improvement (Gamlem & Smith, 2013). Furthermore, positive feedback perceived by students encourages them to be engaged in learning. Meanwhile, students could perceive teacher feedback as negative feedback when it makes them more unmotivated. As Gamlem and Smith (2013) demonstrated in their study, students viewed teacher feedback as negative feedback when the teachers asked them to write more and gave students a detailed description of students' weaknesses. In other words, students will be more stressed when the teacher gives negative feedback as a "thorn" (Gamlem & Smith, 2013, p. 159) because it forces students to do things that they have not mastered yet.

In English language learning, teacher feedback as a powerful formative assessment has pivotal roles in supporting students' self-regulated learning. It is proved by Xiao and Yang's (2019) results of their study. Their study involved two teachers who had been studied how they implemented formative assessment, namely feedback, as an effort to develop students' self-regulation in learning the English language. The results of the study revealed that teacher feedback as formative assessment fostered students' self-regulation in learning English language, such as producing product, setting learning goals, adopting new strategies, and managing resources. In other words, teacher feedback is believed to improve students' self-regulated learning (Lam, 2015b; Oxford, 2016; Xiao & Yang, 2019). For this reason, English language teachers should provide many activities in the classroom which could support the characteristic of self-regulated learners. For instance, after a teacher gives feedback to students' tasks, they are expected to minimize their errors in using the target language. In responding to the teacher feedback, they could monitor their learning, increase their motivation, and ask for help (Ounis, 2017).

Teacher's appropriate feedback brings an impact on students' self-regulation. The results of a study by Vattoy and Smith (2019) showed that feedback influenced EFL students' self-regulation. Likewise, Chaudron (1988) stated that feedback could develop students' skills in the target language. It means that when EFL learners receive teacher feedback, their self-regulation will be influenced; whether it will be high or low depends on the effectiveness of the feedback. The more the students got the advantages of feedback, the more their self-regulation will be raised. This implies that feedback supports the improvement of students' self-regulated learning.

Self-regulated learning refers to the students' ability to monitor and manage their learning progress (De Bruin et al., 2011). How well the students monitor their learning can influence the quality of the study. When the students regulate their study every day, it makes them understand and learn more. Furthermore, self-regulation could improve students' performance by knowing the strategies that they should apply or prepare for in the future (Mahlberg, 2015).

There are three major components of students' self-regulation (Zimmerman, 2008): metacognitive, motivational, and behavioral. The metacognition process includes setting and planning goals, organizing, self-monitoring, and self-evaluating at various points during the process of acquisition (Zimmerman, 2008). The motivational process includes students'

self-efficacy, self-attribution, and intrinsic task interest (Zimmerman, 2010), while the behavioral process includes how students manage time, create an environment to support learning, seek out help or advice, and self-instruct while learning the target language. When the students actively use those components in their learning process, they are self-regulated learners.

Despite the relationship between self-regulated learning and experiences in getting teacher feedback, teachers' expectations by providing feedback for students' performance are not always in parallel with students' outcomes for some reasons. The first reason is that students do not always have an opportunity to think and respond to the feedback. Another reason is that students do not respond to the teacher feedback because they perceive feedback differently from teachers' intentions (Amalia et al., 2019). For those reasons, it is important to investigate students' perceptions about receiving teacher feedback for improving the quality of learning (Andrade, 2010; Gamlem & Smith, 2013). Moreover, as stated previously, it is important to investigate how responding to teacher feedback develops students' self-regulated learners.

Therefore, based on the explanation, more research about learners' perception of teacher feedback and how they develop self-regulated learners was still worth doing, especially in the Indonesian senior high school context. This study focused on investigating students' perceptions of teacher feedback and their self-regulation after receiving their teacher feedback. This study is expected to shed light on teacher feedback's benefits in enhancing students' self-regulated learning in EFL class. The following research questions guided this research:

(1) What are the EFL students' perceptions of their teacher feedback in English class?
(2) How do the students develop their self-regulated learning after receiving teacher feedback?

Method

Research design

In line with the research questions, qualitative research was applied to this study, exploring the students' perceptions of teacher feedback in English class and how teacher feedback developed students' self-regulated learning. The qualitative approach has been conducted in the teacher feedback research (e.g., Gamlem & Smith, 2013; Hattie & Timperley, 2007). It was also used to study self-regulated learning and teacher feedback (e.g., Lam, 2015a).

