

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 The Background of the Study

English is an international language that is used by most people in the world, including our country Indonesia. In language learning there are four important skills such as speaking, writing, reading, and listening that students must master. Brown (2001) stated that writing is the process of putting ideas down on paper to transform thoughts into words, sharpen the main idea, and give them structure and coherent organization. Richards and Renandya (2002: 303) define writing as very important and most required in academic fields. Student writing is the process of describing a language so that the message conveyed by the writer can be understood by the reader.

According to Harmer (2004), writing is a language skill that must be mastered if one wishes to master a language. Students in school can use writing to learn English because it allows them to put and explore an idea. However, the students must also pay attention to punctuation, word choice, and grammar. As a result, writing is one of the most difficult skills to master, especially for those whose English is not their first language. They are required to be able to write using sentences formally and according to grammatical rules. Writing is considered important for academic success because usually writing is used to be the most common assessment measure for academics to evaluate their students.

Since writing is important, there are some types of texts which are stated in the syllabus for Junior High School students. These texts include descriptive, recount, narrative, report, and procedure texts that students have to learn. A descriptive text is a type of text that is used to describe or illustrate something, such as a location, person, animal, object, or idea from the writer's point of view. Oshima and Hogue (1997: 50) explained that the text describes how something looks, feels, smells, tastes, and sounds. Gerot and Wignel (1994: 208) stated that descriptive text has the purpose to describe a particular thing, person, or place which shows the reader about the physical appearance of something clearly.

According to Richards and Renandya (2002: 316), there are some processes of writing in classroom activities, such as planning, drafting, revising, and editing. In the process of writing there must be planning, planning stage refers to motivating students to write and assisting them in generating ideas to begin their writing. In the drafting stage, the students write down their ideas based on the composition of the main ideas in the planning stage. Students can consult their ideas with the teachers and ask for help arranging the sentence structures. A revising stage, is a stage where a process of making changes throughout the writing of a draft occurs, a change that can make the draft congruent with the writer's intention. And the last stage of editing, students are tidying up their texts as they prepare the final draft for evaluation by the teacher. Feedback is an essential component of the writing process, and it helps students to improve their writing skills. The students need feedback which may come from various sources, such as teachers, peers, and so on. Teacher feedback is important to students.

When the teacher gives corrective feedback on students' mistakes was one of the important methods to improve their writing skills.

Hattie and Timperley (2007) states that feedback provides information about students' progress toward achieving learning goals and is one of the most potent factors influencing student achievement. Teachers' feedback can provide the students with information about their writing strengths and weaknesses and help them to identify areas where they need to improve. Additionally, feedback should focus on the process of writing rather than just the final product. They need to understand how to improve their writing skills, not just their written pieces. Thus, teachers should provide feedback that highlights areas of improvement, suggests strategies for addressing those areas, and encourages students to apply those strategies in future writing tasks (Shute, 2008).

Feedback is divided into two activities. The first one is indirect feedback, which means the teacher reads a student's paper and gives comments through writing. The student then read the revision based on the teachers' writing. The second one is direct feedback. It means we have to make a consultation with the teacher or face-to-face after the teacher comments about writing. Both of them have advantages and disadvantages. According to Lee (2008), when some students make a mistake, the teacher can help the students by correcting the mistake with direct and indirect feedback. Direct feedback can be given when students do not understand what the comment is about and also when the students made a complex error that is too difficult to explain.

Hattie and Timperley (2007) find feedback that focuses on correcting errors can lead to modest improvements in students' writing skills. However, if feedback only identifies errors without providing guidance on how to correct them, it may not be effective in improving student's writing abilities. In addition, the way students perceive written feedback can affect its effectiveness. And when students view feedback as useful and relevant, they are more likely to act on it and improve their writing skills (Carless and Boud, 2018). On the other hand, if students do not understand the feedback or view it as irrelevant, they may not act on it, and the feedback will not improve their writing abilities.

Based on the English syllabus students are expected to be able to write some simple descriptive texts about people, animals, and things. However, they have difficulty writing references. In addition, the result of the writer's preliminary observation, the researcher discovered most of the students at junior high school especially year VII students found it difficult to find the idea when they wrote. The students often do the same mistake in grammatical errors and mention the generic structure of the written text. They could not finish their writing at the end of the time set because of fewer ideas and vocabulary. Even though the teacher had given written feedback, some were still confused and not motivated in writing. Based on the previous observation, the researcher is interested in conducting research entitled "Students' Perception of Teacher's Written Feedback in Writing Descriptive Text at Junior High School".

1.2 The Problem of the Study

Based on the background of the study, the research problems formulated as follows:

1. What were the students' perceptions toward the written feedback given by the teacher in teaching of writing descriptive text at junior high school?
2. Why did the students have a perception the way they do?

1.3 Objectives of the Study

Based on the problems, this study aims to;

1. To describe the students' perceptions toward the teacher's written feedback in writing descriptive text at junior high school.
2. To find out the reasons why the students come to have perceptions the way they do

1.3 The Scope of the Study

This research focused on students' perceptions of the teacher's written feedback in writing descriptive text. And the reasons why the students come to have perceptions the way they do. The researcher limits the focus of the English writing text to descriptive text about the person. Participants of this research were year VII students at junior high school in Medan.

1.5 The Significance of the Study

The researcher expected the result of this study to provide contributions to language teaching and learning, both theoretically and practically.

1. Theoretically:

The result of the study can be used as input in English teaching practices, especially regarding the teacher's role in English teaching. The findings of this study can be used as a reference for those who want to research the English teaching and learning process.

2. Practically:

a. For the students

The findings of this study could help students learn to write better their writing by having a clearer understanding of the teacher's written feedback. They can accept both negative and good feedback perceptions. It is also expected that a preference will show for increasing students' motivation to learn in the classroom.

b. For the teacher

This study provided English teachers with a detailed description of writing feedback, including how students perceive and interpret the feedback they receive. Hopefully, now that they are aware of the findings of this study, their input will be more successful in improving the students' writing.

c. For the researcher

The researcher hopes this study can provide information and explanation related to the topic, which is the concern of the research.