

**CHAPTER I**  
**INTRODUCTION**

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## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background of the Problem

Human learning is basically a process, which involves the making of errors (Brown, 1987:169). This includes language learners (Byrne, 1983: 83) as language learning is part of human learning. This means people cannot learn a language without first systematically committing errors (Dulay & Burt, 1982: 138). Nelson Brooks (1960, as cited by Hendrickson, 1979: 1) considered error to have a relationship to learning resembling that of sin to virtue: "Like sin, error is to be avoided and its influence overcome, but its presence is to be expected." Therefore, error serves as indicators of progress and success, because humans learn from their mistakes.

Corder (1967 in Hendrickson, 1979: 3) states that teachers consider that language learners necessarily produce errors when learning a language, because those errors can provide significant insights into how languages are actually learned. He also adds that studying error provides feedback to make learning a language better. Therefore, error is a medium to learn better, but to get it, error correction is needed. The teacher as a correct model has an important role in error correction. He or she corrects errors in the hope that the students will not make errors again.

Allwright (1975 in Hendrickson, 1979: 5) contends that a student cannot really learn in class without knowing when an error is made, either by him or by someone else. Error correction, therefore, is really important given to the language learners, because it makes language learners understand and know where he makes wrongs. Besides, the students can also improve their writing to be better than before.

Due to the fact above, error correction is unavoidable in classroom interaction. As the students are not able to recognize their own errors, they need help from someone more proficient than they are, that is, the teacher. Thus, most teachers assume that it is their responsibility to correct their students' errors.

However, this kind of help from the teacher is sometimes undesirable due to some reasons. First, it makes the students more interested in knowing their marks than the errors they got. Second, it has been argued a long time ago that the teachers should not use red pen in correcting. Seeing a composition with a bunch of red pen-markings is discouraging, because the students see only the number of errors they made. It makes them lose their confidence. It also makes the students feel their self-esteem slapped. Third, written feedback is often too brief and/or unclear. Fourth, written feedback provides no suggestions and at times the teacher's handwriting is difficult to read. Fifth, teacher's correction, sometimes, is *inconsistent and imprecise* in the treatment of errors. It makes students misinterpret the correction. Sixth, the teacher also feels that correcting composition is a boring work, especially when he or she has a big writing class. He or she has to spend a lot of time going through those compositions by circling

errors, with a pen, drawing arrows, and giving comments, or simply marking through and rewriting some parts of the compositions. Seventh, the teacher also states that in written feedback, he cannot give many comments in idea, because he focuses more on wrong grammar, spelling, punctuation, etc Eighth, both teacher and students have a difficulty to find a time slot when they are free to attend in a writing conference. Ninth, the students feel easy lose the teacher's comments because there is no a permanent record. They are also not able to listen to the comments at any time and in any place. Tenth, there is also no good communication between teacher and students in order to solve some problems in writing that they have faced, especially for a student who is afraid to ask questions when he/she doesn't understand. As a result, it accomplishes little for both students and teacher.

Time changes and the technology have been widespread. Foreign language educators try to look for another technique by using modern media that is useful for giving feedback in learning writing called *Audiotaped Feedback (ATF)* (Stroupe, 1998). This technique uses sound in tape as a medium for giving feedback. As teachers, they should use it in order to make their work easy and also to make other students feel "closer" to them. It means that the students are more relaxed and not fearful in telling their problems in writing. Besides, the students feel it is easier to understand than written comments. They can also repeat the comments anywhere and anytime, only by listening to the cassette. Being interested in audiotaped feedback, therefore, the writer would like to know

further whether audiotaped feedback is effective enough to improve students' grammatical performance and idea in writing.

