

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. Background of The Study

In the field of English as foreign language, writing skill become one of important skill related to other ability that must be developed. The uniqueness of writing as a skill has its own features and conventions. The difficulty of learning to write “well” in any language become the most problem that the students faced even in their own language (Brown, 2010, p. 259). In addition to being a communicative skill of vital importance, writing is a skill which enables the learner to plan and rethink the communication process (Celce-Murcia, 2001, p. 213). Therefore, it provides the learner with the opportunity to focus on both linguistic accuracy and content organization. Writing in classroom has many benefits although it contains many steps on it.

As Scrivener argued many students have specific needs that require them to work on writing skills: academic study, exam and business English are three common areas where written work is still very important (Scrivener, 2011, p. 235). As for university level education, especially for those EFL students who set their focus on English learning, writing itself has become a crucial point to improve their understanding in learning it. In order to help students improving their writing’s performance, the teacher should teach them by using effective strategies of writing. However, it is important for teachers to provide effective methods of teaching that improve student’s ability to communicate their ideas and feelings through writing.

Monaghan found that improved teaching techniques are needed, as shown by the lack of student's improvement in writing (Monaghan, 2007, p. 2).

Writing conference is one of the teaching method to enhance the student's ability and performance in writing. It focuses on the writing process where the teacher help the students solve a problem related to their writing. Teacher-student writing conferences are considered as a valuable teaching method in structure courses, used mostly with the purpose of discussing the student's development on their writing (Maliborska & You, 2016, p. 1). A writing conference is, first and foremost, a conversation. The word conversation suggest many things about the way the teacher should talk with the students. The key to the conversation is that the teacher are helping the students to become better writers in the process. This kind of teaching method offered an activity that both teacher and students are involved in learning process. Helping the students through the process of learning writing, the teacher also build positive relationship with them, talking to them about their writing goals and challenges. Thus, it results a good communication which will affect the student's performance in their writing. It is a fact that a better writing performance would obviously benefit them in many other ways, either for the sake of education or daily life itself. It is related to what Allah said in the holy Al-Qur'an *surah Al-Qalam* : 1 as follows:

نَّ وَالْقَلَمِ وَمَا يَسْطُرُونَ ۝

Based on the verses of Al-Qur'an above, it tells about the importance of writing. writing is one way for the worship to be done. Therefore, making writing

as material for reading is also a good deed. As per how importance the writing, the God swear upon it and what were written by His servants. It proves that how huge a role of a human being in what he writes. Thus, an effective method of teaching writing would certainly give an impact to the learners to become a good writer.

There are many teachers practice this teaching method while teaching writing. In English Education Department of Tarbiyah and Teacher Training Faculty UIN Antasari Banjarmasin, several classes of writing are conducted this kind of teaching method. As for the example, EAP (English for Academic Purpose) and Business writing subject which are managed in sixth semester practiced it. The teachers would begin the lesson by choosing the topic then encourage students to think out loud of their ideas and their own arguments. During the conferences, both teacher and students play their own roles in two parts (Anderson, 2000 as cited in Bayraktar, 2012, p. 710). Group conferences will sometimes be carried out according to the assignment given by the teachers where then the teacher feedback follows after.

Thus, any feedback to students should be made clear so as to help students improve their skills (Hounsell, McCune, Hounsell, & Litjens, 2008, p. 56). Zacharias (2007) proved her study in Indonesia that most of EFL students believed that feedback is crucial thing for them to improve their language skills. English as Foreign Language (EFL) is the term used to describe the study of English by non-native speakers in countries where English is not the dominant language. With the teacher feedback which is more qualified, experienced, accurate, reliable and trustworthy, the students were excited and motivated in the learning process (p. 51).

A review of literature on writing reveals three major areas of feedback as revision. These areas are peer feedback; conferences as feedback; and teachers' comments as feedback (Keh, 1990, p. 295). Among the various feedback methods, the teacher writing conference has often been rated by learners as the most beneficial to writing development. Feedback is an important tool to enhance student's ability whether it is written or oral feedback, students can learn from the errors they make on their writing assignments and revise them to make a better writing piece.

However, due to some circumstances such as current pandemic inhibited the face-to-face learning process, an online learning is being carried out in order to continue the education. It fully replaces face-to-face learning in classroom setting into online learning. It now becomes a new challenge for both students and teachers to run online learning. As the classroom setting changed, it doesn't mean the teaching methods are also changed. Thus, writing conference which is practiced in writing class subject of English Education Department of Tarbiyah Faculty managed to apply the writing class with online conference. In the online setting, feedback during the online conference for students may be written, audio, video, or in the live synchronous web-based conference format (Spink, 1997 as cited in Leibold & Schwar, 2015, p. 35).

Therefore, based on the background above, this study attempts to investigate about the implementation of how the writing conference conduct in writing class subject with online learning setting. Focusing on how the online conference is carried out and what type of feedback that occurs in it based on the students experiences.

In Indonesia context, not many studies are related to writing conference teaching method. While many of feedback studies have focused written corrective feedback, oral feedback in teacher-student writing conference in EFL context is underexplored. This has led the researcher to investigate on how the writing conference online conduct due to current pandemic.

The study that the researcher conducts takes place at English Education Department of Tarbiyah and Teacher Training Faculty UIN Antasari Banjarmasin. The researcher focus on the students of sixth semester about the writing conference online in one of their writing class. As to how their feeling, opinion, and experience through it.

B. Research Question

1. How is the implementation of writing conference strategy in online EFL writing classroom?
2. What type of feedback that occur during the teacher-student online conference?

C. Objectives of Study

The purpose of this study is (1) to find out about how the implementation of writing conference strategy in online EFL writing classroom and then (2) to identify about the type of teacher feedback that occur during the teacher-student online conference.

D. Significance of Study

This study offers two important benefits both for teachers and students. While it comes to the English teachers, they will have to know more about a

strategy that help the students become a good writers. In spite of using their own language while writing process, the teacher can provides immediate feedback to motivate the students by using this strategy. When it comes to the students, they would probably learn about the writing conference strategy itself so that in the future they can adjust to it or they can practice it when they become a teacher or lecturer. Furthermore, this study also offer the information about how the writing conference teaching method conduct with online learning setting. Thus, it may help for other studies that discuss about the challenge and problem in classroom in online learning setting

E. Definition of Key Terms

1. Writing Conference

Writing Conference is a one-on-one direct strategy, designed to guide and assist students through the process of writing. it is also a strategy for navigating a stage of the writing process. Just like a conversation that take place between teacher and students, during the time they will have a conference about reviewing a piece of writing. In this research, the writing conference is conducted in several class of online EFL writing classroom.

2. Feedback

Feedback is information given to the students or teacher about the student's performance relative to learning purposes or goals. Providing students engage with feedback should enhance their learning and improve assessment performance. In this research, the feedback is reviewed as the

three major areas of feedback as revision. The areas are peer feedback, conference feedback, and teacher's written feedback.

3. Online Learning Setting

Online learning is education that takes place over the internet. It is often referred to as "e-learning" among other terms. However, online learning setting means the form of education no longer take place like traditional classroom but it takes place across distance. In this research, the online writing classes were conducted by using Zoom or Google Meet for the online conference.