CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

This chapter is about the introduction of the research, including background of the research, research questions, aims of the research, scope of the research, significance of the research, clarification of terms, and organization of the paper.

1.1. Background

Writing has been proved as language activity that helps the students to create the logical competent, which is the ability to solve problems through complex linguistic and cognitive ability such as organizing, structuring, and revising (Alwasilah and Alwasilah, 2005: 134). In the Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary (1984: 666), it is stated that an educated person is a person who has the ability to read and write. However, many students think that writing is something difficult to learn. It is supported by Alwasilah (2005) who declares that teachers and students consider writing as the most difficult skill to teach and learn. Of the four language skills, writing skill, for a long time, has been ignored and treated with less respect than it deserves (Alwasilah, 2005).

In accordance to those statements, there must be an appropriate method used by the teacher in teaching writing in class to make the students easier to learn. According to Alwasilah (2005), many teachers did not apply the appropriate method in teaching writing for the students. Most of them gave a task for the students to write on a paper, collected them, gave a score with some feedbacks or without any feedback at all so that the students do not know their errors and could not revise it in the next paper.

Whereas, feedback in learning writing is something which is important for the students. It is supported by the Dheram (1995) who emphasizes that feedback is something which is central in the process of teaching and learning writing. However, feedback without any explanation and discussion seems useless and

does not give an effective correction for the students. The students will probably be confused with the feedback that they get. According to (Brender, 1998; Fregeau, 1999; cited in William, 2003; cited in Lenggogeni, 2011), feedback without explanation or discussion will not bring positive effects for the students.

The large number of students with only one teacher in every class is probably one of the factors which make many teachers did not give the students any feedback in every student's paper. It is also impossible for the teacher to give the explanation of each feedback to the students one by one since the time allocation which is provided for teaching and learning English is limited. According to Alwasilah and Alwasilah (2007), most of the teachers think that it is impossible to teach writing in the big classes. Many language teachers and lecturers, especially those who think that they know anything, complain of difficulty in teaching writing in the big classes. Traditionally, teachers are only one who has high knowledge to provide feedback to students' writing. They forget that knowledge is not only centered on the teachers or lecturers, but the environments, including friends, also could give knowledge to each other (Alwasilah, Alwasilah 2007: 211).

Based on the previous explanations, there is a way that is able to be implemented to anticipate this problem, which is peer feedback. Peer feedback could be defined as students' discussion in order to give corrections of the errors of the students' work that could be written or spoken. It aims to make the students realize their errors so that they could revise it and make it better in the next paper. Based on Pennstate (2007), feedback is a strategy used in improving the quality of written assignments and foster discussions. It is an effort to help the students increase their writing skills by reducing the amount of errors they make in their written assignments. The students get an opportunity to revise their written assignments when they get the corrections from other students. In addition, Bartels (2003) states that peer response, that is also known as peer review, peer feedback, peer editing, and peer evaluation, is the popular key that is implemented

by the teachers in teaching the students. It is also supported by Richard and Renandya (2002; cited in Siswana, 2008) who state that responding intervenes between drafting and revising after the students have produced the first draft and just before they proceed to revise is the central role in successful implementation of writing process.

Wood, et. al. (2008) state that by implementing peer feedback technique, the teacher also could implement students-centered in teaching-learning process. When the students discuss the feedback to their friends, they could develop the interaction between students, so that they do not depend on teacher all the time. Jones (2007) states that when the teacher implements student-centered in the classroom, the students will find their problems, discuss it with their friends, and solve it by themselves. While their teacher, acts as a facilitator in the teaching-learning activity. The teacher helps to guide the students, manage their activities, and direct their learning (Jones, 2007).

Some previous researches state that peer feedback gave positive effect for the students in learning writing. Bijami et. al. (2013) in her research state that peer feedback on writing develops students to improve their knowledge through providing opportunities to think critically.

Chiramanee and Kulprasit (2014) revealed that peer feedback do increase students' writing skill. Besides, they also state that students showed positive attitudes towards the implementation of peer feedback in learning writing.

The above facts are also supported by the research result which was found by Shokrpour, Keshavarz, and Jafari (2011). The research found that the students not only enjoyed the process and the product of the implementation of peer feedback in class, but also a significant development and change was observed in their writing skill. Peer review or peer feedback process did engange the students in frequent reading and writing, fostered their critical reading and reflection, sharpened their writing knowledge skill, helped them to manage their learning schedule, and increased their motivation and joy in writing.

