

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the introduction of the study. It covers the background of the study, focusing on the motivation behind the study, related research under the topic of investigation and the importance of the conduct of the study. The rest of the chapter highlights the aims of the study, research questions, the scope of the study, the significance of the study, the clarification of the term central to the study and the organization of the thesis.

1.1 Background

This study was concerned with the use of text-based syllabus design in teaching academic writing, especially research paper. It explored the process of text-based syllabus design and its application in the classroom and found any gaps (if any) between the design of the syllabus and its application. The study also investigated teacher's strategies in anticipating the gaps if occurred.

This study was conducted based on a problem faced by one non English department lecturer of one public university in Bandung, Indonesia, in writing a research paper in English. This problem was identified based on a preliminary interview and a diagnostic test prior to the study. The result of the interview and diagnostic test showed that writing a research paper in English in general and research paper abstract in particular, for non English learners including lecturers is a big issue. Furthermore, The result of interview and diagnostic writing showed that her problems when writing a research paper lay in: (1) ideas presentation in standard or acceptable English determining that most ideas conveyed are Indonesian- English translation; (2) limited function of phrases usage; and (3) limited grammar knowledge, especially in the tenses usage dealing with each

element of research paper and in the application of cohesive devices in the writing.

The importance of syllabus in the teaching learning process has been noted by many researchers such as Richards (2001), Brown (1995), Dubin and Olshtain (1986), Nunan (1988) and Krahne (1987). The syllabus organizes systematically the course and the materials and is used as a map or guide for teachers and learners in the teaching learning process by selecting and sequencing content based on explicit objectives (Brown, 1995; Richards, 2001; Krahne, 1987; Dubin and Olshtain, 1986; Nunan, 1988; Finney in Richards and Renandya, 2002; and Feez and Joyce, 1998). These objectives and contents, as a result of needs analysis, define types of syllabus; whether, it is functional, structural, task-based or notional (Krahne, 1987).

Among those types of syllabi, text-based design is the central issue of this study. It has been used in Australian language education system since 1980 (Joyce and Feez, 2012: 113) and is a response to changing views of language and language learning by incorporating an increasing understanding of how language is structured and how language is used in social contexts (Feez and Joyce, 1998). Its primary concern is on what learners do with language, centering on units of discourse called texts (ibid) and these whole texts in context are taken as the organizing principle for syllabus design (Tindale, 2003). In line with it, text-based syllabus design working cycle operates on genre-based teaching of writing by Callaghan and Rothery (1988) and is built on a social view of language and a functional model of language in which texts are socially and purposefully constructed (Thai, 2009; Feez and Joyce, 1998). Further details on the text-based syllabus design are presented in chapter 2, section of literature review.

Studies in text-based syllabus design have also shown its application in varying contexts. Kucherenko (2013) reported on the use of text-based syllabus as one of the integrated syllabus elements in the teaching of English for Academic Purposes (EAP) focusing more on English for Occupational Purposes (EOP) in

Higher schools of Economics in Russia. Previously, another study was conducted by Haghighi (2012) in the same field but different setting. His study was conducted to 120 first-year undergraduate engineering students from two EAP classes at one university in Iran and suggested the use of text-based syllabus design as one of the eclectic approaches in assisting students with their EOP practices including report reading/ writing and development of technical vocabulary knowledge. This is in line with a study conducted by Flowerdew (2005) illustrating the application of text-based syllabus in the delivery stage of teaching learning in an EOP-oriented course by integrating this syllabus with task-based and content-based. Finally, Abbaszadeh (2013) suggested the use of text-based syllabus to develop communicative competence in the areas of English for Specific Purposes (ESP) and English for Academic Purposes (EAP).

Most of those studies have been devoted to the use of text-based syllabus design in EOP-oriented scheme; reflecting specific field in English for Academic Purposes (EAP) revealing similar education level of participants, who are university students, and concerning same focuses that are report writing and technical vocabulary knowledge. Other than that, the use of text-based syllabus design in several studies aforementioned is integrated with other types of syllabi, if not; its use is compared with another type of approach. Less attention has been paid to its application in English for Academic Purposes (EAP) that focuses more on research paper writing, particularly those occurred in Indonesian setting, especially with those learners from non English department.

