

# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION

This chapter contains introduction discussing background of the study, research questions, purpose of the study, context, research procedure and organization of the paper.

### 1.1. Background of the study

Reading is one of the most beneficial activities in human life. One of the prominent benefits that can be gained from reading is its relation with students' school achievement. The activities of reading allow students to collect abundant information and familiarize students to grasp things they have to understand easily. Reading makes them quick learners that can comprehend learning materials fast and enables them to do tests better than those who do not read. Mitchell (1996) reported that students valued reading most for its contribution to school success. In this extent, though students do not read voluntarily, there is a recognition that reading can help them achieve school success which is good marks.

Reading can be divided into reading fiction and reading non-fiction. Reading fiction, or literary reading, is different from reading non-fiction. Miall (1995) believes in reading fiction readers involve more such psychological aspects as thought and feeling compared to those who read non-fiction. He further suggests that literary reading can be a demanding activity, both cognitively and emotionally. Literary works, particularly novels, are often very attractive to readers. It offers readers stories to

discover, characters to analyze, conflicts to explore, settings to feel and so forth. Those elements cited above are the essences that distinguish non-fiction and fiction reading.

During reading, readers and texts become connected in the construction process of meaning of texts. Readers and texts are inseparable. Texts itself are a set of words formed to create sentences. The sentences then are collected to arrange paragraphs and those paragraphs are gathered to form a story line. A set of words in the texts are no more than a series of printed words without meaning until readers come to read and attach meaning to it. Rosenblatt (1990) argues that “the texts become alive only when they are read and they become literary only when a sufficient body of reader chooses to read them as aesthetic objects rather than as informal documents.”

In other words, it is the readers who define the meaning of a text, not its writer. Referring to Rosenblatt, (1993) the existing texts are only empty vessels that are ready to be fulfilled by meaning given by the readers when reading the text. The writers do not have any power to define the meaning of texts. A text alone does not independently make certain meaning. The meaning in the text is given by the reader when they read the text.

One of the most prominent duties the readers have to do is that giving response. Here, readers' response takes a big part in the constructive process of making meaning. The statements above are in accordance with reader response theory suggesting that the reader (response) plays at least an equal role in the process of interpretation. Carson (1993:88) describes that “the text itself is incomplete ... ; it needs a reader's experience to make it understood.” Interestingly, the response given by the readers will differ

depending on what they have experienced. This difference occurs because “the readers consider not only the text, but also what they bring to the text – their own histories, beliefs, biases, prejudices, experiences and hopes” (Rosenblatt, 1993). Therefore, reader responses open up the possibilities to look at students’ different responses.

This research aims at investigating readers’ responses to Judy Blume’s *Iggie’s House*. This novel was chosen because previous studies regarding reader response in students of UPI mostly focused on a set of short stories. A novel was selected because it offers more elements to explore, i.e. more detailed plot, deeper characters, more obvious settings and a set of conflicts, compared to those elements comprised in short stories. On the other hand, *Iggie’s House* is an adolescent literature comprising daily words that often times can be found in our life and telling the sensitive conflict of racial discrimination. Racial issue in our culture lies still on grey area, the pro and contra is uncertain and it is not as clear as in America. Thus, the writer believes that raising this issue can evoke many questions and assumptions.

## **1.2. Research question**

To conduct the research, the writer has formulated the two following questions:

1. How do college students respond to *Iggie’s House*?
2. What do their responses mean?

## **1.3. Purpose of the study**

The purpose of the study is to:

1. Find out the way college students respond to *Iggie’s House*.

2. To seek out the meaning and implication behind their responses.

#### **1.4.Context**

This research is conducted under two principles which are Wall's categorization of response patterns and types of readers. This research is concerned only with the data, taken from students' essays and questionnaires, consisting at least one or more Wall's response category and type of readers. Interview is conducted to ensure the consistency of information given by the respondents. Ten respondents are considered to be sufficient to represent the overall 2007 English Literature students.

#### **1.5.Research procedure**

The study will employ descriptive qualitative analysis to find the answers of the research questions. It is chosen because the data taken is in form of words rather than numbers.

##### **a. Data collection**

The data will be collected through written response. Written response is used because it (can) acts as the evidence at the transaction between the reader and the text (Hancock, 2004). Ten students of 2007 Non Education Program are chosen as sample. They are regarded as considerable sources because they have learned several critical analysis courses and they are relatively able to write expected and thorough responses.

##### **b. Data analysis**

The data will be firstly categorized based on the two following steps:

### **Categorizing data based on Wall's (1997) categorization**

The data is taken from students' written responses. Any statements that contain at least one of six Wall's categories are then separated and treated as textual evidence.

### **Categorizing data based on types of reader**

The data is also taken from the students' questionnaires. Through this way, the writer can find whether the respondents are avid readers or reluctant readers.

The data is then analyzed based on the theoretical frameworks that have been formulated. The first data categorization from students' written response is analyzed and arranged. Therefore, the writer can find patterns of students' responses and the answer of the first research question can be revealed. The second data categorization is then analyzed. After classifying respective student's type of reader, the findings from the second analysis are then combined and matched with the previous findings from the first analysis. Through this way, the difference between types of reader in creating patterns of response can be revealed and the second research question can be answered.

## **1.6. Organization of the paper**

The research will be organized as follows:

### **Chapter I Introduction**

This chapter contains an introduction which provides the information on the background of the study, research question, purpose of the study, limitation of the

study, research procedure, synopsis, clarification of terms and organization of the Paper.

## **Chapter II Theoretical Review**

This section consists of the theoretical reviews that are relevant to the present study.

## **Chapter III Research Method**

This part contains the methodology of the research to answer the research questions including the subject, stages of preparation, instruments, and steps of data collection.

## **Chapter IV Finding and Discussion**

After collecting the data, the findings of the study were interpreted and explained in a comprehensive manner.

## **Chapter V Conclusion and Suggestion**

This chapter presents all the conclusion of the research paper; it also provides space for implications and suggestions for further researchers and related institutions.

The next chapter discusses some theories related to the present study. It contains theoretical framework, which serves as a basis for investigating the research problems.