The implementation of peer feedback not only could increase students' performances in learning writing, but also develop students' perception towards writing activity. Grami (2010) in his research concludes that the effect of peer feedback on students' perception was profound. Students were hugely impressed by the potential of peer session on their writing routines which has been reflected on their eagerness to have more similar sessions in the future. In addition, Siswana (2008) in his research states that peer feedback gives benefits to the students, two of them are peer feedback could develop the students' writing, and the students' work were getting better by using peer feedback.

Based on the above consideration, this research will investigate whether or not peer feedback technique increases students' descriptive writing skill and find out the students' responses toward the use of peer feedback in teaching descriptive text.

1.2. Research Questions

The inquiry will be guided by the following general questions:

a. Does peer feedback increase students' descriptive writing skill?

b. What are the responses of the students toward the use of peer feedback in learning a descriptive text?

1.3. Aims of The Research

The research primary aims to explore and find the answer of the questions above. The other aims are stated as follows:

a. To investigate whether or not peer feedback does increase students' descriptive writing skill.

b. To find out the responses of the students toward the use of peer feedback in learning a descriptive text.

1.4. Scope of the Research

The limitation of the research is taken to specify the problem that will be analyzed and make it clear. This research is conducted in one of Junior High Schools in Subang and limited to second semester of second grade students. The 70 students from two classes were involved in this research, but the researcher only took 30 students for each class as the participants to anticipate the students who were absent at that time. One of two classes taken as the participants were implied the peer feedback technique to measure the use of peer feedback in increasing students' descriptive writing skill and to find out the responses of the students toward the implementation of it in learning English.

Although there are so many researches who found that peer feedback is effective to be implemented in writing activity in class, there are several limitations that might be happened during the research. The first is the mid-trust of the high-achiever students to the lower-achiever students in giving feedback process. This situation might be happened since writing is the process although the assessment is taken from the product of the process itself. The high-achiever students may not trust on the feedback given by their friends whose knowledge and skill is lower than them. So that, they have to be selective in using the feedback given. Zhang (1995) states that less profitable interactions have been found within peer groups, sometimes because of the participants' lack of trust on the accuracy of the comments given by their peers. The second is the role of the teacher. In implementing peer feedback in class, the role of teacher is very limited. The teacher only acts as a facilitator, while the important role in this research is the students themselves. In fact, most of the students still need their teacher's comments. Kitchakarn (2012) on his research states that teacher's feedback is still needed in peer feedback technique to make it more effective and beneficial for the students. The comments of the teachers are better given on the right time of the writing process.

1.5. Significance of the Research

The result of the research is expected to give some contributions to teachers, students, and the next researchers.

a. To the teachers, it hopefully can give the inspirations to implement the peer feedback technique in the teaching-learning activity in class in order to improve students' writing skill.

b. To the students, it hopefully can give them motivation to learn and awareness to their own and friends' works. They can be a good reader, a great commentator, and good writer.

c. To the next researchers, it hopefully can be good references for the next research that they make.

1.6 Clarification of Terms

There are some terms that will be used in this research. In order to make the readers understand about those terms, the researcher will make it clear in the explanation below.

1.6.1 Feedback

Feedback in this research refers to the comments and corrections given to another's work. It aims to give a useful correction in order to let another knows his/her errors, so that he/she could make it better in the next revision.

1.6.2 Peer Feedback

Peer feedback in this research refers to a feedback that is given by friends. In this context, the feedback will be given by the students to students. Every student will give feedback to another student's work, and give the corrections as much as possible based on their knowledge in order to let his/her friend know and understand their errors and could make it better in the revision later.

1.7 Organization of The Paper

This paper consists of five chapters, they are:

Chapter 1 : Intoduction. This chapter provides background of the research, research questions, aims of the research, scope of the research, significance of the research, clarification of terms, and organization of the paper.

Chapter 2 : Theoritical Foundation. This chapter will provide the material and theories about writing skill and peer feedback, the previous researches relate to the current research, and concluding remarks.

Chapter 3 : Research Methodology. This chapter will explain clearly the method that was used in this research which is actually the method that has been introduced in the chapter 1.

Chapter 4 : Finding and Discussion. This chapter will explain the result of the research and show the progress of the participants' work from each test. Besides, this chapter will also provide the interpretation to the result.

Chapter 5 : Conclusion and Suggestions. This chapter will conclude the result of the research and give some suggestions for the next researcher in order to make a better research.