

## IMPROVING STUDENTS' DESCRIPTIVE WRITING ABILITY THROUGH TEACHER'S INDIRECT FEEDBACK

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### Abstrak

Tujuan penelitian ini adalah untuk melihat apakah umpan balik tak langsung dari guru dapat meningkatkan kemampuan menulis deskriptif siswa serta melihat aspek menulis apa yang paling berkembang setelah penerapannya dalam mengajar penulisan deskriptif. Peneliti menggunakan desain *pretest* dan *posttest* pada penelitian ini. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa nilai rata-rata meningkat dari 57,96 (*pretest*) ke 72,41 (*posttest*) dan nilai signifikansi berada dibawah 0.05. Mekanik mendapatkan peningkatan tertinggi dimana nilai rata-rata meningkat dari 7,78 (*pretest*) ke 13,33 (*posttest*). Dapat disimpulkan bahwa umpan balik tak langsung dari guru dapat digunakan sebagai salah satu cara alternatif dalam pengajaran menulis guna meningkatkan kemampuan menulis deskriptif siswa.

The objectives of this research were to see whether teacher's indirect feedback can improve students' descriptive writing ability or not and to see what aspect of writing improved more after its implementation in teaching descriptive writing. The researcher used pre-test and post-test design in this research. Based on the data, it was found that there were significant improvements in students' descriptive writing ability. The data shows that the mean improved from 57.96 (*pretest*) to 72.41 (*posttest*) and the value of significance was 0.000 and the sign  $< \alpha$  ( $0.000 < 0.05$ ). Mechanics got the highest increase in which the mean score was increased from 7.78 (*pretest*) to 13.33 (*posttest*). It can be said that teacher's indirect feedback can be used as an alternative ways in teaching writing in order to improve students' descriptive writing ability.

**Keywords:** *indirect feedback, teaching writing, writing ability.*

## **INTRODUCTION**

Writing is one of the human's ways to communicate. Communication is not only achieved through speaking, but it can also be obtained through writing. Someone can express his/her idea that he/she want to share in the written form. According to Tarigan (1987:7), writing is the language skill that is used in the indirect communication. It implies that the students can communicate their ideas to the others through written form such as letter, message, or invitation for communication. It means that writing is very important for student to learn. In fact, writing is still considered a complicated skill for students to master because it involves a complex activity requiring a variety of skills. Students must have the ability to generate ideas, determine the purposes, develop arguments, organize and manage the text effectively, and revise.

Based on researcher's pre observation in MA Al-Hikmah Bandar Lampung, it was found that the students had problems in writing a text. They had difficulty to express their idea smoothly because the teacher taught them without using a good approach and treatment. The teacher only asked the students to write a text based on the topic or picture in the text book without checking their mastery of writing aspects first. Teacher did not guide the students to make a composition. Consequently, the students were not able to understand the generic structure of the text, purposes, and the language features of the text. The researcher assumes that if teachers want to help the students to write, they must be able to teach writing effectively to the students in the classroom.

Teaching writing is teaching the students how to express the idea or imagination in written form. In order to be successful in writing, the material presented should be relevant to their needs, interest, capacities, and ages until they are able to make composition with view or even no errors (Finnochiaro, 1964: 129). In other words, the teacher should guide the students to write or how to express the ideas in written form. Teaching writing is always related to how to give feedback directly or indirectly on writing in a good way, especially by the teacher.

Alghazo (2009:146) states that teaching writing is an important skill and a helpful activity to students if it is done in a way to give the students error feedback to improve their writings. Feedback sessions can be a beneficial experience for the student if the teacher shows strong points as well. There are two types of feedback that can be given to the students to improve their writing ability namely direct and indirect feedback. In this case, the researcher thinks indirect feedback is one of positive support that can be given by an English teacher to their students in order to improve students' writing and minimize their errors. Study on indirect feedback shows that indirect feedback is an effective step in teaching writing. Lalande (1982) states that indirect feedback is more beneficial to students than direct feedback in editing, because indirect feedback can guide learning and help the students solve problem by themselves.

