

# A COMPARATIVE STUDY BETWEEN TEACHER'S DIRECT AND INDIRECT FEEDBACK TECHNIQUES IN IMPROVING STUDENTS' DESCRIPTIVE WRITING AT THE FIRST GRADE OF SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL 1 TRIMURJO CENTRAL LAMPUNG

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**Abstrak.** Tujuan dari penelitian ini adalah untuk mengetahui apakah terdapat perbedaan yang signifikan dalam hasil pencapaian menulis teks deskriptif antara siswa yang diajar menggunakan umpan balik dari guru secara langsung dan tidak langsung dan untuk mengetahui aspek manakah dalam hal keterampilan mikro yang paling meningkat setelah penerapan umpan balik oleh guru secara langsung dan tidak langsung. Penelitian ini dilakukan di SMAN 1 Trimurjo, Lampung Tengah pada semester kedua tahun ajaran 2018/2019. Peneliti menggunakan pendekatan kuantitatif. Tes menulis diberikan untuk melihat peningkatan menulis teks deskriptif siswa. Data yang diperoleh dari tes menulis dianalisis dengan menggunakan SPSS; hasil analisis menunjukkan bahwa kedua teknik umpan balik tersebut efektif untuk meningkatkan kemampuan menulis teks deskriptif siswa; konten merupakan aspek penulisan yang paling meningkat di kelas yang diberikan umpan balik secara langsung dan tidak langsung. Selain itu, analisis statistik menunjukkan bahwa terdapat peningkatan yang berbeda dalam kemampuan menulis teks deskriptif antara siswa yang diajar menggunakan umpan balik secara langsung dan tidak langsung.

**Kata Kunci:** teks deskriptif, umpan balik dari guru, umpan balik secara langsung, umpan balik secara tidak langsung.

**Abstract.** The objectives of this research were to find out whether there was a significant difference between descriptive writing achievement of students in teacher's direct feedback class and in teacher's indirect feedback class and to find out which aspect of writing in terms of micro skills improved the most after the implementation of the teacher's direct and indirect feedbacks. This research was conducted at SMAN 1 Trimurjo, Central Lampung at the second semester of 2018/2019 academic year. The researcher used quantitative approach. In order to see the students' descriptive writing improvement, the writing tests were administered. The data taken from the writing tests were analyzed by using SPSS; it reveals that the two feedback techniques were effective to improve the students' descriptive writing; content was the aspect of writing that improved the most by both feedback techniques. In addition, the statistical analysis showed that there was a different improvement of students' descriptive writing between the students who were taught through Teacher's Direct Feedback and Teacher's Indirect Feedback techniques.

**Keywords:** descriptive writing, teacher's feedback, direct feedback, indirect feedback.

## INTRODUCTION

Writing plays the important role in English language education because it is one of the four skills – listening, speaking, reading, and writing – that is needed to be learned by English learners. Nunan (2003: 88) states that writing is the process of thinking to invent ideas, thinking about how to express into good writing, and arranging the ideas into statement and paragraph clearly. It means that the learners are expected to explore ideas and to make them into a good paragraph. In general, the objective of writing is to produce a kind of writing composition. As stated in Curriculum 2013, the students in senior high school have to be able not only to understand the nature of writing but also to produce certain various short functional writing compositions, monologues and essays in the form of procedure, descriptive, recount, and report writing. Therefore, it is important for students or English learners to learn how to write well in English.

In order to write well in English, the students must pay attention to five aspects of writing, which are content, organization, vocabulary, language use, and mechanics. Nevertheless, in reality, many students at a senior high school think that producing a good English writing composition is not easy since they make many basic mistakes in their written works about spelling, grammar, punctuation marks, and organization; it makes the students sometimes believe that they will never be able to write well in English because they identify writing with the proper spelling and grammar.

In addition, during the researcher's experience in Teacher Training Practice (*PPL, Praktik Pengalaman Lapangan*) in SMAN 1 Purbolinggo and pre-observation in SMAN 1 Trimurjo, the researcher found that besides the aspects of writing, the technique which is used by the teachers also be the reason that makes the students of senior high school are not interested in writing. Firstly, in teaching writing skill, the teacher uses a conventional technique that makes the students bored and not interested in the learning process. Secondly, after explaining the material by using a conventional method, the teacher directly asks the students to make a writing composition individually. Thirdly, after the students have made the composition, they only get the score without knowing their mistakes in their writing.