## 1.2 Statements of the Problem

This thesis intends to answer one major question and two sub-questions as follows:

1. *Is Audiotaped Feedback effective enough to improve students' grammatical performance and idea in writing?*
  - . The above problem statement is clarified by the following sub-questions:
    - a. *Is Audiotaped Feedback able to demonstrate students' progress in the grammatical performance and getting ideas in writing?*
    - b. *Does Audiotaped Feedback help students in making reasonable corrections in their mistakes?*

## 1.3 Objectives of the Study

Derived directly from the previous formulated statements, the objectives of this study are to find out:

1. *Whether Audiotaped Feedback is effective enough to improve students' grammatical performance and idea in writing.*
  - a. *Whether Audiotaped Feedback is able to demonstrate students' progress in the grammatical performance and getting ideas in writing.*
  - b. *Whether Audiotaped Feedback helps students in making reasonable corrections in their mistakes.*

#### **1.4 Significance of the Study**

First of all, this study is expected to give some contributions to the writing teachers of the English Department of Widya Mandala Surabaya Catholic University in giving their corrections, ideas and insights toward the students' compositions and overcoming the students' boredom and fear of having to do the writing assignments. Second, it is expected that students will become good writers.

#### **1.5 Scope and Limitation of the Study**

Due to the limitation of time, the writer applies this technique only to one class that is Writing B (third semester) class D. She takes the third semester students due to the availability of writing subject offered for the odd semester of academic year 2002/2003 and also they are considered to have enough language skills needed in understanding and listening to the feedback from the teacher. Besides, they have already got narrative writing that is needed for making a good and clear description based on what is happening. The teaching and learning material of the descriptive writing for Writing B is determined by of the English Department of Widya Mandala Surabaya Catholic University the syllabus.

#### **1.6 Theoretical Framework**

Correcting written work has become a big problem for Foreign Language (FL) teachers for two reasons. First, there is too much burden for the teachers (Chia, 1985:13) as most of their time is spent only on the students' composition

(Michaelides, 1990:28). Then the teachers become worried concerning the students' errors (Michaelides, 1990:28).

As correcting composition is such a boring work, Murisson Bowie, (1993, as stated by Stroupe, 1998) suggests that all written work by the students could be corrected by the teachers and the peer responses by using audiotaped feedback.

Some researchers gave their reasons of using audiotaped feedback. McAlpine, (1989, in Boswood & Dwyer, 1995/6:21) states that audiotaped feedback encourages a reader-based response rather than an editorial or proofreader stance. Kirschner (1991, in Boswood & Dwyer, 1995/6:21) also found Audiotaped Feedback more productive than written marking, noting minimal difference between recording time and written marking time. Besides, Clark (1981, in Boswood & Dwyer, 1995/6:21) identifies teacher comments through ATF as being more sympathetic as well as more complete and clear. Similarly, Hunt (1989, in Boswood & Dwyer, 1995/6:21) found taped comments effective, simple, and fast.

### 1.7 Definition of Key Terms

To avoid misinterpretation that might happen when reading this paper, the writer provides definition of the key terms as follows:

1. Audiotaped Feedback (ATF) is a process of correcting, and commenting of writing by recording and playing back sound using a magnetic tape (Boswood, et al., 1993).

2. Grammatical performance is an action of writing based on the rules of combining words into sentences and forms of words (Gwin, 1991:2).
3. Writing is a process of creating meaning based on the person's ability to put thoughts and ideas onto paper (Wells, 1978:11).

### **1.8 Research Methods**

The great majority of the research for writing this thesis is using action research. First, the writer makes a plan about giving feedback using audiotaped feedback as a means. Then, she gives treatments in the classroom. Next, she observes all the process in order to get report. Last, she makes some suggestions for the second plan.

### **1.9 Organization of the Paper**

This paper includes Chapter I that consists of background of the problem, statements of the problem, objectives of the study, significance of the study, scope and limitation of the study, theoretical framework, definition of key terms, research methods and organization of the paper; Chapter II describes writing in English as a foreign language, feedback in writing correction and the audiotaped feedback as a technique of correction; Chapter III consists of research design, the subjects, research instruments, procedure for collecting data and procedure for analyzing data; Chapter IV consists of data analysis and findings, interpretation of the findings, and the discussion of data analysis, findings and interpretation of the findings; and Chapter V consists of conclusion and suggestions.