The Implementation of Indirect Corrective Feedback to Improve Eleventh Graders' Writing Performances

Firda Aprilia, Dewi Rochsantiningsih, Sri Haryati
English Education Department
Teacher Training and Education Faculty
Sebelas Maret University of Surakarta
e-mail: firdaaprilia4617@gmail.com

Abstract

Written corrective feedback is an effective way of improving students' writing. Numerous previous studies have demonstrated this. Teachers are free to choose their corrective feedback. There are several types of corrective feedback that can be employed in the writing classroom, such as direct, indirect, and metalinguistic feedback. This paper discusses the use of indirect corrective feedback in the writing classroom. The research aims to improve students' writing performances using indirect corrective feedback. This study uses classroom action research, and the participants of this study are 24 eleventh grade students in Karanganyar. The main data of the research is based on the students' writing papers. The study is conducted in five meetings with four steps of the classroom action research procedure: planning, implementing, observing, and reflecting. The writing test in pre-research and at the end of each cycle are used to measure students' improvement. The findings of this study indicate that indirect corrective feedback is effective in improving students' writing skills, as evidenced by the improvement of the students' writing scores.
Keywords: indirect corrective feedback; self-editing; writing skills

INTRODUCTION

Writing skill can be categorized as an essential part of the communication process through which people can deliver and convey their idea, thought, and assessment through the written word. Writing can greatly assist students in combining previously and recently acquired language knowledge (Harmer, 2012). In line with this, Leki (2001) also states that writing is an important part of language performances. English writing in professional and educational settings is becoming increasingly crucial in countries where English is not the first language.

A specific writing process can be viewed in two ways; as a process or as a product. In a short, both concerns can be referred to as writing approaches. Linse (2005) elaborates on the writing process, stating that it consists of several stages, including prewriting, writing, revising, editing, and publishing. However, every writing stage, including revising and editing, makes a significant contribution to how students learn and practice writing. The most significant part of the editing or revising process is how the modification is formed to improve the writing. As a result, the students require feedback to edit and revise their writing.

Senior High School students, especially eleventh graders, still tend to have problems in writing and ignore an important aspect of writing, as has been found in some studies. Rahmatunisa (2004) in her study reveals that Indonesian EFL students had problems in terms of linguistic, psychological, and cognitive aspects. According to Cahyono & Widiati (2011), writing is the most complicated skill compared to the others. It is because writing is a complex, cognitive activity requiring students to demonstrate control of various variables at once. Likewise, the students must arrange their thought into phrases and paragraphs while adhering to particular language structures. It takes a lot more effort and mindfulness than oral communication, which makes it burdensome to master.

According to a study done by Imanuel (2017), students have inadequate command of grammar aspects such as the usage of subject-verb agreement, article, plural and singular form, preposition, pronouns, and conjunction. It portrays grammar as a crucial aspect of writing English. In line with the findings of Putri (2014), which show that shows that the most common type of error occurring in students' writing composition is an error of omission. Dulay (1982) proposed omission as a type of error strongly associated with grammar. Thus, grammar is an important part of learning to write.

The findings of investigations conducted by Imanuel (2017) and Putri (2014) align with sub-aspects of challenges the researcher faces in the classroom. First, students frequently use inappropriate grammar structures in their composition, and they are often unaware of the errors they have made. The students' problems do emerge for some reasons. For starters, the teacher barely provides feedback on the students' writing and simply assigns a score. Second, students barely have an opportunity to revise and learn from their mistakes. The last reason is that the students simply lack writing knowledge and practice.

There are large numbers of great effort in improving students' writing accuracy. Written corrective feedback is one of the strategies to teach writing better, yet it has become a huge debate among the researchers since Truscott (1996) published his investigation. He assists that written corrective feedback should be abandoned because it harms students' writing.

Moreover, as stated by Truscott that there is no substantial evidence that error correction aided students' writing. Truscott also claims that error correction ignores the aspect of SLA concerning how languages are learned and mastered. Following

that, students' and teachers' willingness to conduct such rigorous error-correcting is considered a practical issue. Error correction, without a doubt, takes time and energy.

Then, there is the theory opposing Truscott's argument. Truscott's theory was shown to be flawed by Ferris (2004). She explains that by providing written corrective feedback, students have the opportunity to revise and edit their writing. Similarly, they become more conscious of their mistakes. This short-term effect of written corrective feedback on text modification had consistently enhanced students' writing accuracy. Meanwhile, the students' writing accuracy gains over time are the long-term effect of written corrective feedback. Thus, written corrective feedback is well-accepted by the teacher and the students.

