

# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the background of the study, the research questions, the purposes of the study, the significance of the study, the definitions of the key terms, and the organization of the thesis.

### 1.1 Background of the Study

Providing feedback towards students' writing is a commonly recommended technique to improve writing skill. The role of written feedback in the development of writing skill has been viewed as a crucial part indicating the quality of language learning and teaching process (Coffin et al., 2003; Hyland & Hyland, 2006, p. 83; Carless, 2006; Emilia, 2012). Feedback is considered as a source of input that encourages writers to improve their written work and to develop their writing skill (Hyland & Hyland, 2006). When provided with feedback, writers are able to reconsider their work, reflect on the meaning of their work and modify their composition. Therefore, feedback plays a key role in students' revision activities and it contributes to the quality of students' writing (Hyland & Hyland, 2006).

Furthermore, students are able to gain advantages from sufficient writing practices and revisions on their drafts to produce a final piece of writing in which they mostly rely on feedback either from a teacher, peer, or self (Purnawarman, 2011). Some commonly used sources of feedback are oral feedback, peer feedback, teacher written feedback (end notes, side notes, or correction codes) and computer-mediated feedback (Gonzalez, 2010). Of all the feedback sources, teacher is still valued as the main source of feedback and many studies have found teacher written corrective feedback is helpful and effective in improving student writing (Karbalaie & Karimian, 2014). As Ferris (2003) concluded that teacher written feedback can and often help students to improve their writing from one draft to another over time. In addition, the intimacy between teacher and feedback has also been stated in *PERMENDIKBUD No. 64 Tahun 2013* about *standar proses* that teacher should provide feedback towards students' response and product of learning during the learning process.

In providing written corrective feedback, teachers need to be clear and concrete to assist students with revisions (Ferris D. R., 2003). As feedback is meant to help students

understand that there is part of their text which requires revision, teacher should provide clear information about what students need to do, which part of students' essays needs correction, and even how to revise it or otherwise students may have trouble understanding teacher feedback and will not be able to fix the error properly. Shortly, it can be said that the more explicit the information given by teachers when providing feedback, the easier it should be for students to follow the teacher suggestion to perform error correction and make revision of their works. Explicit corrective feedback, however, needs time and be provided with repetition to finally help students to notice the correct forms of the target language (Hyland & Hyland, 2006). In accordance to the issue, the unbearable benefits of teacher written feedback still encounter its common problem among teachers who perceived that giving one by one feedback on students' writing is frustrating and time consuming (Goldstein, 2005). Teachers' frustration in giving one-on-one corrective feedback is still open to be discussed and the emergence of electronic feedback seemed to be one promising solution to give teachers more space in providing feedback.

According to Quan-Haasse, et al (2005), the introduction of technologies such as the Internet, e-mail, chat, etc, into educational environments have made it possible for learners to communicate ideas, information, and their feelings without any limit on time and space. With recent development of software applied in the internet, interaction among students and between teacher and students can be facilitated (Jati, 2010), which is the main concern of the present study. Technology helps to enhance learning and to speed communication and it shifts handwritten feedback into electronic feedback, which covers a range of often dissimilar approaches to the teaching of writing (Hyland & Hyland, 2006). Technologies have opened up new opportunities for teachers in responding students' writing since they are able to provide comments on electronic submissions by e-mail or specifically by using the comment function on the students' essay in the form of a word-processed text (Bultron, 2014). Recent studies indicated that the integration of technology into classroom instruction brings significant changes to the social dimension of learning, empower students and make writing classes more collaborative (Hyland & Hyland, 2006).

In particular, the integration of technology into classroom instruction also increases pervasiveness of LMS (Learning Management System) such as *Moodle*, *Blackboard*, and

*Edmodo* which enable teacher and students to access both online communication types: synchronous (interactive communication with no time delay; written and oral chat) and asynchronous (communication with a delay that allows participants to respond at a different time after the message is sent; e-mail and on-line forum) (Moore & Kearsley, 2005). Synchronous and asynchronous communication methods each have their advantages and disadvantages based on their degree of inherent media naturalness and the specified communication task (Hrastinski, 2008; Kock, 2005)

