CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

This chapter covers the general overview of this research. It comprises background of the research, the research questions, the purpose of the research, and the significance of the research. This chapter also contains the definition of operational terms, and organization of the research.

1.1 Background of the Research

Learners in Indonesia have been introduced to English since their early age. In early level, the main objectives of English learning are encouraging learners to speak up and be interested in English (Harmer, 2007). In other words, fluency is prioritized over accuracy and errors committed by young learners should not be corrected excessively. Nevertheless, teacher’s corrective feedback is still needed to support learners’ language acquisition and prevent fossilization (Ellis, 2009; Gebhard, 2009). As the giving of feedback can hinder the process of learning if it is not given properly (Chu, 2011; Ellis, 2009), teachers need to consider how they give corrective feedback to learners.

Corrective feedback is given to treat learners’ errors. In speaking, it may not be addressed to all oral errors as it can hinder the flow of communication or fluency (see for example, Chu, 2011; Ok & Ustact, 2013 Widianti & Cahyono, 2006). When and how oral errors should be corrected encourage various points of view. In one end of the spectrum, some educators believe that oral errors do not need to be corrected excessively as spoken language is not as rigid as written language (Hilliard, 2014), while on the other end of the spectrum, some educators believe that learners’ oral errors in speaking need to be corrected to avoid fossilization and encourage acquisition (Chu, 2011; Ellis, 2009). Teachers in Indonesia also face this dilemma. The dilemma is getting more intense as teachers should give corrective feedback to young learners which are different from adult learners. To make matter worse, training on how to teach English to young learners is scarcely provided.
There are several things that need to be taken into consideration when giving oral corrective feedback to children. Gordon (2007) asserts that the goals of teaching language to young learners are giving contextual exposure and encouraging children to communicate fluently. He further explains that accuracy is not necessary as children can formulate rules due to their preordained grammar development which is difficult to intervene. On the other hand, some experts (see for example Ellis, 2009; Harmer, 2007; Lyster & Saito, 2010; Panova & Lyster, 2002) support the giving of feedback as long as it is appropriate for children’s affective and developmental level. In other words, teachers need to understand children’s learning characteristic and the appropriate condition to give appropriate feedback. In the light of this matter, Ellis (1997) categorizes errors into local and global errors. The former can be ignored as it does not hinder the conveying of messages, while the latter needs to be corrected as it hinders understanding of messages (Ellis, 1997). Unfortunately, determining which errors belong to local and global errors is not an easy task, thus the most appropriate condition to give corrective feedback cannot be formulated easily. Hence, this research aims to reveal what corrective feedback teachers give to learners’ oral errors and the reasons why particular corrective feedback is given to particular errors.

In terms of type of feedback, there are differences in feedback given to adults and children. In general, corrective feedback is used more frequently by teachers who teach adult learners (Chu, 2011), while positive feedback is used more frequently by teachers who teach children (Maolida, 2013). Despite using different types of feedback, both teachers teaching adults and children use corrective feedback to address their learners’ oral errors. The reports also show that explicit corrective feedback is more favored by both teachers who teach adults and children (Choi & Li, 2012; Maolida, 2013). In a similar vein, Ellis, Loewen, and Erlam (2006) and Rezaei & Derakhshan (2011) reported that explicit corrective feedback tends to be more effective than implicit feedback in improving learners’ grammatical understanding.

In Indonesia, research on oral corrective feedback has also been conducted in various contexts. Yusuf, Widiati, and Sulistyo (2017) investigated the influence of multimodal feedback on pre-service teachers teaching ability. The research
demonstrated that the use of multimodal feedback could help the teachers to improve some important aspects in teaching such as the use of media and classroom languages. In adolescence learning context, Fathimah (2017) found that the corrective feedback strategy used the most frequently by the teachers was recast with 51% of the total occurrences. The considerations behind the selection of the corrective feedback strategy were type of error, learning objective, and students’ proficiency. Similarly, Tersta (2017) reported that input-providing corrective strategy, especially explicit correction, is effective to improve junior high school students’ speaking skill when incorporated in scaffolding process. In young learners learning contexts, research on feedback has been conducted by Maolida (2013). She investigated both the use of positive and corrective feedback and found that the teachers prefer to use more positive feedback than corrective feedback. Gozali and Harjanto (2014) conducting research in kindergarten classes reported that the use of corrective feedback in grammar lessons effectively improved the students’ grammar understanding. Both Maolida (2013) and Gozali and Harjanto (2014)’s research was conducted in ESL settings, where young learners are required to use English even in subjects other than English, and was focused on feedback in general. The focus of the research on young learners’ classes was feedback in general without specific concern on types of error committed by learners and the considerations of selecting particular corrective feedback strategies.