Many studies regarding written corrective feedback have been widely researched. However, there is still a small number of studies that focus on indirect corrective feedback in Indonesia. Thus, the researcher needs proof that indirect written corrective feedback can be done in Indonesia. The second language learners from previous explanations and research have different socio-cultural from Indonesian language learners. This research is conducted to examine the implementation of ICF in the writing classroom. Specifically, this research focuses on investigating whether indirect corrective feedback can improve students' writing accuracy or not.

LITERATURE REVIEW

With a process, product, and genre approach, feedback is a fundamental component in foreign language writing programs throughout the world and it is an important part of their instructional repertoires (Hyland & Hyland, 2006). Likewise, according to research conducted by Keh (1990) feedback is any input from teachers to students that provides information or it can be said that feedback is explained as the information "given back" to individuals about the adequacy of their actions. In this case, the information can be in the form of direction, advice, suggestion, or request. There are two types of feedback based on its mode: oral feedback and written feedback. Written feedback, or delayed feedback, is more appropriate for use in teaching writing because it requires a specific time between the performance and the feedback result – which is written and takes time.

Corrective feedback is concerned with linguistic error correction (Ellis, 2009). It is sometimes written as CF in abbreviation. In the classroom, when writing, corrective feedback is provided primarily in written form. As a result, the abbreviation changed from CF to WCF. In line with Ellis (2009), Chaudron (1988) characterizes corrective feedback as "the valid" correction which is powerful in adjusting the learners' inter-language rule so that the errors can be dispensed with for the additional creation. According to Evans et al. (2010), practically everything learned deals with and requires feedback. It, therefore, leads to the assumption that delivering written corrective feedback (WCF) relating to the principle of writing can contribute to learning progress. According to additional research, written corrective feedback assists students in

improving their writing. Bitchener (2008) claims that written corrective feedback has a considerable impact on students' writing accuracy.

Bitchener undertook a two-month research project related to the article system in English (the usage of "a" and for the subsequent mention is the usage of "the". The first experimental group received both direct corrective feedback, while the third experimental group received only direct corrective feedback without any metalinguistic feedback, outperforming the control group that did not receive corrective feedback. After that, Bitchener and Knoch (2009) revealed that written corrective feedback had a ten-month retention impact. Those who got written corrective feedback outscored students who did not provide written corrective feedback during a ten-month interval. The study concluded that written corrective feedback had a long-term impact.

A variety of corrective feedback can be applied in the classroom. Six ways or strategies, according to Ellis (2009, p. 98-99), can be adopted in the classroom to ensure that the strategies are effective. Table 1 visualizes a list of written corrective feedback strategies.

Table 1. *Types of Corrective Feedback*

No	Types of CF	Description
1	Direct CF	The correct form is directly provided to the students.
2	Indirect CF	The teacher mentions the errors but does not give the correct form.
	Indicating + locating the error	This is accomplished by underlining and utilizing cursors to identify the errors in the students' paper
	Indicating only	This takes the form of a note in the margin indicating that an error or errors have appeared.
3	Metalinguistic CF	The teacher provides some metalinguistic hints as to the nature of the errors.
	Brief grammatical description	The errors in the text are numbered by the teachers, as are the grammatical errors at the bottom of the text
4	The focus of the feedback	This refers to whether the teacher attempts to rectify all (or most) of the pupils' errors or focuses on one or two categories of problems.
	Unfocused CF	Unfocused CF is extensive
	Focused CF	Focused CF is intensive
5	Electronic Feedback	The teacher points out the errors and gives a hyperlink to a concordance file with an example of appropriate usage
6	Reformulation	This consists of a native speaker reworking the entire text

of the students to make the language appear as native-like as feasible while retaining the original's meaning

(Source: Ellis, 2009)

As a result, the teacher was confronted with a flood of written corrective feedback options. The importance of feedback implementation does not preclude it from being contradictory. It has been a long point of contention whether direct or indirect feedback is more appropriate and effective. In terms of efficacy and effect on students' learning process and improvement, some researches demonstrate that indirect corrective feedback outperforms direct corrective feedback.

