

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The study did not run as smoothly as the author expected. Like weeds in a garden, certain problems showed up from time to time. This chapter will discuss the findings and will give conclusions and recommendations of this study.

5.1 Discussion of the results

This section will discuss the three areas mentioned in the purposes of the study: (1) the comparison pre-and post mean number of errors counted, (2) the relationship of students writing ability and the use of the editing checklist, (3) and student's reaction to the editing checklist.

5.1.1 The comparison of pre-and post mean number of errors

Generally speaking, training in the use of the editing checklist did not help students reduce errors much. The little improvement may have been because the duration of training was not enough for

students to fully understand and use the checklist. Students might be reluctant and nervous to make changes in their drafts. Students' perception toward the use of editing checklist was to hunt for all errors in their writing, even though their original text was correct. Punctuation, capitalization, and spelling are more obvious errors to identify for students.

The above finding confirms what Parsons (2001) reveals with the use of the editing checklist for students that although they understand what they are supposed to look for, they tend to scrutinize the text for more concrete lists such as the punctuation, capitalization, and spelling rather than grammar and usage.

5.1.2 The relationship of students writing ability and the use of editing checklist

Students were divided into two groups by assessing their papers before training and grouping them as 'lower' and 'higher' writing ability students. The reason for grouping students was to discern for which group of students the editing checklist is most helpful. The assumption of the research was that the editing checklist might be a helpful tool in basic conventions in writing for lower writing ability

students whereas for higher writing ability students, the checklist might be a guideline for proofreading and self-editing.

The results revealed that training for higher writing ability students resulted in more benefits than for lower writing ability students. Thus it may be said that before introducing the editing checklist, students should have some knowledge in basic English grammatical elements. Their background knowledge will help them be able to correct ungrammatical sentences. The role of the editing checklist here is not to teach grammar but to alert students to some of the common errors found in students' writing.

5.1.3 Students' reaction to the editing checklists

From the post – training questionnaire, students viewed the editing checklist was a useful tool in self-editing drafts. Regarding the benefits of the editing checklist, some students wrote that they have guideline for what errors they should carefully look for. One of the students wrote that she learnt more new vocabulary while she was self-editing drafts. Regarding the negative points of the editing checklist, the subjects viewed it as a complicated task and confusing. They realized that they still need to improve their knowledge of

grammar, usage and mechanics. One student mentioned the fact that although she fully understood what the checklist meant, she was still unable to correct her own draft due to the lack of enough knowledge on the verb tense usage. Fundamental grammatical knowledge is required before implementing the editing checklist.

5.2 Limitations

5.2.1 Problem of counting errors

In the course of the research, it was found that counting errors from students' paper is very difficult. With capitalization and spelling, it is quite straightforward to count errors. With punctuation, it is less easy. Although grammar mistakes can be identified, it is not at all easy to count them or to classify one mistake as 'grammatical' rather than 'lexical'. For instance, one student wrote *'If we are interesting and we think it is important for us,.* With the mistake of the adjective 'interesting', shall the graders count it as 'grammatical' or 'lexical'? In this study this was counted as a grammatical error.

Another problem is the grader sometimes did not understand the intended message students would like to convey. For instance, *'We can study bold English language'*, *'We can have method in study bold is had to try...'*, and *'That study bold we can study bold by reading*

book'. The solution here was that the two graders counted them as grammatical errors because there seems to be an error in the sentence structure.

The last point of the problem in counting errors in this research is that in one paragraph students repeated the same pattern of mistakes such as *Study English language*. This phrase appeared at least three times in one student's paper, so should these be counted as one or three mistakes? In this research, the graders counted them as three mistakes, but it is acknowledged that an argument could be made for counting this as one mistake.

5.2.2 Problems with the school activities

The research was conducted during September 24 – October 5. The school was in the week of preparation for Municipal Sports Day which was taking place the week after. The question may arise why the researcher still chose that week. This is because annually the Sports Day takes place in August but that year the school postponed the schedule due to other circumstances and the researcher was not informed. This affected the process of implementation in the use of the editing checklist with this class. Every afternoon class some students had to join in activities, training for running and cheerleading

rehearsal. There were at least 7-8 students missing every afternoon class during the training, so they could not complete the process of training in the use of the editing checklist. On the last day, six students (students 1, 2, 4, 5, 6 and 8) from the 'higher writing ability' group asked to write their second drafts before the rest of the class because they had to rush to the cheerleading rehearsal. They then did the post-test during lunchtime (12.30 to 13.30) whereas the rest of the class did the post-test from 14.00 to 15.00. This different time for doing the post-test may have had some effect on the quality of papers produced. Looking back to the length of words they composed, student 1 composed 116 words before training, reducing to 87 words after training, and student 6 before training composed 150 words, reducing to 62 words after training. The performance of others, however, was not much different, whereas some produced more words (student 2 before training composed 90 words, increasing to 140 words after training). The average length of words before training was 116, reducing to 108 after training. Thus it can be suggested that the difference of time had limited impact on the length of papers.

However, it could be the case that student's concentration might be disturbed by school activities leading to their papers showing carelessness in writing and editing. Five students from the higher

writing ability group made more errors even though the length of words was reduced after training. For instance, student 5 initially spelled some words correctly but after training she spelled the same words incorrectly such as *learner-leaner*, *language-langues*, *understand- understard*. In addition, new word choices of student 8 were produced after training, but spelled incorrectly such as *fluenly*, *belive*, *underlind*, and *purpasse*. This underlines the hazards of carrying out research in situations that have not been created specifically for the purpose of the research.