From the background problems and theories that have been explained above, the researcher formulates the research question as follow:

1. "Is there any improvement of students' ability in descriptive writing after the implementation of teacher's indirect feedback at the first year of MA Al-Hikmah Bandar Lampung?"
2. "What aspect of writing improved more after the implementation of teacher's indirect feedback in teaching descriptive writing?"

## **METHOD**

This research was designed as a quantitative research. In order to find out whether teacher's indirect feedback can improve students' descriptive writing ability, The researcher used one group pre-test and post-test design. A pre-experimental design with a repeated measures t-test instrument was applied. Repeated measures t-test usually called as paired t-test or sample t-test, was used to analyze the data. The analysis was to compare two kinds of data or mean that came from the same sample (Setiyadi, 2006:170).

The population of this research was the first grade of MA Al-Hikmah Bandar Lampung. The researcher used one experimental class to be treated. A class was chosen randomly to be the sample.

This research used two instruments namely pre-test, post-test in order to answer the research questions. There were one pre-test and one post-test in this research. Between the two tests there were treatments held in three meetings. In this research, the learning materials were focused on writing of descriptive text. All students'

compositions were assessed in terms of content, organization, language use, vocabulary, and mechanics. Specifically, this study investigates whether students' descriptive writing ability improve or not through teacher's feedback. The type of feedback provided is indirect feedback that was given on students' writing.

The procedures of this research were first, preparing the lesson plan. Second preparing the material. Third, administering pre-test. Fourth, conducting treatment. Fifth, administering posttest. The last, analyzing the test results. The analysis of the results was aimed to know whether teacher's indirect feedback can improve students' descriptive writing ability significantly in each aspect. The researcher analyzed the data by using SPSS.

Hypothesis of this research was:

Ho: There is no significant improvement in students' descriptive writing ability after the implementation of teacher's indirect feedback

H<sub>1</sub>: There is significant improvement in students' descriptive writing ability after the implementation of teacher's indirect feedback.

If the significant  $> 0.05$ , Ho is accepted, but if the significant  $< 0.05$ , H<sub>1</sub> is accepted.

## **RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

The research used pre-test and post-test as the instruments to collect the data. The test was descriptive writing test. The researcher scored the students writing based on the

writing aspects and they criteria, i.e. content, organization, vocabulary, grammar, and mechanics. The whole result of pre test was explained in the following table.

**Table. 1 The whole Result of Pre Test**

Score	Frequency	Total
40	1	40
45	3	135
50	3	150
55	5	275
60	6	360
65	5	325
70	4	280
Total	27	1565
Mean	57.96	
Minimum	40	
Maximum	70	

According to the table above, the mean score of pretest was 57.96. We could also see that there was 1 student (3.7%) who got score 40. The number of the students who got 45 were 3 students (11.1%). The number of students who got 50 were also 3 students (11.1%) of the sample. The number of students who got 55 were 5 students (18.5%). The number of the students who got 60 were 6 students (22.2%). The number of students who got 65 were 5 students (18.5%). Then, there are 4 students (14.8%) of the sample obtained 70 as the highest score. In the test we also have aspects which used as a basic foundation to score the students' descriptive writing ability and each of aspect also had score. The whole result of post-test was explained in the following table.

**Table.2 The whole Result of Post-test**

Score	Frequency	Total
55	1	55
60	4	240
65	3	195
70	4	280
75	5	375
80	8	640
85	2	170
Total	27	1955
Mean	72.41	
Minimum	55	
Maximum	85	

According to the table above, the mean score of posttest was 72.41. We could also see that only 1 student (3.7%) who got score 55. The number of students who got 60 were 4 students (14.8%). The number of students who got 65 were 3 students (11.1%). The number of students who got 70 were 4 students (14.8%). The number of students who got 75 were 5 students (18.5%). The number of students who got 80 were 8 students (29.6%). Then, there are 2 students (14.8%) of the sample obtained 85 as the highest score. In the test we also have aspects which used as a basic foundation to score the students' descriptive writing ability and each of aspect also had score.