According to Hosseini (2014), indirect corrective feedback is preferable to direct feedback in writing. It allows students to participate in the rewriting or revising process, forcing them to deal with the problem and learn something from it. On the other hand, students do not learn much from direct corrective feedback because they are already provided the proper form and are not required to review, meaning they did not learn anything. The findings are consistent with the findings of Anna Westmacott (2016) who conducted qualitative research about students' perception of direct and indirect corrective feedback. The findings showed indirect corrective feedback has more positive impact on students' writing than direct corrective feedback. She also asserts that students have a positive perception regarding the indirect feedback given in the writing classroom. Students felt that ICF was better because it forced them to put it into practice and think about where they went wrong. On one hand, ICF was more useful because they could revise it by themselves and it could reinforce their grammatical knowledge. On the other hand, two participants considered that direct corrective feedback is more beneficial for them. Next, Siti Mei Rahmawati (2017) conducted a quantitative study about direct and indirect corrective feedback in a middle school classroom. The participants in this research numbered 38 middle school students and were divided into two groups of experiments. Statistical analysis test found that indirect corrective feedback was more successful than direct corrective feedback in enhancing students' writing accuracy because students grasped the errors and did the self-correction. Furthermore, Nia Pujianti et al (2018) conducted a qualitative study about the use of indirect corrective feedback to eliminate grammatical errors in students' writing. The participants of this study were 9 students in the third semester taking a writing subject. The researcher collected the data from students' writing assignments for a descriptive paragraph. The research showed that the provision of indirect corrective feedback was effective in reducing grammatical errors in the subsequently revised draft.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study aims to improve eleventh-grade students' writing skills through the use of an indirect corrective feedback strategy. This study employs the Classroom Action Research design because it is concerned with the resolution of a specific instructional problem. Because both numerical and verbal data are gathered in

classroom action research, it is not precisely classified as either quantitative or qualitative research (Latief, 2014). Similarly, this study examines how a group of teachers organizes their teaching practice and learns from their own experiences by putting their notions for bettering teaching and learning practice into action and evaluating the result. A preliminary study was carried out to identify the problem and develop a strategy to solve it. Before the researcher proposed the indirect corrective feedback strategy, this became the starting point. However, CAR is about diving deeper into how to fix that issues component or field based on observable impact, rather than just solving an instructional problem (Kemmis & McTaggart, 1988, p. 21). The process consists of several steps in a cycle that includes planning, acting, observing, and reflecting which are done integrated like a spiral.

The research participants are 24 eleventh-grade students. The class is chosen randomly by the researcher. The researcher collected the data from the interview, observation, and students' writing assignments. In this study, to examine the qualitative data, the researcher used constant comparative approaches as described by Burns (1999) that list different steps for data analysis, including assembling the data, coding, comparing the data, building interpretation, and reporting the outcomes. Quantitative data analysis was utilized to analyze data from the teaching and learning process. It was done to compare the students' writing skills before and after the action or the result of the pre-research test and the test of each cycle. A formula proposed by Sukardi (2005) was used to compare the mean score.

Treatment and Procedure
Planning

Planning is the initial phase of Classroom Action Research. The planning phase was carried out when the problem had been identified and the objectives of the research had been determined. The most essential part of the planning stage was a detailed plan of the action or improvement that the researcher intended to take. The researcher prepared a lesson plan, teaching material, test instruments, and observation sheets to record the students' activities. The students were instructed to write their thoughts on a selection of poems picked by the researcher and aligned with the curriculum. The poem was chosen as the material for the learning process. To establish whether the technique was successful in solving the problem, some success criteria were chosen. (1) The research was deemed successful if at least 75% of students in the class received a score of 70 or above on the final essay at the end of the cycle. (2) The research was deemed successful if there were positive responses to the strategy's execution.

Acting

To treat comprehensive students' errors, the researcher employed indirect corrective feedback. This means that the researcher would mark all errors made by students without providing the correct form. Some steps were carried out by the

researcher while conducting the research. First, the first poem entitled "The Struggle of Life" was given, students were required to write their interpretation of the poem and give their opinion about it. Then, this first composition was given indirect written corrective feedback, scored, and returned to the students. It was used as a writing pre-test. Next, the students were given some different poems based on the English book "Pathway to English", they could choose one, and they were asked to write their opinion. Fourth, this second composition was given indirect corrective feedback and returned to the students to be revised. Then, the third and fourth were repeated until the students were given the final poem. Fifth, the final poem entitled "A Helping Hand" was given as the post-test. The students were required to write their opinion about that. This final composition was given indirect corrective feedback, scored, and returned to the students. This composition was used to see whether the result achieves the criteria of success.

