

## **CHAPTER I**

### **INTRODUCTION**

As an introductory part, elaboration of several points is presented in this chapter. The background of the research is firstly presented. Afterwards, the research question is listed out. Departing from the research background, too, the research objectives are listed. Furthermore, the research significance is elaborated as seen from theoretical and practical perspective. In providing limitation, the meaning of the key-terms is clarified.

#### **I. Background of the Research**

The application of corrective feedback (CF) as a mean of improving learner's writing skill is not without intrigues. Currently, there has been contradicting study-findings causing vagueness on how the CF should be provided to achieve maximum result. As suggested by Lee (2013), who has summarized the results of CF studies around the globe, to selectively choose type of error to be treated is regarded as the best way in providing the feedback. It is fair to say that such assumption is justifiable. It has been suggested that process of revision is a cognitively demanding process requiring heavy demand on working memory (Kellog, 1994). It has also been suggested that each individual possesses different capacity of working memory (Dehn, 2011; Gathercole&Alloway, 2008). Especially in Indonesia, where learners attain inadequate amount of English exposure, to limit the scope of error to be treated in a CF provision is a wise choice. Nevertheless, such way of CF provision is considered unrealistic (Ferris, 2010; VanBeuningen, 2010). They argue that in reality, learners make broad range of errors thus to selectively choose errors to be treated only suits laboratory setting.

The debate has not only branched in terms of amount/ scope of CF provision, but also it has branched on CF explicitness. The summary of CF studies provided by Lee (2013) has suggested that explicit/ direct feedback, where an explicit correct linguistic form is provided, is more fruitful than the implicit/

indirect ones. However, some studies had also proven that implicit/ indirect feedback, where an error is only marked without the provision of correct linguistic form, is more fruitful (e.g Ferris &Helt, 2000 in Bitchener&Knoch, 2008). Chandler (2003), in accordance, has revealed that implicit feedback is the strategy preferably chosen by students over explicit one implying positive attitude towards the strategy. However, the study done by Ferris &Helt was conducted by involving 92 ESL learners in American university where exposure on English attained by the participants was adequate. To claim such notion in Indonesian context needs further verification. Myhill& Jones (2010) have suggested that most EFL learners faced difficulty in figuring out what to do with the error within their writing even when the location has already been identified. Given inadequate amount of English exposure to be utilized as reference, the provision of implicit CF may not be a wise choice to assist Indonesian learners in assisting learners' revising process towards a grammatically-accurate piece of writing.

An Indonesian CF study done by Purnawarman (2011) has suggested that the best way in providing CF to Indonesia's adult learners (university student) is through combination of both implicit and explicit strategies. In his study, Purnawarman utilized color and comment as error-marker during the provision of corrective feedback. However, there was a strict limitation of the errors that were being treated (focused CF) in this referred study. Thus, there is vagueness on whether or not these error-marking strategies will similarly result positively in the provision of an unfocused and implicit corrective feedback.

## **II. Statement of Problem**

Referring to the elaboration above, to combine unfocused CF and implicit CF for Indonesian learners seems to be preposterous. However, a distinction between young and adult language learners should be made. As suggested by Saville-troike (2006), adult language learners are benefited from their elaborated learning capacity and analytic ability whereas younger learners are benefited from their brain plasticity. Specifically limiting the focus on adult language learners, referring back to the notion on the urgency of providing an unfocused

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(comprehensive) as suggested by Ferris (2010) and VanBeuningen (2010), such assumption on unfocused-implicit CF potential ineffectiveness should be put into test. By scrutinizing the effectiveness of two error-marking strategies, color and comment, such assumption is attempted to be put into test. Applying sequential-explanatory mixed-method design, the research question is formulated as follow:

- A. Is there any significant difference between the use of color and comment error marker in assisting participants' grammar-revising progress?
- B. Under what circumstance does the use of the two strategies end up in futile revisions?

### **III. Objectives of the Research**

This research is aimed at comparing the effectiveness of two types of unfocused-implicit CF techniques both quantitatively and qualitatively. The comparison is focused on the effect towards participants' revising progress.

### **IV. Significance of the Research**

Two aspects, namely theoretical and practical aspects, are comprised as the significance of this current research. From theoretical aspect, the findings of this research are expected to provide further reference on CF discussion. More specifically, the findings of this research are expected to provide further validation towards the assumption suggesting the combination of unfocused and implicit CF to be potentially ineffective for adult learners by scrutinizing the effectiveness of color and comment error-marker in its provision. Seen from practical perspective, the findings of this research was intended to expand the guidance on how to and how not to provide corrective feedback for Indonesia adults learning to write in English.

### **V. Clarification of Key Terms**

- A. Writing corrective feedback

The term writing corrective feedback used in this research is understood in accordance to the definition proposed by Harmer (2002) where CF is the

provision of comment or response towards learners' writing which is aimed at assisting learners' revising process. Referring to Hayes' current model of writing (2012) (see Figure 1, p.9), the evaluator and collaborator is the researcher himself, a final semester student of English Education Department, Indonesia University of Education; whereas the proposer, translator and transcriber is students enrolled in foundation of English grammar (FEG) class academic year 2012/2013. Thus, referring to O'brien's classification of teacher and peer feedback (2004), it can be said that in this research, the feedback given is categorized under teacher-feedback category given that the feedback is given under the supervision of the FEG-course lecturer.

#### B. Unfocused corrective feedback

The term unfocused corrective feedback used in this research is synonymous to the term comprehensive feedback as suggested by Lee (2013) where such CF is defined as the response to every single error identified within learners' writing. Nevertheless, it has to be noted that the term unfocused CF here is limited only to grammatical aspects. In other word, other errors in terms of contents, mechanics and other ungrammatical errors are neglected. One feature distinguishing it from focused CF relies on the absence of limitation on what and how many grammatical errors should be marked in learners' writing. In addition, there is also no categorization of treatable and untreatable errors.

#### C. Implicit corrective feedback

The term implicit CF used in this research is synonymous to the term indirect CF used in other CF researches. Simply put, the term implicit CF is defined as a strategy of providing feedback by indicating an error without providing the correct form in assisting a learner correcting his error (Ferris & Roberts, 2001). In the provision of implicit feedback, there are two error-marking strategies used in serving the function to indicate the location of errors. Both error marking strategies, color and comment, are implicit given that no correct linguistic form is provided in helping the learner revising their writings.

#### D. Revising progress

It has to be noted that the term revising progress here doesn't refer to the improvement of learners' writing score as measured by tests. The term revising progress refers to the percentage-value of error of each learner during three drafting process (rough draft/ original draft, revised draft and final draft). A grammatical error is considered successfully revised when the reviser have made an accurate revision on the respective error through different means of revision resulting in a coherent clause. On the other hand, a grammatical error is considered unsuccessfully revised when the reviser either fails at performing accurate revision towards the marked item or performs unnecessary omission of the marked item.

#### **VI. Organization of Paper**

This paper is organized into five chapters. Chapter I presents the background of the research, statement of problems, research purposes, research significance and clarification of key terms. Chapter II comprises elaboration of related literature review. Chapter III focuses on the research methodology. Chapter IV elaborates the findings and discussion. Lastly, in chapter V, conclusion and suggestion are presented.