CHAPTER III
RESEARCH METHOD

In order to answer the research questions presented in Chapter I, there are several steps in the study that need to be elaborated. This chapter deals with the research method, the site and participants, the data collection, and the data analysis.

3.1 Research Questions

There are two research questions formulated for the study. These questions will be answered through the research method that will be explained in the following subchapters:

1. To what extent does self-directed feedback affect the students' writing skills?
2. What is the students' response to the inclusion of self-directed feedback in their writing activity?

3.2 Research Design

The method used in this study is qualitative. Qualitative research, as Creswell (2009, p. 1) stated, "… is a means for exploring and understanding the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to social or human problem." The justification of using qualitative as a method is as follows.

Much research talking about self-directed feedback has been focusing on its effectiveness and students' preference when it is being compared to other kinds of feedbacks—peer and teacher feedback (see Berger, 1990, Zhang, 1995, and Ferris, 2003). Most of the research has used quantitative method which in turn still invites many questions as to a deeper explanation on the specific traits that made the students prefer or disfavor the activity. Morse (as cited in Creswell, 2009) stated that when a researcher is still not sure about the important variables necessary to be examined, qualitative research can be useful since it is also exploratory. Furthermore, Morse (as cited in Creswell, 2009) added that

qualitative approach may be needed when the topic has never been addressed with a certain sample of group of people. As the self-directed feedback has never been applied in high school, there is an importance to also seek the students' response in an exploratory answer besides seeing how far the self-directed feedback may affect their writing. Therefore, the use of qualitative method was preferred.

A case study was employed to carry out the research as well as answering the research questions. According to Neuman (2007), in case-study research, there will be a number of cases which is observed by a researcher over certain duration of time in order for it to result in varied and extensive data. In the process of the research, only a few cases are selected by the researcher as it is important to capture an issue to be studied inside a specific context (Neuman, 2007). The data taken were in a qualitative form, as what was stated by Lier (as cited in Hinkel, 2005, p. 195), "Case study research is primarily a form of qualitative and interpretive research, …" Even though the data were not presented in form of numbers, according to Neuman (2007, p. 89), "Qualitative data are empirical." The process of research that records what people say and studies written documents are included into the concrete aspects of the world (Neuman, 2007). This is exactly how the study was carried out. Some students were selected to portray how self-directed feedback happened in the context of high school level. The data were taken in a qualitative form through interviews and document analysis. Therefore, this research is categorized into a case study.

3.3 Site and Participants

This study was conducted in one of public senior high schools in Bandung. The institution was chosen because the researcher was familiar with the context and also the participants, as the school was the place where the researcher did a teacher training before.

Nine students of eleven graders majoring in science were chosen due to several considerations. The first concern was the knowledge of teacher about the students. As the students stepped into their second year at school, the teachers are assumed to have enough understanding about the students' characteristics and

ability in writing, including the aspects they are still lacking in. This would be helpful in defining the students later on in the data analysis. The second concern is related to the readiness of the students to write. Generally, the students have learned English in their formal education for at least 4 years—three years in junior high school, a year in senior high, or more if they started to learn English since elementary school—in which they have been objected to learn five text types—descriptive, procedure, report, narrative, and news item—in both reading and writing (see *Standar Isi SMP dan SMA*). In this stage, the students should be already familiar with diverse writing activities including feedback, even if the self-directed feedback may or may not be experienced yet.

The sampling in qualitative research, according to Neuman (2007) usually focuses on how the small collection of cases elaborates the key features of social life. Therefore, the cases collected are supposed to be taken to clarify and deepen understanding (Neuman, 2007).