With regard to the previous clarification, the researcher uses the teacher's feedback to teach English writing. According to Harmer (2001: 97), feedback is sensory information that a person receives as a result of a response. Presumably, it is a crucial aspect of the writing process. There are two features of feedback advantages. Firstly, through feedback, learners come to distinguish for themselves whether they are performing well or not (Li, 2009: 1). Secondly, feedback is helpful in encouraging students not to consider what they write as a final product and in helping them to write multiple drafts and to revise their writing several times in order to produce a much-improved piece of writing.

In addition, Panova & Lyster (2002: 573) explained that by using the teacher's feedback in writing classes directly or indirectly, the student will understand the mistakes he has done, learn from them, and their ability to write accurately will be improved. He also added that if teachers do not correct their students'

mistakes, “fossilization” will occur and it will become very difficult to eliminate these errors later.

According to Nation (2009: 139), there are many types of feedback; it can come from the teacher, from peers and from the learners themselves in self-assessment. For the purpose of this research, much attention will be given to the feedback that comes from the teacher. It is called the teacher’s feedback. Basically, there are two types of teacher’s feedback that can be given to the students to improve their writing ability, namely direct and indirect feedbacks.

Ferris (2002: 19) states that direct feedback is a technique of correcting students’ errors by giving explicitly written feedback. It simply means that the feedback is provided when a teacher gives the student with the correct form of their errors or mistakes. In contrast, indirect feedback is more beneficially. It gives students the opportunity to fix the errors themselves by providing a clue of what kind of error they do (Ferris, 2002: 19). As for this type, the teacher underlines the errors or mistakes for the students and writes the symbol above the targeted errors. It becomes the student’s task to diagnose and correct their sentences.

In line with the explanation above, it can be inferred that by using teacher’s feedback, the students will know and realize their mistakes. Consequently, they learn from the mistakes which have been done and make a better writing composition.

## **METHODS**

The researcher used a quantitative approach. The design was two groups pretest and posttest design. The population of this research was the first grade students of SMAN 1 Trimurjo. Trimurjo is one of the regions in Lampung Province, which is precisely located in Central Lampung. For the sample of this research, the researcher took two classes; the first class was X IIS 1 which was as the experimental class and the second class was X IIS 2 which was as the control class. Those samples were chosen by a lottery technique so all classes got the same chance to be a sample.

The instrument, which was used in this research, was a writing test that consisted of a pretest and a posttest. The pretest was given in the beginning of meeting before the students get the treatments, while the students were given the posttest after students got the treatments. The treatment was conducted in three meetings in each class. In analyzing the data in both classes, the researcher used Independent T-test of SPSS 16.00 to find out whether there was a difference in both classes. The researcher also used ANOVA test to find the significant difference between one aspect of writing and the others.

According to Hatch and Farhady (1982: 281), there are two basic types of validity: content validity and construct validity. First, content validity is concerned with the comprehensiveness and representativeness of the instruments toward the material which was taught. In this type of validity, the material given should be suitable with the curriculum. Precisely, in this research, the material given was

suitable with the Curriculum 2013 which was applied in SMAN 1 Trimurjo, Central Lampung.

Second, construct validity is needed for the instrument which has some indicators in measuring one aspect or construct of a language skill. If the instrument, which is a test, has several aspects and every aspect is measured by some indicators, the indicators must have positive association one another. In addition, this research administered a writing test, which consisted of a pretest and posttest, as the instrument. It investigated the result of the students' descriptive writing based on five aspects of writing: content, organization, language use, vocabulary, and mechanics. Therefore, it can be concluded that the test of this research was valid because in maintaining the validity, the researcher used the indicators which were stated in the competency and syllabus of the curriculum of senior high school.