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Participants

Before conducting the research, two participants who had a personal relationship with the researcher were contacted to invite their school friends to join this research. The participants should be EFL learners in senior high schools in Indonesia, be in the same grade, and be enthusiastic about sharing an opinion about teacher feedback. Subsequently, ten EFL students in a senior high school in Bojonegoro, East Java, Indonesia agreed to participate in this study. They were from different classes of the same grade, Grade Eleven. Their L1 is *Bahasa Indonesia*, and their target language or foreign language is English.

Moreover, they had different English teachers. After contacting and introducing herself to the participants through online group chat, the researcher asked for their consent. They were all willing to participate in this study and had high motivation to get involved.

Data collection

This study used in-depth interviews with the participants. The participants were interviewed one by one over the phone in their first language, *Bahasa Indonesia*, to understand the questions better. The phone interview was done to guard against the spread of COVID-19. The interview questions were adapted from Xiao and Yang (2019). Moreover, the interview questions (see Appendix) consisted of 17 questions: questions number 1-2 were developed to warm up the interview, questions number 3-10 were developed to know the students' perceptions of teacher feedback, and questions number 11 -17 were developed to investigate how students develop their self-regulated learning after receiving teacher feedback. Furthermore, the data were interpreted and represented based on the research questions. After that, the data were described to explain the results of this study.

Data analysis

The data were analyzed in several steps recommended by Cresswell (2013). The first step is organizing and preparing. In this step, the data from the interviews were organized, and the relevant data were selected and prepared for the next step. Then, the data were coded using a codebook to identify students' perception of teacher feedback. This study analyzed the students' perceptions by using Gamlem and Smith's (2013) theme, namely feedback valence, which

refers to positive feedback and negative feedback. Positive feedback could encourage students to be engaged in learning. Meanwhile, students could perceive teacher feedback as negative feedback when it triggers students to be more unmotivated. Table 1 shows the codes for analyzing the data, such as whether the students perceived teacher feedback as positive feedback (PF) or negative feedback (NF).

Table 1. The codebook of students' perception

Category	Code
Positive feedback	PF
Negative feedback	NF

Moreover, for analyzing how students develop their characteristics of self-regulated learners, this study adapted Xiao and Yang's (2019) analysis of students' self-regulation after receiving teacher feedback. Table 2 presents the codes for analyzing how students develop self-regulation after receiving teacher feedback, including setting the goal (SG), seeking help (SH), monitoring (M), adopting strategies (AS), motivation (MT). Subsequently, the last step is interpreting and representing the data to answer this study's research questions.

Table 2. The codebook of students' characteristic of self-regulated learners

Categories	Codes
Setting the goal	SG
Seeking help	SH
Monitoring	MT
Adopting strategies	AS
Motivation	MT

Findings

Positive perception of the teacher feedback in English class

The results showed that all participants perceived that teacher feedback was vital to them since it improved their future learning. The following are the excerpts of the students' interviews. When asked about the significance of teacher feedback, students stated as follows:

> It is very important for me because the teacher's advice or suggestion encourages me to correct my mistakes in English". (S1)

> It is very important for me because I will examine it again when I got some corrections for the future. Enter the teacher to encourage me to correct my mistakes in learning English. (S3)

The students felt more motivated when their teachers gave suggestions or advice on their performance. It seems they felt happy to receive teacher feedback. Most of the students said they could understand difficult words in English after getting feedback from their teachers. Furthermore, two of the students gave examples of teachers' positive feedback such as "Good" "OK" "Excellent". It encouraged them to learn English. The following are examples of the excerpt from two students.