Since research paper writing is one of English for Academic Purposes (EAP) and is considered important especially for academia, the use of a text-based syllabus design as one alternative in teaching academic writing centering on research paper is therefore worth trying. Thus, this study was conducted to serve this purpose and aimed at exploring the process of text-based syllabus design and its application in the classroom, finding any gaps (if any) between the design of

the text-based syllabus and its use in the classroom, and describing teacher's strategies in anticipating the gaps.

1.2 Aims of the Study

As aforementioned, the study was conducted in order to attain the following aims.

1. To identify whether text-based syllabus design can enhance the learner's performance in writing research paper.
2. To find out whether there are gaps between the text-based syllabus design and its use in the classroom.
3. To explore teacher's strategies when anticipating the gaps if occurred.

1.3 Research Questions

In line with the aims above, the study was conducted to answer the following research questions.

1. Can text-based syllabus design enhance the learner's performance in writing research paper?
2. Are there any gaps between the design of text-based syllabus and its use in the classroom?
3. If there are any gaps, how does the teacher anticipate the gaps?

1.4 Scope of the Study

The study investigated the process of text-based syllabus design and its use in academic writing class, centering on research paper writing. When designing the syllabus, a framework suggested by Feez and Joyce (1998) was used. The content of the syllabus only focused on research paper abstract due to limited space in the thesis. The generic structures of the elements are based on the suggestions among

others are Swales and Feak (2004), Bem (2003), Emilia (2009), Clare and Hamilton (2004), Paltridge (2002), Paltridge and Stairfield (2007) and Wallwork (2011).

Further, in its implementation, the study employed three main stages of text-based methodology as outlined by Feez (2002), Feez and Joyce (1998), Joyce and Feez (2012) and Emilia (2011), encompassing modeling stage, joint construction and independent construction. The stage was applied in this study owing to the fact that lecturer as the participant of this study is likely to have some knowledge on research paper writing and that research paper writing has been a part of her academic life so that background knowledge of field as the most common stage to start is skipped. Other than that, the topic for research paper writing was predetermined including language education and linguistics.

1.5 Significance of the Study

The study is significant to the theory, the educational practice and the professional development of English education especially to the development of English for Academic Purposes in Indonesian context. In relation to the first significance, the study is projected to be able to enrich the literature of syllabus design in the context of EAP teaching in Indonesian setting and in foreign language context in general. Second, in terms of educational practice, the result of the study will enhance practitioners in education in terms of choices enrichment of syllabus design that are in line with the needs of the students and alternative solutions to make better teaching practices in EAP setting. Finally, regarding the area of professional development, this study is expected to increase EAP teachers' awareness on the importance of the right type of syllabus chosen for teaching and that these need to be well –prepared as well as the realization of being creative and productive teachers through materials development especially in EAP setting by referring to the chosen syllabus, especially text-based syllabus design.

1.6 Operational Definition

- Text-based syllabus refers to a type of mixed syllabus that draws on the systematic functional model language that incorporates an increasing understanding of language how language is structured and how language is used in social contexts (Feez and Joyce, 1998; Joyce & Feez, 2012) which is selected and organized around the texts its social contexts (Richards, 2001, Feez, 2002).
- Research paper is defined as a scholarly article that contains the results of original research or an evaluation of research conducted by others which then undergo a process of peer review before they can be accepted for publication in an academic journal (Winkler & Metherell, 2012).

1.7 Outline of the Thesis

The next chapters of the thesis are illustrated as follows. Chapter II discusses theories that underpin the study. These include three major theories including theories of syllabus, focusing more on text- based syllabus design, theories of text-based implementation and theories of research paper. The first theory includes definition of syllabus, importance of syllabus, elements of syllabus, principles of syllabus design and types of syllabus in general. The first theory mainly outlines definition of text-based syllabus, foundation of text-based syllabus, design of text-based syllabus, negotiation of text-based syllabus, planning the lesson in the research site and resourcing instructional materials in text-based program. The second theory covers the implementation of text-based syllabus, criticisms of text-based syllabus, description of differences or gaps between the plan, the syllabus and the actual implementation and the program assessment based on text-based syllabus design. The final theory contains definition of research paper, elements of research paper, and contents of each element of research paper. Chapter III elaborates methodology of the study that consists of aims of the study, research questions, research design, research setting

and participants, data collection and data analysis. Chapter IV outlines the process of syllabus design and its implementation in the research site. The research questions will be answered in this chapter too. Chapter V concludes the preceding chapter, points out limitations of the study, and provides recommendation for further research.