

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

This introductory chapter presents background of the research, research questions, aims of the research, scope of the research, significance of the research, clarification of terms, and organization of paper.

1.1. Background of the Research

Of the four language skills, writing may become the most difficult skill (Westwood, 2008). The difficulty of writing may come from the complex process which a writer has to face that includes drawing ideas, transforming ideas into text, and organizing ideas to become a coherent text (Hayes & Flower, 1980 quoted in Saddler, et al., 2004).

Moreover, Saddler, et al. (2004) adds that the difficulty of writing is proven by the small percentage of the use of writing, only about 11 percent during people's daily life. The small percentage indicates the lack ability in writing skill and how people tend to avoid it.

Writing in a foreign language such as English is even more difficult. In Indonesia, where English is learned as a foreign language, students have difficulties in writing (Emilia, 2010). This condition may happen because the language learning in Indonesia has not emphasized on writing skill.

According to Indonesian curriculum, tenth graders who learn English Subject have to be able to write News Item Text (Doddy, et al., 2008). News Item Text informs newsworthy events to readers, listeners or viewers (Gerot & Wignell, 1995). However, the genre of News Item Text has not commonly discussed by experts. It is because the News Item text is not the basic genre of text, but it is a multi-generic text which is sometimes not explained in language books (Knapp & Watkins, 2005).

There is a number of research regarding News Item Text. One of it is a research which is conducted by Emilia (2011). Emilia (2011) analyzed Indonesian senior high school students' texts using the Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL). SFL is chosen because it enables the researcher to analyze the students' text from both coherence and cohesive aspects (Eggins, 2004). The research shows the lack ability of students in writing News Item Text and the students still need improvements.

As the previous research, the present research also focuses in analyzing News Item Text using SFL. News Item Text is chosen because as stated before that the News Item Text is a text type which the Indonesian senior high school students have to write and the source regarding the News Item Text writing is still limited as it is one of multi-generic text. Therefore, the present research investigates the News Item Text written by students from an Indonesian senior high school using SFL to find out students' ability and difficulties in writing News Item Text.

1.2. Research Questions

This research is conducted to answer the following research questions:

1. How is the tenth grader students' ability in writing News Item Text?
2. What difficulties did the tenth grader students experience in writing News Item Text?

1.3. Aims of The Research

Based on the research questions which are stated before, this research is aimed:

1. To identify the students' ability in writing News Item Text.
2. To find out the students' difficulties in writing News Item Text.

1.4. Scope of The Research

This research is limited to investigate tenth graders' ability and difficulties in writing News Item Texts in one senior high school in Bandung.

1.5. Significance of The Research

This research is significant from two aspects; theoretically, this research could be used as a reference for research on writing skill for EFL (English as Foreign Language) context, especially for text analysis using SFL and practically, this research is expected to give information about students' difficulties in writing. This information is useful for both students and teachers. Students could be more careful and not make the same mistake, and teachers can help students with the difficulties.

1.6. Clarification of Terms

To avoid misunderstanding, the clarifications of the terms used in the present research are:

1.6.1. Writing Ability

Writing ability is the competence of someone to compose letters into meaning to achieve specific purposes (Westwood, 2008). To achieve different purposes, a writer should write different genre of text and implement the thematic structure and linguistic features of the genre (Gerot & Wignell, 1995) and master mechanical aspect of writing, such as spelling, punctuation, capitalization, etc. (Vanderburg, 2006; Lin, et al., 2007; cited in Westwood 2008).

1.6.2. Systemic Functional Linguistics

Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) is originally developed by Michael Halliday and his colleagues (Butt, et al., 2000; Ning, 2008). Halliday and his colleagues state that language has its social function to bring out meaning from text (Gerot & Wignell, 1995; Butt, et al., 2000; Emilia, 2010). The meaning of the text is conveyed by giving context to the text (Eggins, 2004). Context lets text to have specific purpose (Knapp & Watkins, 2005). To reach a specific purpose, texts share similar structural elements and language features (Gerot & Wignell, 1995).

1.6.3. News Item Text

News Item Text informs newsworthy or important events to readers, listeners or viewers (Gerot & Wignell, 1995; Doddy, et al., 2008). Based on Gerot & Wignell (1995), a news item text has a schematic structure: newsworthy event(s),

background events and sources. Gerot & Wignell (1995) further state that the language features of News Item text are the short and telegraphic information conveyed in the text, the use of material and verbal process, and the focus on circumstances.

1.7. Organization of Paper

The organization of the research paper will be as follows:

Chapter I: Introduction

This chapter presents an introduction which consists of the background of the research, the formulation of the problems, the aims of the research, the scope of research, the significance of research, clarification of terms, and organization of paper.

Chapter II: Literature Review

This chapter contains theoretical frameworks which are relevant to this research including News Item Text, Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL), Text and Context, Transitivity and Cohesion.

Chapter III: Research Methodology

This chapter reveals the methodology used for the research to answer the problems which is included the design of the research and how the data were collected and analyzed.

Chapter IV: Findings and Discussion

This chapter presents the data from the findings of the research and the interpretation of the data.

Chapter V: Conclusion and Suggestions

This chapter contains the conclusions of the paper and also suggestions for future research.

