

CHAPTER I

Introduction

1.1 Background

As we know writing is an important skill that should be mastered by students. As Alwasilah (2003:19) said, writing is the most complex constructive act of human beings expected to perform. Troyka (1987; 2-3) said that we should bother writing because of four reasons. First, because writing is a way of thinking and learning. Second, because writing is a way of discovering. Third, because writing creates reading and the fourth because writing ability is needed by educated people.

But in the reality, teachers and students perceive writing as the most difficult skills to teach and to learn, and unfortunately, it has long been neglected in Indonesian schools (Alwasilah, 2003: 23). It is a fact that academics are more used to using the spoken channel of communication than the written in their everyday work; lectures, seminars and tutorials provide plenty of opportunities for sharpening oral skills, but opportunities for developing writing skills are much harder to come by. The writing class, according to many students experience, is merely just transferring process of theories of writing rather than the practice itself. Beside, the environment in most Indonesian public school or colleges in which they have a big number of students makes the teacher difficult to control and revise each students' draft. In fact, feedback is very important for the students, without a valuable feedback from the others, students will be hard to

notice their mistake. So, a good feedback is needed for the students to improve their writing skills. ¹¹

From the reasons above, various adopted techniques of giving feedback to the students have been adopted by writing experts. One of them is peer feedback. According to

www.mtholyoke.edu/acad/programs/WCI/saw/faculty/guides/write/index.shtml,

peer feedback is the process by which students exchange constructive criticism on their work to help each other edit and share their critical reading, writing, and speaking skills. They can get many valuable feedbacks from their classmates or their teacher. There are many benefits of peer feedback:

- Provides a wider audience for students writers;
- Teaches students to critically analyze their own writing and the writing of others
- Motivates students to create multiple drafts and undergo substantial revisions;
- Familiarizes students with the format, style, criteria, and expectations of writing in the discipline being studied;
- Promotes active learning;
- Builds classroom communities;
- Models the interpersonal, interactive, and group problem solving nature of most workplace writing.

One thing that a writer should consider while giving feedback is the amount of correction on the end product. According to Zeliha Gulcat and Oya Ozagac (2004), in academic writing, the end of product is expected to have:

- A wide range of vocabulary
- Correct grammar
- Meaningful punctuation
- Accurate spelling
- Varied sentence structures
- Unity and coherence in ideas
- Well-supported and explained major points

In EFL context, the problem that most students usually encounter is concerned with linguistic or grammatical matters. According to Wirza's research (2000), although students have accomplished some related course that are important to support their ability to write such as grammar, syntax, introduction to linguistics, and reading courses, they still have some problems in writing, especially in terms of grammar.

It has to be improved because grammar is important in writing. The writer who has not mastered grammar – in the sense of the structures – sentences – will have some difficulties getting his or her ideas down on paper, will fumble about, will use more words than necessary, and will find writing to be enormously frustrating.

It is not the only problem that students face in making a written text. Students shouldn't focus only on grammar because students start to think that

grammar is the only thing that counts in writing. In making a written text the students always do many mistakes such as, inaccurate spelling, wrong punctuation, and incorrect capitalization. It is because they only focus on the content of their written text and finally they do not bother to edit the spelling, punctuation, and capitalization mistakes.

The above reasons make it important to find out the effectiveness of peer feedback for the improvement of students writing skills by seeing the number of grammatical and mechanical (spelling, punctuation, and capitalization) mistakes correction in the end of product. By analyzing students work in writing descriptive text, we will find out whether peer feedback is effective or not in improving students writing skills especially in improving their linguistic and mechanical ability.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

As Maxwell (1996) says, research question (s) will help the researcher (s) focus the study and give them guidance on how to conduct it. In this paper, some research questions to be answered are proposed. They are as follow:

1. Is peer feedback effective for improving student's writing skills?
2. Is peer feedback better than conventional method in improving student's writing skill?
3. What are student's perceptions toward peer feedback?

1.3 Focus of the Study

In compliance with the research questions above, the study is limited in that the focus of it is limited to find out the effectiveness of peer feedback that is given by the other students and by the teacher through analyzing the grammatical and mechanical mistakes in student's writing work. Student's writing work itself is a descriptive text. So, the sense of effectiveness itself here is narrowed down to the number of grammatical and mechanical mistakes that students made in the descriptive text. The grammatical mistakes that will be analyzed here is the tenses of the text that is simple present tense.

1.4 Significance of the Study

Sometimes students feel confused when their teacher asks them to write. Moreover, they become dislike writing because most often when their teacher revise or correct their writing work, he/ she only criticizes the mistakes that they make. It is discouraging the students to write. For the teacher, himself/ herself writing skill is a 'hard work' because he/she should correct and revise hundreds of student's writing work.

This study seeks to find out the effectiveness of peer feedback in improving students writing skills. In this case is writing descriptive text. Hopefully, with this technique students and teacher will enjoy writing class.