Observing

The researcher then analyzed the result of students' writing tasks to get the numerical data that presented the students' achievements. Using an observation checklist and field notes, the researcher observed the teaching and learning process while the strategy was applied. The result of the observation checklist corroborated the result of the students' writing tests. After the cycle had been completed, a short interview was also conducted to find out their response to indirect corrective feedback.

Reflecting

The writing compositions were scored using the writing scoring rubric set based Weigle (2002). There were five writing aspects used to assess content, organization, vocabulary, language use, and mechanic. Each aspect has different scales, depending on its level. After observing the result of students' writing scores and the teaching and learning process, the researcher evaluated the action and concluded whether the further cycle should be done or not.

FINDINGS

According to the findings, 75% of the students scored less than 70 in the first writing. The indirect corrective feedback had a positive impact. In comparison to the preliminary study, the percentage of students who failed to pass the score of 70 has dropped. In their first composition, 4 out of 24 students failed to meet the passing score. Moreover, according to the final writing, it is shown that more than 80% of students in the class got a score of 70 or higher. The passing score was achieved by 23 of the 24 students. It indicates that the first goal or success criterion has been met. There was only 1 student who got a score below 70. Figure 1 illustrates the improvement of students' writing scores from the pre-research test, the test of cycle 1, and the test of cycle 2. The orange line represents the pre-test score, the grey for the test of cycle 1, and the yellow line represents the test of cycle 2. The grey and yellow lines are always

above the orange line. It means that the post-test is higher than the pre-test score. In other words, the treatment successfully improves students' writing accuracy.
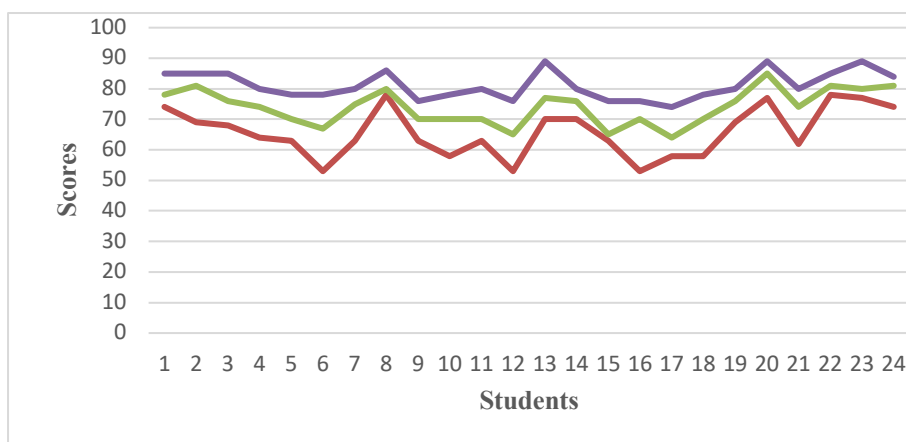

Figure 1. The comparison between the result of students' scores in the preliminary study, writing 1 and writing 2

Table 2. *The Comparison of Students' Writing Scores of each Aspect*

Aspect of Writing	Pre-Research (1)	Cycle 1 (2)	Cycle 2 (3)	(4)	Improvement (4-1)
Content	19.22	20.88	23.46	22.17	2,9
Organization	14	16	17.71	16.86	2.8
Vocabulary	13.75	14.92	16.21	15.57	1.8
Language use	15.46	17.92	19.58	18.75	3.3
Mechanic	3.4	3.9	4	3.95	0.5
Mean Score	65.62	74	81	-	-

Among the five aspects of writing that had been presented above, the highest to the lowest improvement of each aspect can be seen as follows: 1) Language use, 2) Content, 3) Organization, 4) Vocabulary, 5) Mechanic. Language use or grammar aspect had the highest improvement, while the mechanical aspect had the lowest improvement.