In order to avoid subjectivity of the research, the researcher used inter-rater reliability. It refers to the concern that a students' score may vary from the first rater, which was the researcher, to the second rater, which was the English teacher in the classes which were as the samples. The calculation showed that the coefficient of rank correlation of the pretest in the experimental class was 0.91 and the posttest was 0.95, while in the control class, the coefficient of rank correlation in the pretest was 0.88 and in the posttest was 0.93. It could be assumed that this instrument had a very high reliability and proper to be used to get the data.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Results

After conducting the research, the researcher gathered the result of the pretest and the posttest of both classes as follows:

**Table 1. Distribution of Students' Score of Pretest and Posttest**

| Class                       | Mean of Pretest | Mean of Posttest | Gain  |
|-----------------------------|-----------------|------------------|-------|
| Teacher's Direct Feedback   | 58.90           | 68.05            | 9.15  |
| Teacher's Indirect Feedback | 55.25           | 67.25            | 12.00 |

Table 1 reveals that both feedback techniques improve students' descriptive writing. Teaching descriptive writing through two different feedback techniques gave different result on the students' descriptive writing score, which the teacher's indirect feedback is better than the direct one. After analyzing the improvement of the students' descriptive writing scores in both classes, the researcher used Independent T-test to answer the first research question. The result of the test is elaborated in the following table:

**Table 2. The Comparison between Teacher's Direct and Indirect Feedback**

|      |                             | Independent Samples Test                |      |                              |        |      |                 |                       |   |       |
|------|-----------------------------|---|------|------------------------------|--------|------|-----------------|-----------------------|---|-------|
|      |                             | Levene's Test for Equality of Variances |      | t-test for Equality of Means |        |      |                 |                       |   |       |
|      |                             | F                                       | Sig. | T                            | df     | Sig. | Mean Difference | Std. Error Difference | 95% Confidence Interval of the Difference |       |
|      |                             |   |      |                              |        |      |                 |                       | Lower                                     | Upper |
| Gain | Equal variances assumed     | .093                                    | .762 | 2.355                        | 38     | .012 | 2.850           | 1.210                 | .400                                      | 5.300 |
|      | Equal variances not assumed |   |      | 2.355                        | 36.914 | .012 | 2.850           | 1.210                 | .398                                      | 5.302 |

Table 2 shows that the results of the computation of the value of one tailed significance for equality of variance is 0.762 ( $p > 0.05$ ). It means that the data were homogeneous. Besides that, t-test table shows that the value of one tailed significance for equality of means is 0.012 ( $p < 0.05$ ). It indicates that there is a significant difference between the students who have been taught by the teacher's direct and indirect feedbacks.

Besides, the researcher found that both the teacher's feedbacks could improve the students' descriptive writing in terms of all aspects of writing and there was a difference between one aspect and the others numerically, so the researcher used ANOVA test to find out if there are significant differences among all the aspects of writing statistically. Firstly, it can be seen in the following table the result of ANOVA test of the teacher's indirect class:

**Table 3. ANOVA Test of the Aspects of Writing in Teacher's Indirect Class**

| ANOVA          |                |    |             |       |      |
|----------------|----------------|----|-------------|-------|------|
| Score          |                |    |             |       |      |
|                | Sum of Squares | Df | Mean Square | F     | Sig. |
| Between Groups | 34.275         | 4  | 8.569       | 3.171 | .017 |
| Within Groups  | 256.725        | 95 | 2.702       |       |      |
| Total          | 291.000        | 99 |             |       |      |

Table 3 shows that the value of one tailed significance is 0.017 or ( $p < 0.05$ ). It means that H1 is accepted; it can be revealed that the means of the aspects of writing in the teacher's indirect feedback class are unequal. Secondly, it can be seen in the following table the result of ANOVA test of the teacher's direct class:

**Table 4. ANOVA Test of the Aspects of Writing in Teacher's Direct Class**

| ANOVA          |                |    |             |       |      |
|----------------|----------------|----|-------------|-------|------|
| Score          |                |    |             |       |      |
|                | Sum of Squares | Df | Mean Square | F     | Sig. |
| Between Groups | 16.175         | 4  | 4.044       | 2.856 | .028 |
| Within Groups  | 134.512        | 95 | 1.416       |       |      |
| Total          | 150.688        | 99 |             |       |      |

Table 4 reveals that the value of one tailed significance is 0.028 or ( $p < 0.05$ ). It means that H1 is accepted; it can be revealed that the means of the aspects of writing in the teacher's direct feedback class are unequal.

Regarding to the analyses above, it can be concluded that there are differences of all aspects of writing in both classes. Furthermore, it is needed to discover which aspect that has the highest improvement in both classes. Thereby, in order to find out which aspect that improves the most in both classes, the gains of all the aspects are compared.