> The feedback given by the teacher encourages me and helps me in learning English. (S9)

> ... he also gives lots of positive advice like I explained earlier about the importance of speaking English, and motivates us to keep the spirit in the process of learning at school. (S10)

> Sometimes, my teacher just says "Good". (S1)

> My teacher usually gives me the comment "Ok" or "Excellent" with an explanation about my performance." (S2)

The excerpts above indicate that almost all the students agreed that teacher feedback increased their comprehension in learning English. They felt teacher feedback was very useful for the students' English learning progress. Furthermore, when a student asked about teacher feedback in speaking skill, student 1, 3, 6, and 8 revealed that their teachers usually gave feedback on their speaking skills to improve their speaking quality, as the examples of excerpts below:

> My teacher usually assesses a class presentation; when the presentation occurred, my teacher assessing my appearance. And after the presentation, my teacher usually comments about my weaknesses, how to overcome my weaknesses I usually ask my friends and search the Internet. (S1)

> My teacher often provides comments/advice or suggestions on speaking skills, especially in pronunciation; usually, some words say the same thing, but the writing is different. The meaning must also be different. (S8)

Moreover, three students stated that the teachers gave feedback on their speaking and writing skills. The examples of students' statements are shown as follows:

> In the English-speaking section, to be precise about English pronunciation, but sometimes in English writing. (S2)

> My teacher provides advice or suggestions or comments on speaking skills, especially in English pronunciation but sometimes in writing my English, for example, when my grammar is wrong. (S5)

Two students had a similar response, and their teacher often gave feedback on their writing skills.

> When my English writing is incorrect, my teacher often gives comments on my writing. (S9)

From the results above, the students' positive perception about teacher feedback could be concluded and seen in Table 3. The students' perceptions of teacher feedback are positive since it encouraged students to be more active in learning English and were motivated to improve their English ability. Moreover, it can be seen in Table 3 when students stated that teacher feedback is very important, could increase students' motivation in learning English, gives students appreciation, such as "OK" and "Good". This indicates that all students perceived positive stimulation to learn English by receiving teacher feedback.

Table 3. Students' positive perceptions of teacher feedback

Students	Category	Students' responses to teacher feedback
S1	PF	"It is very important for me because the teacher's advice or suggestion encourages me to correct my mistakes in English."
S2	PF	"My teacher's advice or comments are very important to me because when I get a suggestion, I will examine it again in the future. The teacher's suggestion boosts my enthusiasm to correct my mistakes in learning."
S3	PF	"It is very important for me because when I got some correction for the future, I will examine it again. Enter the teacher to encourage me to correct my mistakes in learning English."
S4	PF	"Alhamdulillah, with the method suggested by my teacher, I can learn easily."

S5	PF	"Very important to me. Not only that, some encourage me to correct my mistakes in studying the English language."
S6	PF	"With the advice or suggestion, "I can read the sentence well" in English while listening to English songs and their lyrics often."
S7	PF	"My teacher's advice in helping my learning is very necessary ... because if we were without the teacher's advice, we might not be like this"
S8	PF	"My teacher's advice helped me. It made it easier for me to learn."
S9	PF	"With the feedback given by the teacher, it encourages me and helps me in learning English."
S10	PF	"He also gives lots of positive advice like I explained earlier about the importance of speaking English, and motivates us to keep the spirit in the process of learning at school."

Negative perceptions of the teacher feedback in English class

The results of the interview showed students' negative perceptions of teacher feedback appeared by two students. It could be identified as students' negative perception since their statements indicated that they became unmotivated to learn English, such as the the statement of "... read again and try to understand the meaning...." their teacher seem to force her to learn more, to understand again, read again as shown in Table 4.

Table 4. Students' negative perceptions of teacher feedback

Students	Category	Students' responses
S7	NF	"...... my English teacher is rarely giving me feedback, he often said that I have to read again and try to understand the meaning first, then he will explain later."
S9	NF	"My English teacher rarely gave me feedback; he just came to the class to give the task, he just explained a moment about the task, and usually he leaves the class so that sometimes I do not understand a certain topic in English lesson."

Furthermore, students who had negative perceptions also explained that their teacher rarely gave them feedback to decrease their motivation to learn English. The students' perception of teachers' insufficient feedback could be identified as negative feedback because it influenced students' learning

outcomes, such as superficial knowledge about English and more pressure of language tasks.

For the negative feedback, the results give information about the students' unwillingness to learn English. As stated previously, they seem to do something that they do not want to do, and it triggers them to give up easily in the process of learning English. Although the students who receive negative feedback are only two students, it could be said that negative feedback influences their English learning development.