Based on the result of this research, indirect corrective feedback introduced the students to a new way of learning English, especially in writing. The result of this study is likewise consistent with the earlier study. Bitchener (2012) claimed that students who were provided with written corrective feedback showed modest progress in their writing accuracy. The indirect corrective feedback strategy was effective in resolving the students' writing issues. It is consistent with Evans, et al. (2010), who found that providing indirect corrective feedback on students' composition is a successful instructional method for resolving students' writing problems and is also required by students. Furthermore, for students who were treated

with comprehensive corrective feedback, the linguistic accuracy of a specific text was improved throughout the revisions stage and on a new piece of paper. The students showed improvement in their writing accuracy in cycle 1 and cycle 2. As a result, the students demonstrated that they had gone through the information processing process. The students were aware and took attention to the feedback, recognizing the difference between the erroneous and the target-like, and applying what they have learned in a nee writing project. The students' level of improvement and long-term memory were gained over time.

The students' pre-research writing was below the passing score set which is the minimum score is 70. Th students' English writing score was 65.62. Their verb was incorrectly spelled. There were also some errors in subject-verb agreement, such as when students wrote "it" as the subject but write "start" instead of "starts" as the verb. Following that, the students wrote the verb that was not based on the timeline, such as writing "see" for past tense sentences. Furthermore, the students failed to include a capital letter for a certain usage, such as for the name of the city or someone's name. They failed to follow the most basic rule of writing. Furthermore, they failed to include a full stop at the end of the sentence.

The writing appeared to be the product of a machine translation, which was another issue to handle. The text is in English, but it seems that it was translated from Bahasa into English by a machine translation. It sounded like Bahasa Indonesia was being spoken. It was as if the students thought the sentence in Bahasa, their native language, and then translated it into English. The students also did not choose the appropriate word based on the context.

Nonetheless, by the end of cycle 2, the students had made only minor progress. Their spelling was improving. They used the correct verb form. Their subject began to concur with the verb. The students' writing accuracy improved, thanks in part to the implementation of indirect corrective feedback. As a result, the research disproved Truscott's (1996, p. 364) assumption that written corrective feedback is harmful to students' writing. Once students made a mistake particular word, such as writing "see" instead of "saw" for past tense, they were less likely to repeat the exact mistake. It means that the students' subsequent writing is correct. Moreover, it also implies that indirect corrective feedback contributes to the autonomous learning process. According to Bitchener, et al. (2005), providing feedback has a significant impact on the students' language accuracy each time they compose a new writing project. The mechanical problem was also solved by indirect corrective feedback. This rise is satisfying for the researcher because it demonstrates that the students have finally grasped the essence of indirect corrective feedback, i.e., they can self-correct their writing.

The impact of Bahasa on students' writing should be considered more carefully. This could address both treatable and untreatable errors (Ferris, 2011, p. 36). A treatable error is associated with a linguistic structure that occurs in a rule-governed way. Verb tense and form, plural and possessive noun endings, article usage, subject-

verb agreement, run-on and comma splices, sentence fragments, punctuation, errors in word form, capitalization, and spelling are all examples of treatable errors. Untreatable errors are distinctive, and students must do self-correction using their acquired language skills. Most word choice errors, except some pronoun and preposition usage, are untreatable, as is unidiomatic sentence structure. She also stated that using indirect written corrective feedback is the best way to treat treatable errors. On the other hand, direct written corrective feedback is more effective at treating untreatable errors.

Among the five aspects of writing, language use or grammar aspect had the highest improvement because it is considered treatable errors. That was why students could be directed to a grammar book or set of rules in helping them to solve the problems. Several sources were linked to the grammatical feedback such as subject-verb agreement, tenses, word order, quantifiers parallelism, etc. The majority of the students could effectively revise any type of grammar error. Subject-verb agreement and tenses dominated the grammar errors but they were successfully dealt with the errors. They recognized their error types and revised them based on the feedback given. The usage of adjectives, adverbs, and quantifiers were also their errors, but they could revise it very well and did not produce the same mistakes.

Meanwhile, the mechanic aspect had the lowest improvement among the five aspects. It was not because the students did not absorb the feedback or revised the errors properly, but from the beginning, the mechanical aspect was not a serious problem. The mechanical aspect could be classified as the simplest and the most readable feedback because it only focused on the correct spelling, punctuation, and formatting. The problem with spelling and punctuation dominated the feedback on the mechanic, but the students could revise it easily. The students merely revised the spelling and add commas and periods.

