

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter firstly explains the background, the research questions raised in this study, the aims of the study, scope of the study, and the significances of the study. Besides, the clarification of some terms used in the study and the organization of the paper will be presented and explained in the end of this chapter.

1.1 Background of the Study

Writing plays an important role in the language learning process. By the time students enter senior high school and university, they will have been exposed to writing because numerous kinds of learning activities require them to write. Moreover, in *2013 Curriculum* for high school, writing is one of language skills that should be taught to students aiming to enable them to write different genres of texts. In spite of the importance of writing, some students still lack of confidence (Harmer, 2007) in academic writing ability. It might happen because writing is “a complex process” (Brown, 2001) that done through some stages, such as planning, drafting, and revising.

With regards to the complexity of writing, errors in students’ writing cannot be avoided. However, making errors is a crucial part of the learning process. It is in line with Ferris (2011) who mentioned that “making errors can be found as crucial parts in the writing process, because error can lead the students to the better way in writing.” In this regard, one of the alternative ways to help students in learning writing is providing corrective feedback from their peers and teacher.

In a traditional learning method, in which learning merely takes place in a classroom, EFL students get feedback for their writing only from their teachers or peers. The traditional way of providing feedback using pen and paper also limits interaction as the students do not get to see all their peers’ writing (Sampath & Zalipur (2010). Thus, exploring new ways of implementing feedback in teaching and learning is seen as beneficial to teachers.

As technology develops and computer facilities become more widely available, the role of the computer in both delivering and mediating feedback has become more visible in practice and research (Hyland & Hyland, 2006). With the ever-growing access to the internet in the 21st century, peer and teacher feedback have not been limited to the traditional face-to-face response in a classroom (Wu, 2006). Regarding those issues, several internet tools, such as wikis, blogs, podcasts, and other social media are becoming popular in writing classes. Among those user-friendly internet tools, blogs appear to have suitable features and characteristics that can support teachers and students in providing and receiving feedback (Gedera, 2012).

The implementation of blog-mediated feedback can help students to be less stressful, as they did not need to see the person face-to-face. In addition, it is also believed as an effective way to receive and provide feedback that assists them to improve their writing performances (Gedera, 2012). A study reported that using blogs in the feedback stage in writing process is less “face-threatening” compared to asking the students to mark and comment a paper in red ink, cross out some sentences, or use question marks and exclamation marks in the margins (Sampath and Zalipour, 2010). Therefore, blogs give this opportunity to students to feel more enjoy in providing and receiving feedback as well as improving writing skill.

Numerous studies related to the use of blog-mediated feedback in improving students’ writing had already been conducted by several researchers (Rostami & Hoveidi, 2014; Shahrokhi & Taheri, 2016; Hernandez & Amarles, 2017). Nonetheless, the research about blog-mediated feedback to improve students’ ability in writing in the area of descriptive study is still rare based on the observation of this topic in the Indonesian or international online journal websites. In addition, only a few of researchers on this topic use report text.

Therefore, concerning the explanation mentioned above, the study seeks to fill the gap of the previous researches by using a qualitative descriptive design that aims at revealing the extent to which the use of blog-mediated feedback improves students’ writing skills. Another aim of this study is to find out the students’ responses toward it in learning writing.

1.2 Research Questions

To lead the study to be more specific elaboration, the study is conducted to answer the following questions:

- a) To what extent does the use of blog-mediated feedback improve students' writing skills?
- b) What are the students' responses toward the use of blog-mediated feedback in learning writing?

1.3 Aims of the Study

Regarding the research questions above, the aims of this study are:

- a) To reveal the extent to which the use of blog-mediated feedback improves students' writing skills.
- b) To find out the students' responses toward blog-mediated feedback in learning writing.

1.4 Scope of the Study

This study focuses on two concerns. The first is to reveal the extent to which the use of blog-mediated feedback improves students' writing skills, and the second is to find out the students' responses toward the use of blog-mediated feedback in learning writing. This study was limited to one public senior high school in Bandung; more significantly tenth graders of English cross-interest class as the main participants. Moreover, the text genre used in this research paper was report text. And as this research is intentionally designed as qualitative case study descriptive, the research result will not be generalized to a broader context.

1.5 Significances of the Study

There are three points of significance which are expected to come from the results of the study, namely theoretical, practical, and professional.

Theoretically, the study is expected to enrich the literature or references for the upcoming research related to blog-mediated feedback.

Practically, this study will give another innovation for EFL teachers in teaching and assessing writing, another reference to put modern technique in

providing and receiving feedback as well as a reference to improve students' writing performance.

Professionally, the research findings can be used as good references for other researchers who are interested in continuing the research on improving students' writing ability through blog-mediated feedback.

1.6 Clarifications of Key Terms

To avoid misconception of terms used in the study, the following definitions are provided:

a) Blog

Blog is one of Web 2.0 applications. It is an online journal media that continuously updated and published on the internet (Campbell, 2003).

b) Feedback

Feedback can be defined as information of what is good and what needs to be improved in the writing, which is provided by the reader to the writer for revision (Keh, 1990; Purnawarman, 2011).

c) Writing

Writing is one of the four language skills besides listening, speaking and reading. Writing is an act of discovering and organizing ideas, putting them on paper and revising them. (Meyers, 2005)

d) Report Text

Report text (or factual report text) refers to a text genre that aims to classify an object and then describe its characteristic (Emilia and Christie, 2013).

1.7 Organization of the Paper

The research study is organized into five chapters. Each chapter has subtopics which are organized as follows:

Chapter I Introduction; this chapter includes the background of the study, the research questions, the scope of the study, the purposes of the study, the significances of the study, clarification of key terms, and the organization of the research paper.

Chapter II Theoretical Framework; this chapter provides theoretical foundations of the topic which are relevant to the study. It also presents some previous studies that are related to the use of blog mediated-feedback in writing.

Chapter III Research Methodology; this chapter discusses the methodology in conducting and analyzing this research. It includes research design, site and participants, times of the research, research procedures, steps of data collection, and data analysis.

Chapter IV Findings and Discussion; this chapter elaborates the result of the study including the analysis of data based on the data collection and theoretical framework, and the interpretation of the findings from the study.

Chapter V Conclusion and Suggestions; this chapter concludes the findings and the discussions obtained from the collected data. In addition, some suggestions for the better improvement of the next research are also offered.

1.8 Concluding Remarks

This chapter has discussed the background of the study, the research questions, the scope of the study, the purposes of the study, the significances of the study, clarification of key terms, and the organization of the research paper. In the next chapter, this paper will discuss the theoretical framework of the research.