The results above indicated the students' perception of teacher feedback becomes positive and negative because they have different perceptions. As stated previously, all students revealed positive perceptions. However, two of them also belong to negative perception because they expected teacher feedbacks. Still, their teacher rarely gave ones, and they were forced to study hard so that they felt unmotivated to learn English.

Students' self-regulated learning following teacher feedback

Based on the results of semi-structured interviews, students' self-regulated learning characteristics were identified in this study, such as setting a goal, monitoring, motivating, seeking help, adopting, and self-evaluating.

Setting goal

Setting the goals refers to how students respond *by setting their personal learning goals after they get feedback.* Three students said that after receiving feedback from their teacher, they would learn their teacher feedback and fix their mistakes. The statements of four students indicated that they set their goals.

> After I got feedback, I will fix my English errors so that I could increase my skill. (S2)

> I will use my teacher feedback; it useful for my next performance. (S3)

> After my teacher gave me feedback, I will try to fix my mistakes. (S5)

Monitoring

One student showed that her characteristic of self-regulated learning, which refers to monitoring, was developed since she said that teacher feedback encourages her to monitor learning progress and whether her English ability improves. Her statement is shown below:

After my teacher assesses me, I will monitor my learning progress by doing a self-assessment. I could know learning progress; I could judge whether it improves or not. (S4)

Self-motivating

Almost all students felt that teacher feedback increases their motivation to learn English. It means that their motivation is influenced by feedback. The students' statements are shown as follows:

My teacher feedback encourages me to show my great performance; after I got the feedback I hope I could perform better than before. (S1)

When my teacher assesses me and comments on my performance, it increases my motivation to study hard to get a better score than my previous performance. (S9)

After my teacher gives me advice or feedback about my performance, it encourages my motivation to learn English. I will try to learn what I do not know; I try to find the explanation from YouTube, and I will note it. (S10)

Seeking help

Nine students demonstrated that they tried to ask their teacher; some find solutions from the Internet, from their seniors, from their friends, and find a new strategy. The examples of their statements are shown below.

When my teacher feedback does not satisfy my questions, I will try to find another solution, such as asking my friend. (S1)

If my teacher feedback does not give me sufficient information, I will ask my friends and my senior. (S2)

When my teacher feedback does not help me understand what I don't know, I will find a solution, such as asking my senior, goggling, and discussing it with my friends. It is effective for me to solve my problem. (S5)

Another student said she would try to find a new strategy, such as making a note when she studied. The new strategy increased her understanding of the English lesson. The results indicate that students asked for help when they got insufficient information from their teacher.

Adopting

Also, three students indicated that they adopted what the teacher gave to them. They perceived feedback as a solution for better performance. It means they developed the characteristic of self-regulated learners—the students' statements as shown below:

> I will follow my teacher's feedback because it is useful for improving my skill. (S4)

> I learn the feedback that my teacher gives to me. (S6)

Self-evaluating

Furthermore, three students revealed that teacher feedback encourages them to do self-evaluating through their learning progress. They did self-evaluate to avoid their mistakes in the next performance.

> I will evaluate my mistakes in English and improve my speaking skill with accurate pronunciation. (S3)

> I will evaluate my mistakes, I will try to understand my weaknesses. (S7)

The results of the interview above implied that teacher feedback could assist students in developing their self-regulated learners. Self-regulated learners' characteristics identified based on students' perceptions are setting goals, monitoring, motivating, seeking help, adopting, and self-evaluating.

Discussion

The first results section of this paper revealed that the students' perceptions of teacher feedback are various. Those perceptions are divided into two parts, namely, positive perception and negative perception. The results showed some of the students felt positive about receiving teacher feedback. It assisted the students to increase their motivation because they got appreciation from the teachers to improve their performance. Teacher's approval, like "good", "excellent", "OK", giving students motivation to revise their task. In a similar vein, Gamlem and Smith (2013) said that it could promote student learning when the teacher provides positive feedback. Additionally, Hill and West's (2020) and Ounis's (2017) study are in line with these present results that feedback could maintain the students' motivation for better studies.

