

## **I. INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 Background of the Problem**

One indicator of an educational institution success in producing high-quality output is reflected in the achievement of the students or the score obtained on every subject including English.

English is learnt since elementary school up to university. However, the problem arises: though the students have been learning English ever since they were in the elementary school, the result or the achievement of the students found in many cases are still considerably low, especially when it comes to writing skill. As we know, writing is the last language skill from the order of skills that should be mastered by pupils. Perhaps the reason why writing is difficult for most of the students is because this skill is the combination of other aspects of language and language skills themselves.

Writing, unlike speaking, is not an ability we acquire naturally, even in our first language - it has to be taught. Unless L2 learners are explicitly taught how to write in the new language, their writing skills are likely to be left behind as their speaking progresses. Learners also need to be aware of and use the conventions of the type of texts in the new language.

Writing deals mainly with the accuracy of the used words, grammar and other linguistics aspects so that its meaning can easily be understood by readers. The problem that often occurs is that the students use the grammar of their native language and then mold it to their English writing.

Feedback plays a central role in developing writing proficiency among second language learners. Based on the researcher's experience during his field practice (PPL) at SMAN 9 Bandar Lampung in 2011, this was especially true for academic writing since the goal of writing instruction in this course is to teach both the conventions of writing in a particular academic context as well as the grammatical forms needed to perform writing tasks. In this regard, students strive hard to meet the writing demands of the course and the preferences of their writing teachers. As mandated by the curriculum after completing the courses, in this particular case, writing courses the students have to be able to write certain types of texts accurately and acceptably. Based on observations and interview with the English teacher and also the students of SMAN 1 Pringsewu, this problem also happens there.

Feedback demands the existence of gaps between what has been learned and what will hopefully get as the target competence of the learners, and the efforts undertaken to bridge these gaps. This feedback is given to ask for further information, to direct, to suggest, or requests for revision, to give students new information that will help them revise, and to give positive feedback about what the students have done well. Feedback also comes in various linguistic forms, may

be in questions, statements, imperatives, or exclamations, and comments. In introducing claims, criticism, and suggestions teachers should rely on evidence from facts proved by seeing the students' writing and errors that occur. In relation to giving the feedback, hedging plays role as to soften teachers' criticism and suggestion so that the comments (feedbacks) do not discourage the students. Hedging may come up with many labels such as compromisers, downtoners, weakeners, and softeners. For example, instead of saying that the students' writings are wrong, it can be hedged by saying: *Your writing seems to be unique. Perhaps you should read more on the adjective uses in descriptive text.* Such labels include lexical verbs (e.g.: *seem, tend, appear*), modals (e.g.: *may, might*) and some adverbs (*probably, perhaps*), although *condition clauses, passive voices, and impersonal phrases* have also been included.

From the researcher's experience during his field-practice (PPL) in 2011 at SMAN 9 Bandar Lampung, the feedback that would likely to occur is in the form of suggestions and comments. The feedback is likely considered as to help students in developing their skill in writing. This probably due to the condition that the students in SMAN 9 Bandar Lampung should be more active in learning lessons as instructed in most RSBI schools. The researcher observed that when teachers acted as motivator in teaching –learning process the students would be more actively involved. During the PPL, the researcher improved the way feedback used to be given by the teacher. The teacher mostly used to employ indirect feedback yet without hedging and students considered it to be a little too 'harsh'. From the first semester of studying English in SMAN 9 Bandar Lampung,

especially in the class which the researcher taught, students had already been given the feedback particularly in writing sections. The feedback given, again, was considered a little too 'harsh' by the students for it was given inside the class. The form of feedback that occurred during the researcher's PPL is probably due to the lesser role of the teacher in RSBI curriculum, hence the suggestive comments form of feedback would arise.

Why teacher error feedback is chosen? Some research findings indicate that students prefer error feedback from teachers since they believe that they will benefit greatly from it (Leki, 1991; Radecki and Swales, 1988; Straub, 1997). Furthermore, from the researcher's experience during field-practice (PPL), it was found that the peer-to-peer error feedback did not make them comfortable since they had to judge their own friends' writings and they were not confident with their English skill for giving such error feedback.

After taking a closer look on previous experts' researches, then the researcher see that teachers' error feedback on students' L2 writing has always been considered an essential element in writing courses, especially when learners go through a multiple-draft process.