However, recent studies perceived that asynchronous method is more beneficial and suitable since there is less time pressure (Tannacito & Tuzi, 2002), more serious (Honeycutt, 2001) and more effective (Walther, 1996). The asynchronous communications method can also facilitate personalization by allowing the students to learn at their own pace and according to their interest, previous knowledge and style (Balaji & Chakrabarti, 2010). This asynchronous mode is able to facilitate the creation of dynamic learning environments where language is used as a tool to brainstorm, disseminate information, analyze text as it is produced, take linguistic risks, and challenge other views without fear of overt intimidation by bullies or egotists who often interrupt the most and speak the loudest in face-to-face discussions and traditional classroom settings (Tuzi, 2004). The two commonly used types of electronic feedback which categorized as asynchronous mode are written feedback through the comment function on the students' essay in the form of a word-processed text sent by email and online discussion session.

A study conducted by AbuSeeilek (2013) which focuses on the use of teacher written feedback through email reveals that learners who received computer-mediated feedback in the form of track change and word processing while writing performed significantly better than those who did not receive written feedback while writing. Another study conducted by (Hernández, 2011) which confirms that exchanging emails between teacher and students as a way of providing feedback became a useful mechanism in teacher-students communication and it also able to raise students' awareness in their revision about their grammatical and lexical error.

Yet, some study still questioned the benefit of electronic feedback (Scott, 2006; Ferguson, 2011; Chang et al., 2012). With respect to the quality of feedback, the majority of

handwritten supporters chose handwritten feedback, as they perceived this type of feedback as more personal (Chang et al, 2012). They believe that handwritten feedback seemed to allow for establishing a closer rapport with instructors than e-feedback (2012). The findings were confirmed by the reports of Ferguson (2011) and Scott (2006), both of which found that some students still felt a strong dislike toward electronic feedback. Scott (2006) had further claimed a similar concern and identified that electronic communication lacked social interaction and personal touch.

Conversely, the online discussion session as another feature of LMS, fill the gap of what feedback through the comment function on the students' essay in the form of a word-processed text sent by email unable to provide. Online discussion session offers the space for negotiation when students see the teacher's feedback is unclear or misinterpreted and have the chance to ask for clarification (Gonzalez, 2010). Online discussion technology gives the ability to every learner to respond to questions, participate equally, and offer a potential to support the co-construction of knowledge through meaningful discourse (Vonderwell et al, 2007). In a study, over half of the students from three online courses reported that they learned a great deal from their peers through online discussions with 78% of the students valuing online discussion as a chance to share opinions among peers and instructors (Wu & Hiltz, 2004). Online discussion forums increase the opportunities for student participation and enhance the participation of students who may feel inhibited when required to engage in discussions in a traditional classroom setting (Kanuka, 2005). Kanuka (2005) maintains that discussion forums can improve students' critical thinking. This claim is supported by Perkins and Murphy (2006) who developed a model for measuring engagement in critical thinking in online discussions.

On the contrary, some researchers argue that the virtual learning interface of an online discussion forum may not promote the coherent and interactive dialogue necessary for conversational modes of learning (Hewitt, 2001; Thomas, 2002). Researchers report that messages were often left unanswered by fellow students (Vonderwell, 2002; Ellis, 2001), and learners can easily adopt the role of "lurker" rather than actively participating in the discussion (Hara et al., 2000). Brookfield and Preskill (2005) note that often online discussion is experienced as sterile, unfriendly and alienating (cited in Parisio, 2010). It is true that many

of the contextual cues we have some to rely on in traditional face-to-face discussions such as the speaker's tone, tenor, intonation, and facial expression are removed in this new medium (Parisio, 2010). Thus, the benefit of each type of asynchronous mode of communication still needs to be discussed further.

According to the previous elaboration, the existing literature reveals that there has been no study pertaining to examine the impact of teacher electronic feedback on students' writing quality, especially in comparing between teacher written feedback only and the combination with online discussion session. This study, hence, aims to fill this gap by examining not only teacher written feedback through the comment function on the students' essay in the form of a word-processed text sent by email, but also the teacher feedback through the comment function on the students' essay in the form of a word-processed text sent by email which followed by an online discussion session on students' writing at one senior high school in Bandung, West Java, Indonesia.