Types of error committed by students and the considerations behind the selection of corrective feedback strategies should be researched as they can help teachers to decide corrective feedback strategies to be used in their class (Russel, 2009). This research aims to fill the lacuna by revealing what types of errors are committed by young learners, what corrective feedback strategies the teachers use, along with the considerations of the selection of particular feedback.

1.2 Research Questions

As the focus of this research is investigating what feedback is given by teachers and the considerations behind the use of particular corrective feedback types, this research is geared toward answering the following research questions:
1) What oral errors do the young learners make?
2) What types of corrective feedback do the teachers give to address the oral errors?
3) What are the teachers’ considerations in using the corrective feedback?

1.3 Purpose of the Research

The main purposes of this research are to investigate oral errors committed by the students and what types of corrective feedback are given by teachers. In order to attain the objective, this research starts with analyzing the students’ oral errors in speaking. Furthermore, which errors are corrected and what types of corrective feedback are used by the teachers along with the considerations for using the types of feedback will be revealed.

1.4 Significance of the Research

This research is expected to enrich theories of corrective feedback. Since primary education is selected as the research site and participants, this research is also expected to be contributory to English teaching and learning practices in primary education.

In terms of theoretical aspect, this research provides information on what oral errors are committed frequently by learners and what types of feedback are given by teachers. The findings can enrich the theory of error analysis and corrective feedback as they can portray more specifically the corrective feedback given to treat specific errors.

In the practical aspect, this research reveals learners’ errors in oral interaction and which errors need to be corrected. This research can help teachers to determine when they should correct learners’ errors in speaking and formulate specific strategies to address specific problems encountered by their learners.

In terms of professional aspect, this research can serve as a source of reflection and information for teachers’ development. Teachers can reflect from the research as they juxtapose the conditions of learners in this research with their own learners. In general, teachers’ professional development process can take place as they compare conditions portrayed in the research with their own conditions.
1.5 Definition of Operational Terms

In order to avoid misconception and misunderstanding, several terms in this research are clarified as follows:

1) Oral errors: deviations in phonological, grammatical, lexical use in oral communication both due to learners’ gap in knowledge or only due to the inability to use what learners’ actually know (Ellis, 1997).

2) Young learners in this study refer to 09-11 years old learners who learn English as a foreign language in the 4th or 5th grade of primary school.

3) Corrective feedback is defined as responses to learners’ utterances that contain an error (Ellis et al., 2006).

4) EFL classroom is defined as an English language learning institution which teach English as a foreign language.

1.6 Organization of the Research

This research is organized into five chapters comprising:

Chapter I: Introduction
This chapter explicates the background of the research, the statement of the problems, the purpose of the research, the significance of the research, the definition of operational terms, and the organization of the paper which serve as the foundation of the research.

Chapter II: Literature Review
This chapter presents theories and literature related to the topic of the research. The theories and research reported mainly are related to types of oral errors committed by students and corrective feedback strategies used by teachers.

Chapter III: Research Methodology
This chapter explains the methodology used to collect and analyze the data in this research. The explanation is divided into research design, research site and participant, data collection, and data analysis.
Chapter IV: Findings and Discussions
This chapter presents the findings and discussions answering the research questions of this research. The chapter is organized based on the order of the research questions asked.

Chapter V: Conclusions and Recommendations
This chapter presents the conclusions of the research and recommendations for the teachers and other researchers. This chapter suggests the possible future research and what practitioners ought to do after knowing the findings of this research.

1.7 Concluding Remarks
This chapter explains the introduction of the research. The background of this research is the tendency of teachers to use corrective feedback inconsistently and ambiguously due to the lack of information regarding proper use of corrective feedback strategies. Hence, this research mainly attempts to portray what corrective feedback teacher use in certain institution to address the oral errors made by the young learners along with the reasons behind the decisions. This research is expected to enrich the support the use of corrective feedback strategies and teaching English to young learners theoretically, professionally, and practically.