3.4 Data collection

One of the data collection techniques in qualitative study is field research which is most often used in exploratory and descriptive studies (Neuman, 2007). In field research, a researcher may conduct interview and opt for document analysis. These two data collection techniques were also mentioned in Mackey and Gass (2005) who stated that:

> In data collection, ethnographic research (as the most typical and concrete example of qualitative research) does not usually use "instruments," rather "processes" that are supposedly free of bias and prior assumptions: free, prolonged observation, at times "participant observation," open-ended interviews, "triangulation" of information and interpretation, "informant checking," access to existing documents. (p. 165)

Out of all instruments mentioned above, this study used two kinds of data collection: in-depth interview and access to existing documents. These two tools are considered the most suitable to assist in answering the research questions. The in-depth interview was used mainly to see the students' response through the

process of self-feedback. The justification for this is that the reason why some students may have negative or positive response towards self-feedback had not been discovered yet in the previous research, therefore it is hoped to be able to answer the question. As for the document analysis, this is seen as the most suitable way to look at the students' progress in writing. Their writing can represent progress as well as their level of proficiency in writing, and both are important for the discussion in the next chapter. The analysis also involves a triangulation in interpretation.

3.4.1 In-depth interview

An interview, as was stated by Mackey and Gass (2005) makes phenomena which are not directly observable (such as perceptions and attitude) possible to be examined. An in-depth interview, from the perspective of Hatch (2002), was designed with a purpose of going deeper to the understanding of informants. Most of qualitative researchers use an in-depth interview to result in enlightenment from the respondents' experiences and perspectives through their words (Hesse-Biber and Leavy, 2010). As the questions were made in order to dig for the students' responses, it is hoped that the interviews enable them to talk further about their perceptions and also experience during the self-directed feedback was applied in the classroom. In order to get further information from the participants, an interview was given to nine students who represent top, middle, and bottom tiers in their classroom. Based on the level of control of the interviewer, the interview is semi-structured. According to Hesse-Biber and Leavy (2010), semi-structured interview are indicated by a more loose conversation even though a certain set of questions are still used as guidelines. This may result in unexpected directions as the conversations flow more naturally (Hesse-Biber and Leavy, 2010). This unexpected direction, however, is hoped to produce better findings, as the previous research did not talk much about students' response to self-directed feedback. The guideline questions are presented as follows:

1. What do you think about the previous English lessons?

2. What do you feel about the previous English lessons?

3. Did the activity make the writing process easier? Or even harder? Why?

4. If the activity was helpful, in what ways did the activities help you in writing?

5. What are the steps that you do in making your own self-directed feedback?

The above questions were not only intended to help giving an insight on what the students' response towards the activity is. Question number five works as a confirmation on the findings derived from the document analysis.

The interviews were conducted individually in which the students are called one by one to have an informal talk with the researcher. An informal setting is considered necessary in order to provide an ease for the interviewee, so that real and authentic answers can be derived. It was also carried out in bahasa Indonesia to provide comfort for the interviewee during the conversation.

3.4.2 Document Analysis

In the study, the students were asked to write a report text under six topics: chocolate, animation, greenhouse effect, bee, cactus, and microscope. The first meeting was used to have a recap about report text only to remind them about the generic structure, as well as the nature of report text. The researcher, who acted as a teacher in this meeting, did this by purpose since the topic of report text had been discussed in the class with their teacher. That is why the time was not spent too much on explaining the basics of report text. After that, still in that meeting, they chose one topic out of six, and they were expected to make their first draft before the next meeting. At the second meeting, as the students brought their first drafts to the class, the researcher asked them to formulate a self-directed feedback for their own texts. The researcher informed them about several aspects that they could work on: generic structure, punctuation, spelling, vocabulary, and grammar. In the next two meetings, they continued to work on their feedback and revise the text. They had the chance to revise their writing until the fourth draft. The students were asked to work on their texts from September 9, 2013 to September 23, 2013 or two weeks in total to finish until the final draft. After that, they were asked to collect all of their drafts—from the first to the fourth—to be analyzed.

In making the initial text and the revisions, the students were allowed to do it at home. The only procedure that was expected to happen directly in the classroom was the formulation of self-directed feedback, so that the teacher can be present during the activity.