## **1.2 Research Questions**

In accordance with the issues presented, this study is designed in order to explore the impact of teacher electronic feedback on the students' writing quality. Specifically in terms of these three types of teacher electronic feedback: teacher feedback through the comment function on the students' essay in the form of a word-processed text sent by email only, teacher feedback through the comment function on the students' essay in the form of a word-processed text sent by email and followed by online discussion and no electronic feedback condition. Therefore, the formulation of the problem of this research states as follows:

1. Is there a difference by the three types of teacher electronic feedback mentioned above in terms of students' writing quality?
2. What are the students' attitudes towards the different types of electronic feedback techniques?

## **1.3 Purpose of the Research**

Cici Riksa Wiliyanti, 2017

*IMPACTS OF TEACHER ELECTRONIC FEEDBACK ON EFL STUDENTS' WRITING*

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This study is aimed at contributing to the body of research on writing in English as a foreign language by investigating the impact of teacher electronic feedback on students' writing quality. Specifically, this study is focused on investigating teacher's written feedback on EFL students' essay word-processed electronically using Microsoft Word and delivered through email as an attachment and also the combination of online discussion session by using *Edmodo* platform.

Therefore, this study has two purposes: 1) to determine the quality of both essay 1 and essay 2 and 2) to discover students' attitudes toward different types of teacher electronic feedback strategies.

#### **1.4 Significance of the Research**

A great number of studies have been conducted on feedback in relation to the students' writing improvement in EFL contexts. Every study has its own different focus of feedback to be discovered and the recent studies, mostly focused on the effects and strategies of feedback on students' writing. This study investigated the effects of teacher feedback in the area where electronic technology and electronic delivery media are provided. In addition, different from other studies which looked at the effects of teacher electronic feedback in the form of comment only or online discussion only on students' writing, this study will try to investigate the effectiveness of not only teacher electronic feedback in the form of comment only but also the combination of teacher electronic feedback in the form of comment and online discussion session. Moreover, this study will investigate the effects of teacher electronic feedback on both the draft of first essay and on the new piece of text of essay 2.

The results of this study are considered to be significant theoretically and practically. Theoretically, it is expected to enrich the growing body of research in the area of feedback on student writing in EFL context and the integration of computer and LMS platform (e-mail and *Edmodo*) as the media in providing and delivering the feedback. The study will also utilize the Microsoft Word *Comment* tool for feedback provision. These technology issues are expected to fill the gaps that have not been well addressed in previous research.

Meanwhile, practically, the results will be significant for both the teacher and the students. For the teacher, the results of this study will be significant in two aspects. First, the

results will gain the teacher's understanding of the students' expectations on what types of electronic feedback which are suitable to be given and how to deliver them. Therefore, the teacher can adapt appropriate methods of giving written feedback that cater the students' expectations which lead to long term benefits. Second, the results will give insights for the practice of teaching writing, especially in EFL contexts, related to kinds of written feedback focus and strategies contributing to the development of the students' writing skill. For the students, the results will contribute to the development of their writing ability since they will avoid the same mistakes in the future writing based on the written feedback given by the teacher.

### **1.5 Definition of Operational Terms**

The following terms were defined as they relate to this study:

**Teacher electronic feedback** is any input provided by a teacher to students for revision focusing on the language use aspect of writing in the form of explicit comment through email and online discussion through *Edmodo* platform.

**Learning Management System (LMS)** in this study is defined as software used as the platform to place the teacher feedback. This software facilitates students' composition exchange as well as teacher feedback provision.

**Impact** in this study is measured by comparing the quality of students' writing in a group that receive teacher feedback through the comment function on the students' essay in the form of a word-processed text sent by email only and a group that receive teacher feedback through the comment function on the students' essay in the form of a word-processed text sent by email and followed by an online discussion session. When the test result of two groups is found to be significantly different, then different strategies in giving the feedback is considered give an impact. This examination of the electronic feedback impact is further enhanced by students' attitudes from the interview session.

### **1.6 Organization of the Thesis**

Cici Riksa Wiliyanti, 2017

**IMPACTS OF TEACHER ELECTRONIC FEEDBACK ON EFL STUDENTS' WRITING**

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Chapter I has provided the introduction which highlights the basic description of the study. The remainder of the thesis is organized as follows. Chapter II deals with the theoretical framework building up theories and references for this study. Chapter III describes the methodology employed to conduct the study. Chapter IV elaborates the findings and discussion from the gathered data after this study has been conducted. Chapter V deals with conclusion and recommendation based on the result of this study.