Most of the students who perceived feedback as positive feedback declared that teacher feedback helped them increase their understanding of their work and target language. It implies that teacher feedback enhances students' current performance (Vattoy & Smith, 2019), helps students identify what things they have to fix (Sadler, 2013; Xiao & Yang, 2019), and improves their English language skills (Burner, 2015; Chaudron, 1988). Meanwhile, the students' statements illustrated that they seem to have little opportunity to negotiate the teacher feedback; they just received and interpreted the feedback. It seems that feedback refers to the teacher's information where there is still little negotiation between teachers and students (Carless & Chan, 2017).

Moreover, two of the students revealed that their teachers did not provide sufficient feedback or rarely gave feedback to decrease the students' motivation to learn English. The finding is in line with Gamlem and Smith's (2013) study that teacher's negative feedback could decrease the students' motivation, and students tend to be stressed in learning English. Hence, positive teacher feedback should be provided as much as possible in assessing students' performance, and negative feedback should be avoided to increase students' motivation and decrease their stress as EFL learners. The teacher should consider what feedback they want to give to the students. The teachers should consider whether the feedback could decrease or increase students' performance or appropriate feedback or not to deliver.

Regarding the second research question, this study result showed that self-regulated learning characteristics appeared when the students received the teacher feedback, such as setting a goal, monitoring, motivating, seeking help, adopting, and self-evaluating. The results indicated that students' self-regulation in learning English could be improved by receiving teacher feedback. Those results are in line with the previous studies (Vattoy & Smith, 2019; Zumbrunn et al., 2016) that feedback activities could trigger students to become self-regulated learners. These results prove that teacher feedback influences students' self-regulated learning. This study results also support the previous study by Xiao and Yang (2019). The results have shown that teacher feedback has great potential to promote students' self-regulated learning, such as setting learning goals, adopting strategies to achieve goals, managing learning resources, extending efforts, responding to feedback, and producing products.

Also, the results of this study about teacher feedback provide valuable information for both students and teachers. For the students, how they

perceived the feedback could influence how they learned the target language. They need to understand the teacher's messages because their English skills weaknesses could be avoided by providing teacher feedback. Meanwhile, EFL students' perceptions of teacher feedback are very important for the teacher since it also helps them know how to implement the feedback effectively.

Conclusion

This current study revealed that the EFL students had mixed perceptions of teacher feedback, but most of them perceived teacher feedback as positive feedback. Although they had a different perception of teacher feedback, they could develop students' self-regulated learning characteristics, such as setting goals, monitoring, motivating, seeking help, adopting, and self-evaluating in learning English. Thus, from the findings of this study, EFL teachers should consider whether their feedback could decrease or increase students' performance and it is appropriate feedback or not. Teachers, as practitioners in an educational setting, have to increase the effectiveness of giving feedback. Moreover, teachers should provide many kinds of feedback to maximize the students' activities that develop the characteristic of self-regulated learning. The results of this study contribute to EFL teachers improving classroom assessment. Furthermore, this study did not mention the development of students' English skills. Therefore, future research may inform the students' English competence so that the future finding also inform the extent to which teacher feedback influences students' English competence.

Acknowledgements

ORCID

Nanin Verina Widya Putri https://orcid.org/0000-0003-1607-1914
Ahmad Munir https://orcid.org/0000-0003-0606-3590
Syafi'ul Anam https://orcid.org/0000-0002-4687-856X

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Appendix

The interview questions

Interview questions	Purposes
1. Could you please tell me your name?	to warm up the interview
2. What is your English learning experience?	
3. What have you or your teachers done in your English language learning to help you find out your strengths and weaknesses?	to know the students' perceptions of teacher feedback
4. How did the teacher conduct the assessment?	
5. How did you copy with your weaknesses?	
6. To what extent do you find your actions effective?	
7. Can you give me some examples?	
8. What did your English teacher usually do if you had difficulties in your study?	
9. What advice/feedback did your English teacher give you?	
10. How do you think about the feedback?	

11. To what extent do you think the feedback help? In what way?	to investigate how students develop their self-regulated learning after receiving teacher feedback
12. After receiving teachers' feedback what What actions have you taken?	
13. What did you usually do after taking assessments?	
14. How did you cope with the problems identified in the assessments?	
15. Why did you choose [a certain] strategy?	
16. To what extent did you find your actions effective?	
17. Can you give me any examples?	

(Source: Xiao & Yang, 2019)