

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the introduction of the paper. It includes the background of the study, research questions, purposes of the study, hypotheses, scope of the study, explanation of key terms, research methodology, significances of the study, literature review, and the organization of the paper.

1.1. Background

Writing is a particular set of skill. Developing writing skills is a long and tortuous process (Alwasilah and Alwasilah, 2005, p.99). Moreover, Hedge also cited that writing is not only about producing sentences or phrases correctly and accurately. More than that, writing is a process of communicating ideas, information, or arguments to specific readers (Hedge, 2005)

In an English as Foreign Language (EFL) context, teachers usually focus on the final product which must fulfill certain requirements such as the following: (a) meet certain standards of English rhetorical style, (b) use accurate grammar, (c) be organized in conformity (Brown, 2001, p. 335). These conditions make students think that writing is a complex task.

According to Richards and Renandya (2002), the difficulty of writing is not only about relating the ideas, but also how to transfer the ideas into the acceptable text form (p. 154). Braughton et al., (2003) cited that some crucial reasons of writing anxiety are the following: the mechanical problems related to the English script, grammar, and vocabulary in the target language, the style of writing which fulfills readers' expectations; and problems related to the ease and conformity in expressing the ideas (p.154). In conclusion, writing is a complex task; therefore, all language aspects such as grammar, vocabulary, and other language features can be corrected by observing the product of writing.

Because of the reasons above, students need help from their teachers. Feedback is a form of help from the teacher. Chang (2011) cited that feedback is a guiding light to promote the student's learning process (p.1). Moreover, Harmer

(2001) emphasized the importance of feedback as one of the teachers' roles; that is the participant. When a teacher acts as a participant, it means the teacher should provide feedback and correct mistakes in the learning process (p.286). Consequently, feedback is a students' privilege that must be given by their teacher in order to help them improve their skills.

Even though teachers know the importance of providing feedback to their students, there are some challenges that teachers must face. For example, some teachers consider giving feedback to students' work to be a time-consuming task (Ferris, 2007, p.165). In addition, some teachers are anticipating their students' response. Some researchers have observed students' response to a given feedback. Students may argue that teachers' feedback is sometimes unclear, confusing, vague, and inconsistent (Zamel, 1985). Chang, Watson, Bakerson, Williams, McGoron, and Spitzer (2012) said that the majority of students felt that feedback they received had excessively negative content (p.2).

This condition demonstrates that there is a gap between teachers' writing standards and students' original writing skill. However, feedback can be aimed to bridge that gap (Carless, 2006). In order to take advantage of feedback, the teacher should provide the appropriate feedback.

The emergence of the internet brings many changes in human life; one of them is in the educational setting. It is revealed by the escalating amount of research about the e-learning process. Electronic feedback is a product of the e-learning process. Considering the generational theory explained by Strauss and Howe (1991) who classify current students as the millennial generation (p.342), the electronic feedback (e-feedback) can be an alternative method of giving feedback.

Tuzi (2004) explained that e-feedback is a wonderful and effective tool to enlarge the audience for L2 writers, beyond their classmates and instructor. It makes them motivated to write better. Another benefit of e-feedback is that it is a new setting to receive feedback from the enlarged audience. The e-feedback is also accessible because the writers and the feedback providers are able to submit

the text and the revision, as well as provide feedback, anywhere and anytime as the result of the omnipresence of the internet.

Although the emergence of the e-feedback is believed to be very beneficial in the learning process, there are some arguments that explain that the paper-based feedback still taking a lead. Knoch (2011) and Zamel (1985) stated that most students expect a teachers' written feedback more than other forms of feedback. Saito (1994) and Zhang (1995) cited that the teachers' written feedback is a potential tool to motivate students in the writing process if it is done well.

Even though currently many researchers are attempting to find out the most influential type of feedback in the learning process, the research about the use of feedback in writing descriptive text is rare. Many researchers simply focused on the feedback and its impact on the learning process (Pham, 2015; Osterbur, Hammer, Hammer, 2015; Mack, 2009; Hyland and Hyland, 2006; Lee, 2003) or the use of technique or media to improve students' ability in writing a descriptive text (Nurlaila, 2013; Puspitarini, 2013; Zahra, 2013).

In an attempt to bridge the students' need of help in the writing process and determine the appropriate media to deliver the feedback, and also to enrich the literature on the use of feedback in writing descriptive text, this study is going to examine the impact of both paper-based feedback and electronic feedback to improve students' ability in writing a descriptive text. Afterward, this study is going to compare the paper-based feedback and electronic feedback to find out the most effective feedback to improve students' ability in writing descriptive text. Hopefully, this study can offer some contributions to the language teaching process, especially in teaching the process and skills of writing descriptive text.