3.5 Data Analysis

After the data were acquired, the researcher needed to analyze them in order to draw conclusion. As the study used qualitative approach, all of the data would be presented in a descriptive manner. According to Neuman (2007), qualitative researchers, rather than relying on displays of numbers, put a better attention to interpreting the data. Mackey and Gass (2002) also mentioned that in qualitative research, the data taken are seen holistically which means that they are not chunked into different components, and would rather trail the objects' interpretation.

Furthermore, Neuman (2007) mentioned that a qualitative interpretation goes through three stages. The first step is when a researcher starts with seeing through things from the perspective of people he or she is studying in order to see what things mean to them (Neuman, 2007). The second step involves a second-order interpretation, in which he or she moves from staying in the people's perspective to acknowledging that no matter how much involvement he or she may have in the research, he or she should stay outside the circle (Neuman, 2007). It was also stated that this step usually includes a process when the researcher tries to place the data into a larger context (Neuman, 2007). At the last step, a qualitative researcher moves further to linking the understanding he or she has achieved with a larger concepts' generalization or theories (Neuman, 2007). In this stage, the researcher finally 'communicates' with people who are more distant to the data they are seeing (Neuman, 2007).

3.5.1 In-depth interview

The data taken from the individual interviews were recorded using a voice recorder. The interviews were transcribed for a better analysis, and the result will

be interpreted in a way that points out the main issues in the research questions. The analysis of the transcription was focused mainly to answer the first research question as well as supporting a better answer for the second question regarding students' treatment to their own writing and feedback. The result will be linked with the proper literature which will be presented in the next chapter.

3.5.2 Document Analysis

In order to look at the extent to which self-directed feedback affects students' writing skills, the researcher read and comprehended each and every drafts of the students. As a limitation of this study, what was analyzed from the students' texts is their progress which is categorized by the types of error. Errors, according to Thornbury (as cited in Hernàndez, 2011) can be categorized into three different types, which are lexical errors, grammar errors, and discourse errors. Lexical errors refer to mistakes at the word level, which also include word choice for meaning that the writer wants to convey. Grammar errors refer to mistakes in structures, and it may involve wrong verbal tenses, incorrect verbal forms, and syntax problems. Discourse errors, then, deal with sentences organization and how they are connected to make a whole text. As a limitation, this study only looked at the error in terms of following aspects (adapted from Hernàndez, 2011). It will also include mechanics, even though it is not included to the types mentioned by Thornbury (as cited in Hernàndez, 2011) because it also matters in reaching understanding of students' text. The types of error is summarized in a table below.

Table 1. Types of Error

Type of error	Description
Lexical error	Vocabulary
Grammar error	Subject verb agreement, plural/singular nouns, modal verbs
Discourse error	Organization
Mechanics	Spelling, punctuation, capitalization

After that, the data were seen in detail as to what signifies each aspect before they were linked with the related literature. The elaboration is going to mainly answer the first research question given in the first chapter.

Their texts were analyzed only in terms of the organization, mechanics, grammar, and vocabulary. The researcher looked at their errors on those parts and their attempt to fix them. If, for example, the students had mistakes in grammar in their first draft, then the researcher would look at the subsequent drafts (second, third, and fourth) to see whether changes were made in the place where the mistakes were seen before. If they made correct changes, then it would be regarded as a progress in grammar. Another scenario would be the students made changes but they happened to be incorrect. In that case, the progress was not present. This also means that even if the students happened to be marking their mistakes by circling or underlining it, as long as the correct changes were not seen in the next drafts, then they would not be counted as a progress. The analogy applied to the other three aspects mentioned before, and the details as to what is seen as "mistakes" or "error" would be elaborated further in the next chapter.

3.6 Concluding Remark

This chapter has presented research method of the study which consists of research questions, research design, site and participants, data collection, and data analysis. From this application of this method, a set of data was acquired, and the findings and discussion will be presented in the next chapter.