**Table 5. The Different Scores of Students' Descriptive Writing in Each Aspect of Writing between both Teacher's Feedback Classes**

| Aspects<br>Writing<br>of | Teacher's Indirect Feedback        |                                     |       | Teacher's Direct Feedback          |                                     |       |
|--------------------------|------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------|------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------|
|                          | Mean<br>Score of<br>The<br>Pretest | Mean<br>Score of<br>The<br>Posttest | Gain  | Mean<br>Score of<br>The<br>Pretest | Mean<br>Score of<br>The<br>Posttest | Gain  |
| <b>Content</b>           | 11.15                              | 14.575                              | 3.425 | 12.65                              | 14.90                               | 2.25  |
| <b>Organization</b>      | 11.675                             | 14.20                               | 2.525 | 12.575                             | 14.70                               | 2.125 |
| <b>Language Use</b>      | 11.30                              | 13.45                               | 2.15  | 12.425                             | 13.60                               | 1.175 |
| <b>Vocabulary</b>        | 11.975                             | 13.625                              | 1.65  | 12.70                              | 14.25                               | 1.50  |
| <b>Mechanics</b>         | 9.15                               | 11.40                               | 2.25  | 8.575                              | 10.60                               | 2.025 |
| <b>Total</b>             | 55.25                              | 67.25                               | 12.00 | 58.90                              | 68.05                               | 9.15  |

It can be seen from table above that content aspect in both classes are in the place with the highest gain. In the teacher's direct feedback class, it shows that the gain of the content aspect is 3.425 points; in the teacher's direct feedback, it reveals that the gain of the content aspect is 2.25 points.

## Discussion

In this research, there were two classes used as the sample of the research. The research was begun by conducting the pretest. The aim of the pretest is to see how the ability of the students in descriptive writing before the treatments. In the pretest of both classes, the researcher found out the capacity of the students. They were still lack of knowledge of writing aspects. For instance, it was difficult for the students to generate the ideas well. It was also found that the students still made simple mistakes in using grammar. The students also could not find some proper words in English. From the organization aspect, the students were not able to compose a product of writing in a well-organized composition. They were confused to organize the paragraph coherently. Besides, they also made mistakes for the mechanics aspect, such as omitting the use of period and comma and not using the capitalization well. Generally, the students did not know how to compose a good writing in the pretest; they only tend to write what came to their mind.

After being taught by both feedbacks, the students could improve their writing. From the results presented before, it can be seen that the score of the students' posttest was higher than the score of pretest in both classes. Firstly, in the experimental class, it can be seen from the mean score of the pretest was 55.25 that improved to 67.25 in the posttest. Secondly, in the control class, it can be seen from the mean score of the pretest was 58.90 that improved to 68.05 in the posttest.

With regard to the previous explanation, it can be inferred that teaching writing through the teacher's direct and indirect feedback techniques were effective. The students who were given errors feedback from the teacher had greater confidence to revise their draft and the next writing, so their writing improved. Moreover, Chandler (2003: 96) proved that feedback to be a way of improving the accuracy of L2 students' writing. When offering comments on the students' compositions, it means that teacher leads them to have a better writing, since it makes the students aware of mistakes they have done.

Moreover, it also can be said that there was a difference between the students who have been taught by teacher's indirect feedback and the teacher's direct feedback. It was supported by the result of two tailed 0.024 ( $p < 0.05$ ) in the hypothesis testing calculated by SPSS; the teacher's indirect feedback was better than the direct one. It is in a close agreement with Jamalinesari et al (2015: 121) who found that students' who received teacher's indirect feedback performed better than those received direct feedback. Since in this type of feedback, the students try to find the codes and rewrite the correct sentences, this makes them reflect more on their writing and consequently retain their grammatical knowledge. That is the reason why indirect feedback students decrease their number of errors during the treatment and finally they gain better result compared to the direct feedback.

The major improvement can be seen on the content aspect. The gain score of the content aspect was 28.54% in teacher's indirect feedback technique, while in the teacher's direct feedback, it was 25.20%. The content aspect improved the most because during the treatments, the researcher asked some questions related to the material to activate their background knowledge. Furthermore, the researcher also gave a planning sheet that had some steps which was started from the simple instruction to the complex one that was producing the descriptive writing. Likewise, the researcher also reminded the students to express their ideas freely, so most of the students were enthusiastic to express their ideas without feeling afraid of making a mistake. Besides, the students were capable to express their ideas more clearly after they were given feedbacks.