The researcher chose SMAN 1 Pringsewu because he wanted to serve and develop English teaching in SMAN 1 Pringsewu from which the researcher had graduated in 2007. In addition, the students' ability in writing shows problems that are similar to what the researcher found in SMAN 9 Bandar Lampung during his PPL

in 2011. Furthermore, the researcher expected that findings of the research would be used in order to develop the English teaching in school from which the researcher started to love and learn English.

Pursuant to the background, this research is entitled: **Teacher Error Feedback Effect on the Accuracy of Students' Descriptive Writing at the First – Grade of SMAN 1 Pringsewu**

## **1.2 Formulation of Problem**

Based on the background above, the researcher formulates the problem as follow:  
Is there any effect of teacher error feedback on the accuracy of students' descriptive writing of class X SMAN 1 Pringsewu?

## **1.3 Objective**

The objective of this research is to find out whether Teacher Error Feedback has effect on the accuracy of students' descriptive writing of class X SMAN 1 Pringsewu.

## **1.4 Uses**

1. Theoretically, to enrich the relevant science related to the improvement of students' writing accuracy in English as a foreign language.

2. Practically, to give a consideration and information to teacher or related parties in education that Teacher Error Feedback can or cannot be used to improve students' writing accuracy.

### **1.5 Scope of the Research**

This is an associative study that attempts to identify the relationship and effect of Teacher Error Feedback on students' descriptive writing accuracy. Because of the researcher limitation, then the study mainly focuses on the effect that teacher error feedback has towards students' descriptive writing accuracy and therefore any errors that occurs on the students' writing are considered as error in general and not to be classified into more detailed description. Students of class X.1 and X.2 in SMAN 1 Pringsewu are taken as participants of this study. The research is conducted with two groups: experimental group and control group. The researcher uses writing task as instrument for collecting data, then students would have to revise their writing. In experimental group, the students' writing was given error feedback from the teacher while in control group teacher error feedback was not given. This was done as to distinguish and to see whether or not the treatment, i.e. teacher error feedback, has significant effect on students' descriptive writing accuracy progress.

## **1.6 Definition of Terms**

### **1.6.1 Feedback**

Feedback is a response either to the content of what a student has produced or to the form of the written utterances. Krashen ( 1987) states that when the focus is on forms, it is supposed to help learners to reflect on the wrong forms and finally produce right forms. Teacher error feedback and peer feedback are two forms of feedback widely used in assessing writing, especially when multiple drafts are involved.

### **1.6.2 Accuracy**

Accuracy is the ability to be free from any errors while using language to communicate. Accuracy refers to how correct students' use of the language system is, including their use of grammar, punctuation and vocabulary. Accuracy is often compared to fluency when we talk about a student's level of speaking or writing.

Accuracy in writing may mean facilitating students with activities of writing using the following features:

1. Adverbs;
2. Articles;
3. Conjunctions;
4. Formality in verbs;
5. Modal verbs;
6. Nouns and adjectives;
7. Nouns: countable and uncountable;

8. Passives;
9. Prefixes and suffixes;
10. Prepositions;
11. Punctuation;
12. Relative pronouns; that / which
13. Singular / plural;
14. Tenses;

### **1.6.3 Error in Grammar**

Error is a part of conversation or a composition that deviates from some norm of language performances. It can also be seen as a systematic deviation that happens when a learner has not learnt something and consistently gets it wrong. In a simpler way to say, error is different from mistake in that mistake is a slip which students can self-correct whilst error is what learners can not self-correct.

### **1.6.4 Descriptive Writing**

Descriptive writing is an activity of presenting to the readers of how something looks, sounds, and tastes in a written form. Mostly it is about visual experience, but description also deals with other kinds of perception, as when we are describing a condition of a broken-heart young man or when we are trying to invite the readers to feel the weather when a storm strikes.



There are two broad kinds of descriptive writing: *objective* and *subjective*. In *objective description*, the writer sets aside those aspects of the perception unique to himself and concentrates on describing the percept (that is, what is perceived) in itself. In subjective (also called impressionistic) the description is a writer projection of his or her feelings into the percept. Objective description says, 'This is how the thing is'; subjective states, 'This is how the thing seems to one particular consciousness'.