

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents some information on the research background that describes a brief overview of the issues of the feedback on Indonesian EFL students' writing, research questions, the purposes of the study, the significance of the study, the scope of the study, and the organization of the thesis.

1.1 Background of the Study

Writing is one important language skill for students to master. It plays an essential role in all stages of life that contributes to the success of students in academic performance and workplace (Lee, 2017) and affect career development of L2 students (Fazel & Ahmadi, 2011; Ghoorchaei et al., 2010) because students can communicate ideas, develop creativity and critical thinking, as well as build confidence (Lee, 2017). This skill is essential for secondary school students to be learned and mastered prior to their college entrance as a provision integrated with numerous activities at that level, as for their future academic education. By mastering writing skill, students are expected to be successful and able to communicate in the written form.

In spite of the importance of writing skill and the challenges of writing in the first language, it is claimed “more constrained, more difficult and less effective” (Silva, 1993 cited in Weigle, 2002, p. 36) in a second or foreign language. It might be due to the fact that ESL or EFL students are limited to linguistic resources and should deal with the social and cultural uses and expectation of writing. The motivational factors, for instance, their desire to integrate into the culture of the language, grades, proficiency and so on, and affective factors, in this sense like writing anxiety or writing apprehension (Weigle, 2002) can influence writing in a second or foreign language. Thus, writing still appears difficult for students who lack this skill and get demotivated to write, especially in English. This happens in Indonesian classroom setting that for students writing is a painful activity indicating that oral culture is much better than writing one (Iftanti, 2016). The difficulties multiply for secondary school

Reti Wahyuni, 2018

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students for writing skill in English. In most of the cases, they learn English at schools only and use English to communicate in limited occasions as not the only medium for communication in formal education systems (Rezeki, 2016) which provoke the difficulties to master this skill.

In Indonesia, English as a foreign language which is taught from elementary to tertiary level, in fact, is a compulsory subject in secondary school and it is stated that the recent secondary school curriculum in Indonesia requires students to be able to write in English texts (Emilia, Habibi, & Bangsa, 2018). More specifically, as one of the basic competencies in secondary school level, students are expected to be capable of writing oral and written texts in English (as discussed in Regulation of Education and Culture Ministry Number 59 Year 2014). Thus, it has a clear emphasis on secondary school students to deal with this demand and becomes a national goal for EFL students and teachers, schools and stakeholder for English writing skill. By considering writing as not an innate ability but a skill that should be learned, it can be assumed that writing has complexity and it is a hard work that takes extensive cognitive resources (Williams, 2005). Moreover, L2 or EFL writers work within a complex context, for instance, their proficiency of language, various cultural expectations, and lack of experience for both students and teachers and distinct writing process (Hyland & Hyland, 2006). Likewise, Ariyanti (2016) stated that, in Indonesia, English is categorized as a foreign language, the majority of students should deal with challenges in terms of complex English grammatical structures and in making composition as the result of the different cultural background between English and their mother tongue.

However, most students in Indonesia and in other EFL settings still find out difficulties in English writing as they still encounter with some problems. Meanwhile, they are expected to be able to comprehend and to write English texts, as determined by the Ministry of Education Regulation No. 64 Year 2013 for the current curriculum (Emilia et al., 2018). The empirical studies such as Megaiab (2014) found the problems were mostly in grammar such as tenses, articles, singular and plural, verbs, prepositions, and spelling (see also Nanda, Inayah &

Gani, 2016; Andayani & Andayani, 2013). Moreover, it is found that the learners face some difficulties and those are mostly encountered as a result of the influence of mother tongue. Similar findings to support what Megaiab (2014) has found is a study by Hatmanto (2012) regarding the tendency of students using their first language rather than English. Besides, other challenges and difficulties that are found in big writing class caused students' writing ability difficult to get improved (Lin, 2009), grammatical errors and schematic structure of English text (Siahaan, 2013).

Additionally, some empirical studies, in Indonesia, found students' difficulties when dealing with writing, especially common errors in their texts (Agustina, 2014; Irawansyah, 2014; Iswahyuni, 2014; Wahyuni et al., 2014) which suggest the need for providing feedback in students' writing. Ferris (2003, p. 24) emphasizes the idea to respond it by mentioning that the case of L2 student writers whose linguistic, pragmatic and cultural differences (compared to those of L1 writers) affecting their processing of teacher feedback is indeed important to examine. Referring to the aforementioned challenges and difficulties in EFL writing, the need to provide feedback from teachers has been increasing significantly to examine the impacts of EFL students' writing and it has uninterruptedly been crucial. Nevertheless, to the researcher's knowledge, the study examined students' writing of recount text by utilizing both oral and written feedback in a comparative experimental study is still limited.

