

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

For Junior High School (JHS) students learning English as a Foreign Language (EFL), writing is among the most demanding skills to master. These students often encounter challenges in organizing their ideas, applying grammar correctly, and selecting appropriate vocabulary. These struggles not only hinder their ability to produce quality written work but can also lead to anxiety and decreased motivation (Y. H. Phuong & Nguyen, 2019; Valero Haro et al., 2023). Hidayati (2018) further notes that JHS students in EFL contexts often lack confidence in their writing abilities due to limited vocabulary, inadequate grammar skills, and difficulty organizing ideas coherently. Addressing these challenges is essential to fostering students' confidence and competence in writing, and feedback mechanisms play a pivotal role in this process.

Peer feedback has rose as an influential strategy for improving students' writing abilities in EFL contexts. Through this process, students review and critique each other's work, providing constructive suggestions that encourage error identification, self-reflection, and revision. Research has consistently demonstrated the benefits of peer feedback in improving the quality of students' writing. For example, Novakovich (2016) highlights that peer feedback fosters a collaborative learning environment, where students actively engage in their

learning by exchanging ideas and perspectives. Moreover, Kerman (2023) emphasize that peer feedback creates an inclusive classroom culture, enabling students to take greater responsibility for their learning while also developing interpersonal and critical thinking skills.

The concept of peer feedback is deeply rooted in Vygotsky's social constructivism, which highlights the critical role of social interaction and collaboration in the learning process (Vygotsky & Cole, 1978). Central to this theory is the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), which suggests that students learn most effectively when supported by peers or instructors who provide the right level of guidance. Peer feedback embodies this idea by encouraging students to collaboratively construct knowledge, pinpoint areas for improvement, and enhance their writing abilities. Research has demonstrated that the interactive nature of peer feedback helps students internalize grammar, expand their vocabulary, and develop a stronger awareness of their audience (Latifi, Noroozi, & Talaei, 2021). These advantages are especially significant in EFL settings, where students often face linguistic and cultural challenges that hinder clear communication.

While peer feedback offers many benefits, teacher-written feedback (TWF) continues to play a pivotal role in writing instruction. Teachers provide detailed, authoritative feedback that addresses specific areas for improvement, such as grammar, organization, and coherence. Ferris (2018) argues that TWF is essential for guiding students in mastering complex writing conventions, as it draws on the teacher's expertise and experience. Additionally, TWF can

address higher-order concerns, such as argumentation and critical analysis, which may be beyond the capacity of peer reviewers (Hedgcock & Lefkowitz, 1994; Montgomery & Baker, 2007).

However, TWF has certain limitations. Research by Cheng & Zhang (2022) suggests that students often adopt a passive role when receiving teacher feedback, relying on the corrections provided rather than actively engaging in the revision process. Similarly, Yu & Yang (2021) found that teacher-centered feedback does not foster the same level of student autonomy and critical thinking as peer feedback. These insights underline the importance of adopting a balanced approach that integrates both teacher and peer feedback to optimize learning outcomes.

Peer feedback, on the other hand, offers unique benefits that complement TWF. Firstly, it fosters active learning by involving students in the evaluation process, enhancing their critical thinking and analytical abilities (Cheng et al., 2023). Second, peer feedback is often more immediate and frequent than TWF, allowing students to make continuous improvements throughout the writing process. Latifi, Noroozi, & Talaee (2021) note that the collaborative nature of peer feedback encourages open communication and fosters a supportive learning environment, which is particularly beneficial for EFL students who may lack confidence in their writing abilities.

Furthermore, peer feedback has been found to reduce rule-based errors, enhance students' awareness of the relationship between meaning and form, and improve their sense of ownership and understanding of the audience (Diab

& Awada, 2022; Tsui & Ng, 2000). By participating in peer feedback, students gain a deeper understanding of writing conventions while also developing important social and cognitive skills. However, to be effective, peer feedback must be guided by teachers to ensure it remains constructive and meaningful. Teachers play a crucial role in fostering a classroom environment that encourages respect and open communication, allowing students to confidently give and receive feedback (Fan & Xu, 2020).

While much of the research on peer feedback focuses on higher education (Fan & Xu, 2020; Lee, 2016), there is limited empirical research on its effectiveness in junior high school EFL classrooms. This gap is significant, as JHS students often face unique challenges related to their developmental stage, linguistic proficiency, and academic needs. It is essential to understand how peer feedback affects writing outcomes at this level in order to create effective teaching strategies that address these specific challenges.