1.2. Research Questions

Regarding the aspects that have been mentioned before, this research is conducted to answer the following questions:

1. How effective is paper-based feedback in improving students' ability to write the descriptive text?

2. How effective is electronic feedback (e-feedback) in improving students' ability to write the descriptive text?
3. Which feedback is more effective in helping students to improve skills in writing the descriptive text?

1.3. The Purposes of the Research

Derived from the research questions above, the purposes of this research are as follows:

1. To examine the effectiveness of paper-based feedback in improving students' ability to write a descriptive text.
2. To examine the effectiveness of electronic feedback (e-feedback) in improving students' ability to write a descriptive text.
3. To observe the more effective feedback to improve students' ability in writing a descriptive text.

1.4. Hypotheses

According to Arikunto (2002), a hypothesis is a temporary answer to the research questions, until it is proven through the collected data (p. 64). After gathering the data for this subject, the hypothesis is made as a temporary answer.

The hypotheses of this study are as follows:

H_0 : there is no significant difference between students' writing score in pre-test and post-test; it means the technique is not effective to improve students' writing skill.

H_1 :there is a significant difference between students' writing score in pre-test and post-test; it means the technique is effective to improve students' writing skill.

1.5. Significance of the Study

Hopefully, this study will reveal some benefits and otherwise evocative information; it will also provide an alternative approach to teaching and learning English as a foreign language in Indonesia, especially regarding practical, theoretical, and professional benefits.

1. Practical Benefit

Practically, this study will give a true picture of the use of the paper-based feedback and the electronic feedback (e-feedback) in class: the step-by-step process of giving both kinds of feedback including the results. The results of the study are likely to assist both teachers and students to decide the most suitable feedback to be applied in the classroom. Hopefully, the suitable feedback can motivate students to improve their writing skills.

2. Theoretical Benefit

Hopefully, the results of this study will be able to enrich the literature and references for the upcoming research related to both the paper based feedback and the electronic feedback.

3. Professional Benefit

From the professional perspective, hopefully, the results of this study will provide new information for both teachers and students about how to apply these techniques in the classroom. Moreover, it is expected that both the paper based feedback and the electronic feedback can be used as beneficial options in teaching writing skills for descriptive text.

1.6. Limitation of the Study

To answer the research questions that are mentioned above, a limitation is needed to focus on the specific issue that is raised in this study. This study is limited to find out the effectiveness of the paper-based feedback and the electronic feedback, and also to compare the effectiveness of both kinds of feedback. On the other hand, the context of this study was limited to teaching writing a descriptive text in a Senior High School, specifically in an SMA in Cimahi.

In this research, the direct corrective feedback will be applied for both the paper-based feedback and the e-feedback. In addition, for the mechanism of

delivering an e-feedback, the comment feature in the Microsoft Word application will be applied to student text.

The genre of text taught in this research is descriptive text; this research will focus only on the features of the descriptive text, such as generic structure and language features. The generic structure of the descriptive text is identification and description. Language features of the descriptive text are simple present tense, classifiers, and adjectives (Alawi, 2011, p.37), otherwise, the organization and the mechanics as mentioned by Jacobs, et.al., (1981). Any errors which are not related to those features will not be corrected.

1.7. Research Methodology

1.7.1. Design

To carry out the research, a quantitative research design is applied to this study. The quantitative research design is an educational research where the researchers independently decide on the topic of the study, ask specific, narrow questions, collect the scientific data, analyze the result of the data by using statistics, and lead the analysis in an unbiased, objective manner (Cresswell, 2008, p. 46).

Therefore, the quasi-experimental design was applied to examine the effectiveness of paper-based and electronic feedback. The use of the pre-test and the post-test evaluations was developed for both the control group and experimental group.

1.7.2. Population and Sample

According to Arikunto (2002), a population is simply defined as the whole subject of the research (p.108). In his book, Arikunto also quoted the definition of the population from the Encyclopedia of Educational Evaluation. In that encyclopedia, a population is a set (or collection) of all elements possessing one or more attributes of interests (p.108).

The population of this research is students in a Senior High School in Cimahi, grade X (10). It is selected based on competence-based curriculum;

specifically, a descriptive text lesson as taught to senior high school students in grade 10. It is supposed that students have been introduced to a descriptive text before this research was implemented.