In regard to the importance and the need for feedback, it seems undeniable that providing feedback can potentially benefit EFL students' writing. However, most people still clash with their views on the use of feedback in EFL writing. Feedback holds positive and important roles suggested by the proponents of feedback meanwhile feedback has nothing to do with students' writing development agreed with the opponents. However, there seems an increasing belief that providing feedback is requisite and holding roles in EFL students' writing. Numerous studies in the area of feedback have been conducted to theoretically and empirically investigate the impacts, benefits, drawbacks, perception, and responses and so on in the EFL writing. Despite a large number of

studies concerned in this field, still, there have never been able to reach a final agreement. Nowadays, the ongoing debate and research have the focus in which types of feedback are the best although some are done and still attempt to overcome the problem encountered by students in writing.

The opponents of feedback argued that feedback is considered unhelpful meaning that it has nothing to do with positive effects such as writing accuracy, development, improvement and so on (Cardelle & Corno, 1982; Carless, 2006; Driscoll, 2007; Truscott, 2007; Chandler, 2003). As Chandler (2003) affirms, feedback is not necessary and ineffective for it potentially disrupts students' attention remaining questions about its importance for improvement. By the same token, the issue of feedback appears as a love-hate relationship for teachers and researchers (Ferris, 2003) and still remains questionable whether or not it is necessary to student' writing development in short and long-term (Hyland & Hyland, 2006). As Ghanbari et al., (2014) found, even though feedback for some students was very effective, helpful and they wanted it to get corrected continuously as the majority of them considered corrections as essential, some students discover it embarrassing at certain extent

. However, the evidence or research findings in feedback in EFL writing are still lacking and need.

On the other hand, the proponent of feedback agreed that, in learning context and process, feedback is an important element as “a teacher’s response to student work with the intention of further learning” (Moss & Brookhart, 2009, p. 44) which can be an information about the performance and understanding of students (Hattie & Timperley, 2007) in order students potentially would not repeat making the same errors (Slavin, 2003) and to assist students to determine their position regarding the goals of learning and what they should do further. As Hattie (2008) affirms, teachers have to use feedback to decrease the gap between how they want their students to develop or perform and students’ performance and understanding.

Other than that, in relation to providing feedback to students’ writing, Brookhart (2008) proposed strategies of feedback in several ways: timing,

amount, mode, and audience feedback. Those are different each other and the teachers should consider before determining one. The third type of feedback strategy is feedback mode that could be given in many modalities as certain assignments requires different treatment such as written or oral feedback as the mode of representation, for example using written feedback for comments, using oral feedback if there is more information to convey, and so on. In the present study, the feedback strategy in term of mode has become the main concern. The terminology of feedback mode aims to communicate the feedback message in the most appropriate way which refers to the theory suggested by Brookhart (2008). Both oral feedback and written feedback are the focus of the present study.

The notion regarding the practice of teacher feedback as not teachers all practiced feedback or even if practiced, they were rarely used oral feedback in EFL classroom (Saliu-Abdulahi, Hellekjaer, & Hertzber, 2017); this comes up with a number of studies that have been investigated. Some empirical evidences of written feedback provided by teachers on EFL students' writing were such as the studies from Ferris and Roberts (2001), Ferris (2003), Hamouda (2011), Mahfoodh and Pandian (2011), Ngai (2009), Purnawarman (2011), and Telecker and Akcan (2010). However, the forms that teacher feedback utilize could be important in students' ability to understand, process, and to utilize it and there could be real limits on the type of revisions written teacher commentary (Ferris, 2003, p. 26). In addition, the specific types of problems with revision could be best done by a face-to-face teacher-student writing conference (oral feedback) rather than through written commentary (p. 26).

As suggested by experts, one-to-one writing conference or oral feedback can be an alternative to written feedback as the advantages such as negotiation and clarification are possible occurred (Ferris, 2003). Moreover, Power (1993 cited in Hyland and Hyland, 2006, p. 6) issued that there are relations in the conference and the ways that this may affect student participation and negotiation of meaning. Hyland (2003) emphasizes the same idea by saying that oral feedback is influential when students are actively taking part, asking questions, clarifying meaning, and having a discussion instead of quiescently accepting advice.

Additionally, it leads to both revisions in subsequent drafts and more lasting effects to enhance for further writing (Hyland, 2003).