This research aims to address this gap by examining how peer feedback influences writing accuracy in junior high school students. By comparing peer feedback with teacher-written feedback, the study determines which method more effectively enhances students' writing abilities. The findings enrich the existing body of research on English as a Foreign Language (EFL) writing instruction and provide actionable insights for educators seeking to adopt more innovative, student-focused feedback strategies in their classrooms.

1.2 Problem Identification

Peer feedback and teacher feedback are both valuable approaches in teaching writing, each offering distinct advantages and challenges. Peer feedback allows students to assess and provide input on each other's work, fostering critical thinking and a deeper understanding of writing through collaborative learning (Cheng & Zhang, 2021; Kerman et al., 2023). This process aligns with Vygotsky's social constructivism theory, which highlights the importance of social interaction in the learning process (Vygotsky & Cole, 1978). However, the effectiveness of peer feedback can be constrained by the diverse levels of knowledge and experience among students.

On the other hand, teacher feedback offers expert guidance and thorough corrections, which are essential for helping students understand their writing and make improvements (Ferris, 2018; Hedgcock & Lefkowitz, 1994). While this method ensures high-quality feedback, it may also lead to students becoming overly reliant on their teachers, limiting their active participation in the learning process (Cheng & Zhang, 2021; F. Zhang et al., 2023).

Despite the established advantages of both feedback methods, there is a notable lack of research on the use of peer feedback in junior high school (JHS) contexts, particularly in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classrooms. The scarcity of studies exploring this approach at the JHS level highlights the need for research that examines its impact on students' writing skills. To address this gap, the present study aims to investigate the effectiveness of peer feedback in

improving the writing accuracy of JHS students, contributing to the development of evidence-based teaching practices in EFL writing instruction.

1.3 Research Question

1. Is there a significant difference in writing accuracy between students taught through peer feedback and those taught through teacher-written corrective feedback?

1.4 Purposes of the Study

1. To investigate whether there is a significant difference in writing accuracy between students taught through peer feedback and those taught through teacher-written corrective feedback.

1.5 Significance of the Study

This study offers both theoretical and practical benefits;

1. Theoretical

This research is expected to contribute to the scientific understanding of English language education, specifically in the context of teaching writing in English. It aims to provide valuable insights into the effectiveness of peer feedback and teacher-written corrective feedback.

2. Practical

Then in practical benefits there are 3 benefits that can be applied, namely:

- For students: To enhance learning outcomes, increase engagement, and boost motivation in learning, particularly in writing, by using peer feedback strategy.
- For teachers: This study provides practical solutions to enhance teaching quality by fostering more creative and engaging learning experiences. It equips teachers with alternative strategies to address learning challenges through effective models and innovative approaches.
- For MTs Negeri 1 Jembrana: The study provides valuable feedback to improve the quality of English instruction at the school. The findings may support the development of continuous learning initiatives, helping students engage more in practical activities that enhance their writing skills.

1.6 Scope of The Study

This study was managed with Class VIII students of MTs Negeri 1 Jembrana during the academic year 2024/2025. This study focused on exploring the effect of peer feedback on the writing skills of junior high school (JHS) students within an English as a Foreign Language (EFL) context. The study specifically aimed to assess how peer feedback influences the accuracy of students' writing, compared to the traditional teacher-written corrective feedback.

1.7 Operational Definition

1.7.1. Peer Feedback

Peer feedback is a process where students work together by sharing comments and suggestions to help each other improve their work or understanding of a task. This involves giving feedback on different aspects of the task, creating a learning environment that is both interactive and supportive (Latifi, Noroozi, Hatami, et al., 2021).

1.7.2. Teacher Written Corrective Feedback

Teacher-written corrective feedback refers to the guidance and corrections provided by teachers on students' written assignments. The goal is to help students improve their writing by pointing out and fixing mistakes in grammar, vocabulary, and language use. This feedback can be direct, where the teacher explicitly corrects the errors, or indirect, where the teacher highlights the mistakes and lets the students address them on their own (Zheng & Yu, 2018).

1.7.3. Writing Accuracy

Writing accuracy measures how well a student's written work follows the rules of the language, such as proper grammar, correct vocabulary usage, punctuation, and spelling. In learning a second language (L2), writing accuracy is often assessed by identifying and fixing errors in these areas (Rahimi, 2021).