From the table above we can see that there was improvement in students' descriptive writing ability. Based on the results above, researcher analyzed the significance of the improvement from pre-test and post-test. The data were analyzed by using SPSS. It

shows that the significant was less than 0.05. The table of t-test result can be seen as follows:

**Table.3 t – test Result of Pretest and Posttest**

		Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pair 1	Pretest	57.96	27	8.578	1.651
	Posttest	72.41	27	8.590	1.653

		Paired Differences					T	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
					Lower	Upper			
Pair 1	Pretest – Posttest	-14.444	3.490	.672	-15.825	-13.064	-21.506	26	.000

Null hypothesis is rejected if  $t\text{-value} > t\text{-table}$  with the level of significance at  $<0.05$ . From the data above, it could be seen that  $21.506 > 2.045$  and  $0.00 < 0.05$ . Therefore, for the hypothesis, the null hypothesis was rejected and the research hypothesis was accepted. It means that there was an improvement of students' ability in descriptive writing after the implementation of teacher's indirect feedback as an additional step in teaching writing.



Then, to see in what aspect of writing teacher's indirect feedback contributes more, the researcher compared the mean score of students' writing in each aspect as can be seen on the table below:

**Table 4. The Increase of Students' Writing in Each Aspect**

<b>Aspect of Writing</b>	<b>Mean Score of Pretest</b>	<b>Mean Score of Posttest</b>	<b>Increase</b>
<b>Content</b>	12.96	16.48	3.52
<b>Organization</b>	12.78	14.44	1.66
<b>Vocabulary</b>	12.78	14.07	1.29
<b>Grammar</b>	11.67	14.07	2.4
<b>Mechanics</b>	7.78	13.33	5.55

From the table above we could see that the meanscore of each aspect as improved after the implementation of teacher's indirect feedback. The first improvement came from mechanics aspect which is the mean score improved from 7.78 to 13.33. It was the highest improvement in this research. On the pretest and the first draft, students paid little attention to this aspect. They focus is only on the content rather than the form. They often made mistakes, especially in the use of capitalization. However, when they were given indirect feedback, they could easily find their mistakes and fix them. According to Ferris (2002), students who were given error feedback from the teacher, had greater self-correction abilities than those who were not given error feedback.

The second aspect improved was content which is the mean score improved from 12.96 to 16.48. When the students did a mistake concerning this aspect, indirect

feedback functioned as a reminder for the students about the explanation about descriptive text that had been given in the first meeting.

The third improvement occurred in grammar aspect which is the mean score improved from 11.67 to 14.07. The researcher found that when students get feedback related to grammar errors, some of them try to fix it while looking at their notes about language features that have been described in the first meeting. It was supported by Anh (2008: 136) who stated that indirect feedback helped student writers become more competent; and reduce grammatical errors in their subsequent writing.

For organization aspect, the mean score improved from 12.78 to 14.44. In this aspect, teacher's indirect feedback had an important role to inform the students if there was a sentence that does not support the main idea they want to develop or if they failed to give details about things they wanted to explain, so that the text they made would be well organized.

The last aspect that achieved improvement was vocabulary which is the mean score improved from 12.78 to 14.07. It was the lowest improvement in this research. According to Liu (2008: 76), indirect correction enabled students to make fewer morphological errors with greater accuracy in a new piece of writing. It means that indirect feedback could help students to reduce such errors as word choice, article incorrect, omitted or unnecessary words and etc. However, because the students did not make many mistakes concerning this aspect in pretest, the increase of students

mean score in vocabulary after the implementation of teacher's indirect feedback become less significant.

## **CONCLUSION**

Based on the findings in the fields and from the statistical report in the last chapter, some of conclusion can be drawn as follows:

1. There are significant improvements of students' ability in writing descriptive text after after the implementation of teacher's indirect feedback. It can be seen that t-value (21.506) was higher than t-table (2.045) and the significance value (0.00) was lower than 0.05. It means that the result can be accepted as a significant improvement.
2. The highest improvement is mechanics aspect in which the mean score was improved from 7.78 (pretest) to 13.33 (posttest).
3. Teacher's indirect feedback can improve student's descriptive writing ability in all aspects of writing. So, it can be said that teacher's indirect feedback is a suitable additional step in teaching writing.

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