In such a way, several studies have attempted to investigate oral (conference) feedback and both oral and written feedback on students writing (Bayraktar, 2009; Bayraktar, 2012; Davis et al., 2010; Yuehchiu & Lin, 2009; more recently from Alvira, 2016; Hamtaei & Rahimy, 2015; Kazemiar & Chakigar, 2016; Khatri, 2013; Kucukali, 2017; Mahmoodi F., & Rajabi S., 2015; Mansourizadeh & Abdullah, 2014; Sobhani & Tayebipour, 2015; Telceker & Akcan, 2013; Tonekaboni, 2016). Notwithstanding the above studies that have exemplified numbers of varied results of providing oral and written feedback, there has not been the study conducted investigating feedback through a comparative orientation to the study of both oral and written feedback followed by each subcategories (indirect and direct feedback) on EFL students' writing in senior high school level in Indonesian context. By considering the scarcity of the study under the area, this study attempts to bring new insights into the field of feedback. Compared to an excessive number of large-scale studies in Indonesian context, the present study is fairly minor.

Based on the aforementioned issues and the explanation, this study attempts to investigate the impacts of oral and written feedback on students' writing followed by each subcategory (direct and indirect feedback). The numbers of grammatical errors whether it decreases or not due to the feedback provision is also examined. Moreover, this study also attempts to explore the students' responses to feedback on writing. The result of this study is expected to give beneficial insight regarding the use of feedback in EFL writing and setting.

1.2 Research Questions

This study attempts to scrutinize the answers to the research questions:

1. What is the impact of oral and written feedback followed by each two subcategories (direct and indirect) on Indonesian EFL student' writing?
2. Does the feedback provision decrease the numbers of grammatical errors from writing task I to writing task II?

3. What are the students' responses to feedback on writing?

1.3 Purposes of the Study

Referring to the question formulated above, the investigation intends to meet the following purposes:

1. To investigate the impact of oral and written feedback followed by each two subcategories (direct and indirect) on Indonesian EFL students' writing
2. To find out whether the feedback provision can decrease the numbers of grammatical errors from writing task I to writing task II
3. To investigate the students' responses to feedback on writing

1.4 Significance of the Study

This study is considered significant for some reasons. First, as what has been discussed earlier, the major problems of errors in EFL students' writing still occur, attributing the need of best ways of providing feedback to students. Second, limited studies concerned exploring out which feedback practices perform the best results on EFL students' writing. In Indonesia context, the research of oral and written feedback is still lacking both in a quantitative and qualitative study, especially at secondary school level. The next reason for focusing on oral and written feedback is that the majority of research conducted in Indonesia concern written feedback, direct and indirect feedback, electronic feedback and so on which have not attempted to investigate on the significant result of providing oral and written feedback yet. Lastly, the present study is considered significant due to the firm theoretical supports for both oral and written feedback which subsequently have been getting the attention of researchers and teachers in writing skill aspect.

The result of this study is considered significant to the theoretical, practical and professional aspect. Theoretically, it is expected to enrich as well as develop the literature of English language teaching as it provides information about oral and written feedback on students' writing. Practically, this study is beneficial for the teachers as it offers the information about the classroom

condition regarding the use of feedback on students' writing. In this study, it is expected to ensure teachers the potential feedback strategies on students' writing and students' responses to feedback on writing. Professionally, this study is potential as a consideration for English teachers and researchers in according feedback to students' writing. It is hoped that this study offers the information about feedback to the teachers so that they can consider giving the suitable feedback to their students, especially for writing skill.

1.5 Scope of the Study

The scope of this study is investigating the oral and written feedback on students' writing. This study attempts to investigate the impact of the oral feedback and written feedback followed by each subcategory (direct and indirect feedback) on Indonesian EFL students' writing. The decrease numbers of errors in students' writing are also intended to be explored from writing task I to writing task II. Moreover, this study concerns the students' responses to feedback on writing. The students' responses were focused on the aspects in terms of writing, feedback, oral feedback, written feedback, indirect feedback, direct feedback, students' feeling toward feedback, and students' preferences of feedback in writing. Therefore, it hopefully gives benefit to the teachers and students in enhancing the teaching and learning process in the EFL classroom.

1.6 Organization of the Thesis

This thesis begins with an introductory chapter which covers the background, the research questions, the purposes of the study, the significance of the study, the scope of the study and the organization of the thesis. Chapter two is mainly designed to review the theoretical framework that is employed in the present study. Chapter three elaborates the research methodology that includes research design, research site, population, and sample. It also describes data collection by means of writing tasks, questionnaire and interview as well as explains the process of data analysis to answer the research questions which aims to give the work plan of the research. Chapter four shows the results obtained to meet the answers of the research questions and analysis. In this chapter, the

findings are presented in a sequence based on the research questions and followed by the discussion section which attempts to elaborate on the existing literature and some previous relevant studies. Chapter five comprises the conclusion and recommendation including the limitation and implication. This part gives a help to reader to conclude what have been in the study.