5.2.3 Problems with the editing checklist

The editing checklist used in this research especially on grammatical aspect was too general. For instance 'Have I written complete sentences? and Have I used the correct verb tense for my meaning?', these items seemed less effective for students to self-correction. It is acknowledged that there are many grammatical features so students may not be confident enough to self-correct. The editing checklist itself did not specify what grammatical elements they should be concerned with. This represents one area where the process of carrying out the research provided the researcher with idea about creating appropriate editing checklists.

5.3 Conclusion

The use of the editing checklist provides a useful framework for students in editing drafts. But because of it being a new process or new tool, teachers therefore need time to shape and prepare students to really understand the concept of using editing checklist before introducing the process to them.

In the long run with more practice and more familiarity with using editing checklist, it is hoped that students will be able to understand and correct their own mistakes at the early stage of writing. Training in the use of the editing checklist will help to promote a warped view of the writing process, and to encourage students to grow in writing skills (Parsons 2001, p. 118). In addition, the use of the editing checklist can develop students the motivation, confidence, skills, and practice which shape and monitor their own writing. This is suggested by the questionnaire respondents from the research reporting that they feel confident enough to check work and they could handle their text when they are asked to self-edit.

Rosen (1993) points out that correctness develops naturally when students continuously engage in composing and editing activities that are meaningful for them. He claims that 'When young writers need a better understanding of mechanical and grammatical matters to ensure

more effective communication of their ideas, they learn what they need to know to prepare final drafts for readers'. (Rosen,1993 p.382)

In summary, the goal of the use of the editing checklist is not always expected to force students to know where and how to correct errors, but the editing checklist's role is to support their skill in editing paper. Students can see the connection between an exercise and their own writing. It is better that students learn grammatical elements through their own mistakes rather than in isolate exercise and drills.

5.4 Implication and Recommendations

The research revealed little improvement in student's paper but the concept of the use of the editing checklist process in teaching writing aims at increasing student's autonomy in learning writing and providing them guidelines on what to look for (Penaflorida 2001, p.344). In addition, it is a tool for teachers to students that they can also take responsibility for error correction. Though the failure could be seen initially, the growth of students' writing is more important. By implementing the self-editing checklist, teachers can encourage students to interact with their own writing in which correction is not done for its own sake but a part of the process of gradual development in writing skills (Seow 2001, p.315).

This study shows that the self-editing checklist can stimulate the students to interact with their drafts and see what particular point they have to pay attention to. Thus, the researcher would like to suggest that teachers should implement the checklist process as routine teaching. The benefit of doing this is to diagnose students needs based on their edited work (Fletcher and Portalupi 2001 p. 92). In the area of grammar, teachers should specify that grammar point in each lesson plan. For instance, if the lesson plan aims to teach the future form, the checklist should cover and mainly focus on the conventional usage of future form. This would help students not to get confused about what grammatical elements they are supposed to focus on.

The researcher would like to encourage teachers to use the self-editing checklist as routine classroom activity in process writing by conducting a minilesson in each lesson plan. This would be review and give explanation on particular conventional usage that seems to be problematic for students after using the checklist. For instance, after editing drafts, students are asked to go back their paper and underline or mark verbs in their text then encouraged to think of stronger verbs that might replace the ones that they are using. The teacher could also emphasize the basic conventional language, punctuation,

capitalization, and spelling as routine work. For the next progression, the teacher can add more complicated language usage that he or she expects students to learn. However, this phenomenon will not happen if students have not been trained to get familiar with this process. The checklist can exploit not only the surface errors but also the content and organization can also be introduced to students (Pearson 2001, p. 10-11.). Besides the use of the editing checklist, other supports such as proofreading strategies, editing corner, modeling, an editing workshops, mini-conferences, and peer proofreading are the next stages to teach students self-edit.

It is believed that if they are skilled in editing, they will be confident enough to edit for peers. The process of editing is meaningful and has been somewhat neglected by teachers. This research was designed to support the learning of the mechanical and grammatical elements of written language still keeping students focused on the content of their writing. Implementing this technique raises awareness of the importance of the editing stage of writing and puts responsibility for learning on the students rather than being dependent on the teacher to correct their work for them.

Students learn to become accurate and self-sufficient writer by searching for, finding, and correcting their own mistakes. In the

beginning, they may fail to achieve perfection, and may miss many errors, but in the end they learn much more from identifying and correcting whatever errors they can find on their own papers and those of their peers than from the teachers (Rosen 1993. p.384).

This research does not suggest that teachers either ignore or replace grammar exercises and intensive marking with heavy emphasis on editing. The research confirms that the mechanics of writing should be taught in the context of students' own writing. During the research time, when explaining the errors found in writing, students seemed to show more understanding when this was related to their actual pieces of writing rather than in a controlled drill situation that the teacher provided. Finally, the research recommends that teachers should focus students' attention on one or two related patterns of error at a time in order to make sure the problem is mastered before directing their attention to another category of error.

The research was carried out within a limited time and very little improvement was recorded. Thus the researcher would like to suggest that further research be carried out to investigate whether or not the use of self-editing checklist is a workable process in other groups of students of different classes and levels.