A sample is a part of the representative of the research population (Arikunto, 2002, p. 109). The sample of this research is three classes of students in a senior high school in Cimahi. Each class will obtain a treatment. One class will obtain the paper-based feedback treatment; one class will obtain the e-feedback treatment, and another class will obtain no feedback.

1.7.3. Research Instrument

In this study, certain instruments are used to collect the data. In line with Arikunto (2002), a research instrument is a tool which is used when accomplishing research through a certain method (p. 126). Therefore, writing tasks and questionnaires are used as the main devices to gather the data for this study. The writing tasks are used to find out the students' primary skills in writing a descriptive text before they receive either the paper-based feedback or the electronic feedback. There are two writing tasks. The two writing tasks were used to examine the effectiveness of both paper-based feedback and electronic feedback. Afterward, the questionnaire is used to determine students' responses in each experimental group to the feedback that they received. It will be distributed after the last post-test is administered.

1.7.4. Research Procedure

The procedures of this study are achieved by several steps that are described as follows:

1. Conducting the pilot test;
2. Conducting the pre-test;
3. Conducting the treatment, by giving the paper-based feedback or the electronic feedback to two of the experimental groups based on the rubric that is prepared;
4. Conducting the post-test;

5. Giving out the questionnaire.

1.7.5. Data Analysis

As the quantitative method is applied to this study, the collected data will be analyzed through quantitative analysis. The students' writing performance is the main data for this study and the analysis will be conducted on the collected data. Besides the students' ability to write descriptive text, which is clearly described through the pre-test and the post-test results, the analysis will also be accomplished from the collected data from the questionnaire.

1.8. Clarification of the Key Terms

To clarify the process of designing and applying the research, as well as to prevent misunderstanding, defining the main terms is essential.

1.8.1. Comparison study

A comparison study is a kind of research method that is designed to observe drawbacks and the different phenomena, and afterward, attempt to find the significance and the advantages of all differences and similarities. (Arikunto, 2002, p. 30).

1.8.2. Effectiveness

Effectiveness is simply defined as the ability to achieve certain goals which have been stated before (Ninan, 2006; Scheerens, 1999 in Seiler, Ewalt, Jones, et. al., 2013, p. 5).

1.8.3. Paper-based feedback

Paper-based feedback, or usually called the teachers' written feedback, is a part of the larger coordinated communication system between a teacher and students where both the teacher and students can discuss any issues individually, especially used when drafting and redrafting a writing assignment (Nicol, 2010, p.2).

1.8.4. Electronic Feedback

Tuzi cited that an electronic feedback is a feedback in digital format; it still has a written form but is sent out via the web through the internet. (Tuzi, 2004, p. 217).

1.8.5. Descriptive text

Descriptive text is a factual genre of writing. Its social function is to describe a particular person, place, or thing (Wardiman, et al., 2008 p.122). Writing a descriptive text is a way of triggering the process of constructing visual images and a sensory impression through words. Also, the description is a part of a piece of writing. It is used to inform the readers about how something or someone looked or even to persuade the readers to see something from the writer's point of view (Woodson, 1943 p.73).

1.8.6. Writing skills

Writing skills are not natural skills, but rather learned behaviors. We learn to write when we are part of a literate society, and when somebody teaches us how to write (Brown, 2001, p. 334). Brown also said that writing is not only the process of transcribing oral communication into graphics, but more than that, writing is the way to communicate ideas through selected words by considering rhetorical style, accurate grammar, and conformity with what the audience would consider to be conventional (p. 335).

1.9. Organization of the Paper

The organization of the study will guide the readers in discussing the problem be addressed in this study and also will help the readers to easily understand what they read based on the topic of each chapter. There are five chapters in this study:

CHAPTER I (Background of the study)

This chapter consists of ten subchapters or parts: the background of the study, research questions, the purposes of the study, hypotheses, explanation of key terms, the scope and limitation of the study, research methodology, significances of the study, literature review, and organization of the study.

CHAPTER II (Literature Review)

This chapter consists of the theoretical framework which supports this study.

CHAPTER III (Research Methodology)

This part consists of research methodology; the discussion about the steps and procedure of the research, and the data resources used in conducting the research.

CHAPTER IV (Finding and Discussion)

This section will present the data obtained from the research followed by explanation and interpretation of the data.

CHAPTER V (Conclusion and Suggestion)

This part, the last chapter of the study, contains the interpretation of the results of the research in the form of conclusions and suggestions for applying alternative ways of giving feedback to improve students' writing ability.