In contrast, the result shows that the minor improvement was on vocabulary aspect in the experimental class and language use aspect in the control class. In this case, the students made little improvement among other aspects. In the experimental class, vocabulary was the aspect that had a little improvement since the students had not understood to use the proper word. They were still lack of vocabulary. For instance, if the students did not know the word, they opened the dictionary and directly wrote the word as written in the dictionary, so sometimes it made the word that they chose was not proper with the context of their writing; in

the control class, language use was the aspect that had the minor improvement. In fact, the teacher's direct feedback in this research might help the students to produce the correct form of their writing when they revised it, thus it may not contribute to long-term learning. Consequently, the students' achievement in terms of language use in the teacher's direct feedback technique was the lowest.

With regard to the discussion of the findings above, the students gained significant improvement after the implementation of both feedback techniques in their writing scores. There was also the difference between both feedbacks; the result shows that the teacher's indirect feedback was better than the teacher's direct feedback. Besides, it was found that both feedback techniques not only able to improve the students' writing achievement, but also the students' achievement in every single aspect of writing. To put it another way, the aspects are content, organization, vocabulary, language use, and mechanics – in this study – increased. However, the content was the aspect of writing that improved the most by both the teacher's indirect feedback and the teacher's direct feedback techniques.

## **CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS**

### **Conclusion**

In line with the results of the data analysis and discussion, the writer concluded that On the whole, the two feedback techniques (Teacher's Direct and Indirect Feedbacks) improve students' ability to produce a descriptive writing. It is because the students were capable to get involved actively in the process of writing covering each aspect of writing. Thus, when offering comments and feedbacks on the students' compositions, it means that teacher leads them to have a better writing, since it makes the students aware of the errors and mistakes they have done. This can be seen from the results of the research which objectively improved students' writing ability. This is true since the average score in the pretest was 55.25 and the average score in the posttest was 67.25. Clearly the gain was 12.00 points in the experimental class, while in the control class, the average score in the pretest was 58.90 and the average score in the posttest was 68.05. Obviously, the gain was 9.15 points.

There was a significant difference on students' descriptive writing between students who have been taught through both feedbacks. It is proved by the significance value of Independent T-test table is lower than 0.05; it is 0.024. However, the result of this study reveals that the teacher's indirect feedback is better than the teacher's direct feedback since the teacher's indirect feedback can guide learning and help the students solve the problem by themselves. It is in line with Lalande (1982: 140-149) that said the indirect feedback is more beneficial to students than direct feedback in editing.

The teacher's direct and indirect feedback techniques are effective to develop students' descriptive writing ability, in terms all aspects of writing. However, content was the aspect of writing that improved the most by both the teacher's indirect and direct feedback techniques. Concerning to the content aspect, in the experimental class, the students were able to improve their mean score from 11.15 points to 14.575 points with gain 3.425 points and with the percentage was

28.54%; in the control class, the content aspect improved from 12.65 points to 14.90 points with gain 2.25 points and with the percentage was 25.20%.

### **Suggestions**

Since there were aspects of writing which had the lowest improvement, namely (1) vocabulary and (2) language use, so the teachers should pay more attention to those aspects when teaching writing, especially in the cases mentioned above. In the teacher's indirect feedback class which was as the experimental class, the vocabulary aspect had the lowest score. Therefore, in order to improve students' ability in vocabulary, the teachers should pay attention to explain the vocabulary aspect. For instance, after explaining the mistakes and errors of the students' draft which is as the sample, the teacher takes at least three words with the provided pictures of the words (noun, adjective, verb, and noun). Then, the teacher should explain the words, especially the content words; so the students know the difference of the words and the use of them.

In the teacher's direct feedback class which was as the control class, the grammar score was low. Thus, it is necessary for the teacher to increase students' understanding of the language use or grammar by giving the students a lesson about a complete sentence which consists of a subject and a predicate. For instance, the teacher can teach by using a diagram sentence. When the students write the ungrammatical sentences, the teacher takes that as the example and makes the diagram sentence (Subject + Predicate + Object/Complement). Besides, he or she explains the subject verb agreement to the students.

In addition, there are two suggestions for the further researchers: 1) this study was conducted in a senior high school level. Therefore, further researchers can try to find out the effect of both feedbacks in different level of school. 2) the researcher only focused on the increase of students' writing achievement in descriptive writing. The researcher suggests other researchers to find out the effect of *both feedback* techniques in other kinds of writing composition, such as procedure, report, or hortatory exposition writing.

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