

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

This chapter is devoted to delineate briefly the background of the study, research questions, research objectives, and significance of the research. It also provides the organization of thesis.

1.1 Background of the Study

In the last decade, the genre-based approaches (henceforward GBA) are becoming increasingly influential in the field of English language teaching (Derewianka, 2003; Johns, 2002; Paltridge, 2004) and identified as one of the major trends in the new millennium (Rodgers, 2001 cited in Lin, 2006). Similarly, Hyland (2002) argues that the genre approaches had a considerable impact on the ways we see language use and on literacy education around the world. Educators, for example in Australia (native speakers of English), South Africa, Singapore (ESL), and even in Indonesia (EFL) are employing the genre-based approach in developing their syllabi, materials and curricula. Such approaches have been adopted in primary, secondary, tertiary, professional and community teaching contexts in the program for native speakers of English as well as ESL and EFL learners (Derewianka, 2003).

The studies regarding the effectiveness of teaching writing of English based on the genre-based approach in an EFL context was conducted by Emilia (2005) in Indonesia, Kim (2006) in Korea, Lin (2006) in Japan, Foo (2007) in Malaysia,

and Mali-Jali (2007). They concern the ways to improve the writing skills of EFL students. The main goal of their research was to investigate the effectiveness of the GBA to teaching writing. Based on their research finding, the teaching program that used a Systemic Functional Linguistic GBA enhances students' performance of their academic writing skills. They propose that the genre-based approach seems to fit well in the EFL context.

Other studies which implemented the genre theory and application of Computer Assisted Language Learning (CALL) and information technology (IT) were conducted by Lirola and Cuevas (2010), Drury (2006), and Widodo (2006). The results show that incorporating this approach into writing academic course is effective and helps the students to write better.

There are several types of texts that the students have to learn and one of them is Exposition. Exposition genre is considered as an important and influential language process, essential for dealing with many aspects of school knowledge and effective social participation because it involves the process of evaluation and persuasion (Derewianka, 1990: 75; Knapp and Watkins, 2009: 187). Therefore, it is expected that teaching writing an Exposition text could empower students in expressing their ideas. It is in line with Bizzel (1992: 23 cited in Emilia 2005: 59) who suggest that learning to argue in writing could lead the students more directly to academic thinking than would writing in which students simply present personal experience.

Regarding the teaching and learning of English writing in Indonesia, Alwasilah (2001) argues that first, writing was considered as the most difficult

language skill to be learned by the majority of Indonesian (EFL) students; second, students were barely exposed to the practice of writing; and third, the teachers or lecturers lack information and knowledge on teaching their students to write.

From the aforementioned description, it can be concluded that although an Exposition text is very important for the students, the studies on the implementation of the GBA to teaching Exposition in an Indonesian EFL context at the tertiary level of education is still infrequent. Therefore, the present study investigates the effectiveness of the GBA to teaching writing an Exposition, the students' response, and the issues that emerge in the teaching program on the implementation of the GBA in the context of EFL tertiary level of education in Indonesia.

1.2 Research Questions

This study is designed to answer the following questions:

1. Can the genre based approach help students develop their writing skills, especially writing an Exposition text?
2. What are the students' responses toward the implementation of the genre based approach to teaching an Exposition text?
3. What issues emerged in the teaching program using the genre based approach?

1.3 Research Objectives

With reference to the problems which will be examined, this study is aimed at:

1. exploring the extent to which the teaching of writing an Exposition text based on the genre based approach can enhance students' writing ability.
2. exploring students' responses towards the implementation of the genre-based approach to teaching an Exposition text.
3. exploring the issues that emerged in the teaching program using the genre based approach.

1.4 Significance of the Research

Theoretically, this study will provide a reference on the study on teaching writing based on the genre based approach in the tertiary level of education in Indonesia. Furthermore, this study will be preliminary inputs for the readers or other researchers to further study in the similar area of research with different interest.

Practically, this study will provide general guidance for improving the practice of teaching argumentative writing especially an Exposition text and as a guide for teachers in selecting, designing, and using appropriate method of teaching English writing.

Professionally, pertaining to the present English curriculum that is used in Indonesia, the results of this study are hopefully beneficial for English study program students and lecturers, especially writing instructors and supervisors. The results of the study are important for secondary English teachers in Indonesia to enable them to implement the current curriculum i.e. the GBA in their classroom.

1.5 Scope of the Study

This study is a case study of undergraduate English Study Program students in a private university in West Java. It uses observation, text analysis and in-depth interview to investigate the students' improvement in writing an Exposition text. The analysis focuses on the social function of the text, schematic structure, linguistic features, and thematic progression of the students' text. The analysis attempts to identify the students' ability and problems in writing an Exposition text, the possible causes of the problems, and the possible solutions that can be proposed to solve the problems in the teaching program.

1.6 Clarification of Key Terms

To avoid the readers' misunderstanding, it is better to define each keyword which will be used frequently in this study.

Genre Based Approach is a term that is used in literacy pedagogy to connect the different form texts take with variation in social purpose. Texts are different because they do different things and enact various types of social context (Martin and Rose, 2007:8). So, any literacy pedagogy has to be connected, not only with the formalities of how texts work, but also with the living social reality of texts-in-use. How text works is a function of what it is for (Cope and Kalantzis, 1993).

Exposition text is an argument text which concerned with the analysis, interpretation and evaluation of the world around us (Derewianka, 1990: 75). This factual text is used to put forward a point of view, or argument, e.g. essay (Callaghan & Rothery, 1988).

1.7 The Organization of Thesis

This thesis is divided into seven chapters. Chapter One gives general description of the introduction to the topic of the research. Chapter Two presents relevant theories which underpin this study. The theories deal with theory of Systemic Functional Linguistic (SFL), the SFL Genre Theory and Approach, the nature of an Exposition genre, issues in GBA, and related research. Chapter Three outlines the design and methodology of the study. This includes participants, setting, data collection and analysis as well as systemic functional grammar as a tool for students' texts analysis. Chapter Four focuses on teaching program conducted, steps taken in the process of data collection particularly from students' journal and classroom observation. Chapter Five provides a discussion of students' text analysis using Systemic Functional Grammar (SFG). Chapter Six offers a discussion on interview data. Finally, Chapter Seven provides conclusions drawn from the discussion in previous chapter and recommendation derived from the study.