1.5 Hypothesis

After obtaining the data and analyzing it, hypotheses are made related to this subject. The hypotheses proposed in the study are:

1. There is no difference between peer feedback and conventional method
2. There is a difference between peer feedback and conventional method.

1.6 Aims of the Study

Several objectives are to be achieved in this study. They are as follow:

1. To identify whether or not peer feedback is difference with conventional method.
2. To identify the difference between peer feedback and conventional method.

1.7 Methodology

Methodology is the way a researcher answering the question of the research. It is divided into five parts, they are: research methodology, population and sample, research instrument, research designs and data analysis.

1.7.1 Research Methodology

Deciding an appropriate method for conducting a study before doing it is of great importance. As for this study, the methodology applied is the quantitative research design. Quantitative method is a method that will deal with data in the form of scores and numbers. In this study, the quasi experimental (nonequivalent

pre-test post-test control group design) is used as the research design.

Schematically the design in this study is as follow:

$$\begin{array}{c} G_1 \quad T_1 \quad X \quad T_2 \\ G_2 \quad T_1 \quad \quad T_2 \end{array}$$

G_1 : Experimental Group

G_2 : Control Group

X : Treatment

T_1 : Pre-test

T_2 : Post-test

Gibson (1996)

1.7.2 Population and Sample

People are not only one appropriate to be the samples of the study, the other aspects such as setting, events and process may be included to the samples of the study. Subjects of the study cover population and sample. The first grade students of junior high school in MTsN Ciwaringin Cirebon are taken as population. It is done to the fact that in curriculum 2006 descriptive text is taught in the first grade of Junior High School and the first grade students of Junior High School in MTsN Ciwaringin Cirebon has been applying genre-based approach to English language teaching.

Meanwhile, 42 students of class VII B is chosen as the sample of the study. They will be divided into two groups, there are experimental group and control group. Each group consists of 21 students and they will be randomly selected.

1.7.3 Research Instrument

To answer the research questions the writer will use two kinds of instrument, they are test and questionnaire. In this study there will be two kinds of tests, pre-test and post-test. Pre-test will be given at the beginning of the research and post-test will be given at the end of the study. In the end of the study, the writer will compare the scores of pre-test and post-test from both groups. It is done due to the fact that to find the effectiveness of peer feedback there should be a comparison result. The questionnaire is given only to the experimental group to investigate student's perception towards peer feedback.

1.7.4 Research Procedures

Some procedures were followed in conducting this research: first administering try out test in order to seek the validity and reliability of the text, second organizing teaching procedures in the experimental and the control group. Third administering pre-test to both groups in order to investigate the initial abilities of the two groups. Fourth is conducting the experiment teaching. Fifth, administering post-test to both groups in order to investigate the results of the treatments. The last step is analyzing the data obtained from the pre-test and post-test.

1.7.5 Data Analysis

The data analysis performed in this study involved several statistic processes: first analyzing the try out test scores. Second, analyzing the

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experimental and control group's scores in the pre-test using t-test formula in order to investigate whether or not the two groups are equivalent. Third, analyzing the student's scores of each group in pre-test and post-test using t-test formula in order to investigate whether or not there was a significant improvement in student's scores. The fourth is analyzing the student's perceptions using percentage. The last process is interpreting the research findings.

1.8 Clarification of the Main Terms

In order to avoid misinterpretation in understanding the problem and the main terms in this study, some terms are to be clarified as follow:

1. Peer feedback

Peer feedback is the process by which students exchange constructive criticism on their work to help each other edit and hone their critical writing skill. In this process students will evaluate their friends work and find out the grammatical mistakes that their friends make

2. Descriptive text

Descriptive text is one kind of text that tells about the description of something, for example the description of school.

3. Effectiveness

Effectiveness in this context is the final work of the student's writing work. It means that if peer feedback is effective for improving student's writing skill, the number of grammar mistakes that they make after getting feedback from their friends will be minimized.

4. Writing skill

Writing skill is student's ability in making written texts with a wide range of vocabulary, correct grammar, meaningful punctuation, accurate spelling, varied sentence structures, unity and coherence in ideas, and well supported and explained major points.

1.9 Organization of Paper

This paper is divided into 5 chapters

1. Chapter I: Introduction

This chapter is divided into 7 parts. They are background, statement of the problems, focus of the study, significance of the study, hypothesis, aims of the study, and methodology.

2. Chapter II: Theoretical foundation

This chapter is divided into 5 parts. They are the nature of writing, process of writing, aspects of writing, teaching writing, and peer feedback on writing.

3. Chapter III: Methodology

This chapter consists of 7 parts. They are research question, research design, research variables, population and sample, research instruments, and research procedures.

4. Chapter IV: Findings and Discussion

This chapter is divided into 6 parts. They are the computation on pre-test scores, the computation on post-test scores, the computation of experimental group scores, the computation of control group scores.

5. Chapter V: Conclusion

This last chapter is divided into two parts. They are conclusion and suggestion.

