

Chapter I

Introduction

This chapter discusses the background of the study, research question, purpose of the study, scope of the study, and significance of the study.

1.1 Background of the Study

Learning strategies are essential for students' succeed in learning. Learning strategies are not only able to motivate students, but it also enables students deeply understand the content of learning materials (Pintrich et al. 1992; as cited in Linnenbrinc & Pintrich, 2003). Further, Chamot (2001), argued that learning strategies help students become more active language learners. Learning strategies are also supportive for acquiring second language skills — speaking, listening, writing and reading (Ikeda, 1999). Therefore, there are various learning strategies based on those four skills.

Learning strategies are classified into – direct and indirect strategies (Oxford, 1990: p. 14). Direct strategies are language learning strategies that directly involve the target language (Oxford, 1990: p.37). Direct strategies consist of three examples - memory, cognitive, and compensation strategy. Whereas, indirect strategies are the strategies which support and manage language learning without (in many instances)

directly involving the target language (Oxford, 1990: p. 135). The examples are meta-cognitive, affective, and social strategy.

On particular, this study will only focus on one element of meta-cognitive strategy, that is diaries. Diaries contain thoughts, ideas, personal experience, observation and all attendant's feeling relating to the language classroom (Porter et al, 1990; Nunan, 1992; Absalom and de Saint Leger, 2011; Moon, 2003; Bolton, 2001). Diaries can be a pedagogical tool (Porter et al, 1990) and introspective tool (Nunan, 1992). In academic discourse, learning journals or learning logs are part of diaries (Moon, 2003). However, learning journals and logs are more structured than diaries. Learning journals and logs have been used extensively at university level in many courses than diaries (Schmuck, 1992; Morrison, 1996; Callister and Garbet, 2000; Burnett and Meacham, 2002; Langer, 2002). Learning log, in particular, is described as a regular record of language learning or learning-related activity which is kept by the learner, together with some form of review of that activity in order to inform future action (Hurd and Lewis, 2008).

As a reflective tool, learning logs as well as diaries and journals have been used extensively for the purpose of teaching and research. For teaching purpose, Carlsmith (2003) believes that journals or logs are able to build an opinion for passive students, help them to write relaxedly and find their own voice and rhythm. For research purpose, learning logs are

believed as important introspective tools in language research which can “give us access to the participants’ voices” (Bailey and Nunan, 1996, p. 199).

So far, studies on learning log only considers individual accounts (Absalom dan Le’ger, 2011; Cisero, 2006; Connor & Greene, 2000; Halbach, 2000; Huang, 2005; Litzler, 2014; Carlsmith, 2003; and Murphy, 2005). This study is different with the previous ones because this study considers input of friends and teacher in learning log. For this reason, this learning log is given a term as “integrated learning log”. Through this integrated learning log, the writer tries to see how learning log might facilitate students’ learning.

1.2 Research Question

Based on the background of the study, this study seeks to answer the following research questions:

- a. What kinds of feedback appear in students’ integrated learning log?
- b. To what extent integrated learning log enables students to follow up the feedback?

1.3 Purpose of the Study

Based on the research question, this research aims to identify the kinds of feedback which appear in students' integrated learning log and to examine how far the integrated learning log facilitate students' learning in business letters, particularly complaint and application letter.

1.4 Scope of the Study

This research focused on examining feedback in students' writing precisely complaint and application letters using integrated learning log at one of English for Business Discourse classes in English Department at State University of Jakarta.

1.5 Significance of the Study

The result of this research is hoped to give benefits for teachers, students, and other researchers. For teachers this research can give them information about students' difficulties and challenges in writing business letters. Beside that, it also can provide alternative method of teaching on writing skill using an integrated learning log. On the other hand, this study can be beneficial for the students to know the problem of their own writing so that they are able to overcome it and to help other friends in realizing the mistakes which the student do not know. For researchers, this

study will enrich findings on reflective studies, particularly on the implementation of learning log in the classroom.