As a result, students have been introduced to a new way of learning, especially in writing through indirect corrective feedback. Harmer (2007) explained that written corrective feedback was important in assessing students' composition as well as helping and teaching them to write. The indirect corrective feedback worked well in resolving students' problems. They were able to detect their own mistakes in their composition by implementing indirect corrective feedback. This made the students aware of the errors and encouraged them to avoid making similar mistakes in the next writing activity. According to Bitchener et al (2005, p. 201), providing feedback had a significant impact on students' language accuracy each time they write a new writing project.

CONCLUSION

The study is intended to assist eleventh-grade students in a high school in Karanganyar in improving their low writing performances. Based on the finding and discussion does fulfill the researcher's expectation. The indirect written corrective feedback successfully solved the main problems especially the inability to use

appropriate grammar and helped students improve their writing accuracy. The students' writing accuracy improved compared to the time before the strategy was implemented. The implication of this study is great. The researcher hopes that the findings put an end to the never-ending debate among researchers about written corrective feedback. Numerous prior studies have yielded the same result. The findings put the written corrective feedback in a stronger position.

There are several design flaws in this research. However, this is a significant step forward in the domain of written corrective feedback. This research should be served as a foundation for future research on the topic, as it is relatively unknown in Indonesia. The use of indirect corrective feedback has been demonstrated to be beneficial. In enhancing students' writing accuracy. It also boosts the motivation of the students. However, there is still much more work to be done in this area. Future research should be conducted in this area. Direct corrective feedback for low-level students, metalinguistic corrective feedback for advanced students, and comparing direct and indirect corrective feedback for low-level students are only a few of the topics that have yet to be investigated in Indonesia. The research progress in this subject in a foreign country that employs English as their second language has been tremendous. Indonesia has to catch up to the others countries in terms of publishing research in this field.

REFERENCES

Bitchener, J., &Knoch, U. (2010). Raising the linguistic accuracy level of advanced L2 writers with written corrective feedback. *Journal of Second Language Writing, 19*(4), 207–217. doi:10.1016/j.jslw.2010.10.002

Bitchener, J., Young, S., Cameron, D. (2005). The Effect of Different Types of Corrective Feedback on ESL Student Writing. *Journal of Second Language Writing,* (Online), *14*, 191- 205,

Dulay, Heidi et al. (1982). Language Two. New York, Oxford: Oxford Univerity Press

Ellis, R., Sheen, Y., Murakami, M., & Takashima, H. (2008). The effects of focused and unfocused written corrective feedback in an English as a foreign language context. *System, 36*(3), 353–371. doi:10.1016/ j.system.2008.02.001

Ellis, R. (2009). A Typology of Written Corrective Feedback Types. *ELT Journal*, *63*(2), 97-107.

Eslami, Elham. (2014). The Effects of Direct and Indirect Corrective Feedback Techniques on EFL Students' Writing. *Procedia Social and Behavioral Sciences*, *98*, 445-45.

Evans, N. W., Hartshorn, K. J., Tuioti, E. A. (2010). Written Corrective Feedback: Practitioners' Perspectives. *International Journal of English Studies*, *10*(2), 47-77.

Ferris, D. R. (2003). Response to student writing: Implications for second language students. London: Routledge.

Ferris, D., & Roberts, B. (2001). Error feedback in L2 writing classes: How explicit does it need to be? *Second Language Writing, 10*(3), 161–184. doi:10.1016/S1060-3743(01)00039-X

Harmer, Jeremy. (2012). *Essential: Teacher Knowledge*. Harlow: Pearson Education Limited.

Hattie, J., Timperley, H. (2007). The Power of Feedback. *Review of Educational Research, 77*(81), 81-112.

Hosseini, Menijeh. (2014). The Role of Direct and Indirect Written Corrective Feedback in Improving Iranian EFL Students' Writing Skill. *Procedia Social and Behavioral Sciences, 98*, 668-674.

Kemmis, S. & McTaggart, R. (1988). *The action research planner*. 3rd ed. Victoria, Australia: Deakin University Press.

Lee, I. (2012). Student reaction to teacher feedback in two Hongkong secondary classrooms. *Journal of Second Language Writing, 17*(2), 144-164.

Linse, C., & Nunan, D. (2005). *Practical English language teaching: Young learners*. New York: McGraw-Hill ESL/ELT

Putri, Yosi F. (2014). Students' Errors in Using Simple Present Tense in Writing Descriptive Texts. *State University of Malang Online Journal*, 1-18.

Saville-Troike, Muriel. (2006). *Introducing Second Language Acquisition*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press