

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents background of the research, research questions and aims of the research. It also covers scope of the research, significance of the research, the clarification of related terms and the organization of the paper.

1.1 Background of the Research

It is widely acknowledged that writing is a very important skill to fulfill various purposes. For instance, writing can be a medium for expressing feeling, idea, and thought from a writer to the readers (Donn, 1995, p.5). Through writing, the ideas and feeling can be transferred, starting from the simplest to the most complicated one. In addition, Saville-Troike (2006, p.163) states that writing is an important productive skill for learners that will be used for “academic purpose”.

However, in practice, most students are identified to have problems in writing a text, especially in English as Foreign Language (EFL) context (Kim & Kim, 2005, p. 2). The students struggle with many structural issues including selecting proper words, using correct grammar, generating ideas, and developing ideas about specific topics (Kim & Kim, 2005, p. 2). Meanwhile in Indonesian EFL classroom, the problems faced by students in writing is they do not know what beginning step in writing is. In addition, the students also face the difficulties in brainstorming idea, building knowledge, having less confidence in writing and having lack of knowledge about language and genre of text (Mirna, 2009). This is getting worse because teaching writing in EFL classroom in Indonesia is mostly focused on spelling, vocabulary, grammar and theories about writing which disregards the content, students’ need and goal, and time to practice (Alwasilah, 2001).

In order to overcome the difficulties, the teacher is expected to be able to select appropriate approaches to teach writing to students based on their needs and goal and also give much time in practicing (Yan, 2005). There are two approaches for teaching writing that are considered applicable to be employed in EFL

classroom; the process-based approach and the Genre-based approach to teaching writing (Badger and White, 2000; Hyland, 2003; Nordin and Mohammad, 2006). However, some experts argue that each approach has limitation. Process approach tends to use the same process and ignore the target audience and the context of the text (Badger & White, 2000). While, Genre-based approach “can lead to over attention to written product” and “sees learners as passive (Badger & White, 2000, p. 157; Hyland, 2003, p. 24).

Considering the limitation, Hyland suggests that it is possible to synthesize more than one approaches to be applied in EFL classroom (2003, p. 33). It is in line with Badger and White who propose a model of approach that concerns with goal and step of writing from Process-based approach and Genre-based approach, namely Process-Genre based approach (2000). This approach is aimed at giving chance for “students to provide themselves with sufficient knowledge of certain features of genre such as a specific context, purpose and audience, and the nature of writing itself such as prewriting, planning, drafting, revising, editing and publishing” (Nordin & Mohammad, 2006, p.79). Thus, it is expected that learners will be aware that writing occurs in social context and it cannot be done in one draft.

In accordance with that, some researchers have conducted studies concerning the implementation of Process-Genre based approach. Balabola (2012) finds out that there is a significant effect of Process-Genre based approach on the performance in written English of computer science students involved in the treatment. In addition Gupitasari (2013) reveals that students’ ability in writing, especially in writing application letters has improved due to the implementation of Process-Genre based approach. However, teaching writing through Process-Genre based approach studies is still limited while the English curriculum requires students to write different text type and one of them is Descriptive text as the focus of the research.

Based on the aforementioned issues, the research has triggered to fill the gap by implementing Process-Genre based approach to teaching a Descriptive text particularly for eighth grade students. The research is aimed at discovering

whether Process-Genre based approach can help develop eighth grade students' ability in writing a Descriptive text. It is also aimed at discovering the students' responses towards the implementation of Process-Genre based approach to their writing ability through case study.

1.2 Research Questions

The research was conducted to answer the following research questions:

1. Can Process-Genre based approach help develop students' ability in writing a Descriptive text?
2. What are students' responses towards the implementation of Process-Genre based approach to their writing ability?

1.3 Aims of Research

The aims of this study are:

1. To find out whether the Process-Genre based approach can help develop students' ability in writing a Descriptive text.
2. To find out the students' responses towards Process-Genre approach in their writing ability.

1.4 Scope of the Research

In order to specify this study, the scope of the research emphasizes two main points. First, the content of the text is related to science subject, thus students can relate what they got in science class to English class and vice versa. Second, the analysis of the text is just focused on the schematic structure and linguistic features of students' diagnostic texts and final writing products. It is analyzed by using the transitivity system of SFL (Halliday, 1994a). Due to the limited time of research, each student wrote two writing drafts and one final draft. Nine students' from three categories of achievement were chosen as the representative of text analysis. The students were chosen based on the discussion between the researcher and the teacher.

1.5 Significance of the Research

This study is aimed at discovering whether the Process-Genre based approach can help develop students' ability in writing a Descriptive text. The study is significant for theoretical and practical contributions. Theoretically, the research is expected to have a significant impact on the theory enrichment of teaching writing, especially in the one related to the implementation of Process-Genre based approach in teaching Descriptive text. It is also expected to make contribution to the understanding of basic principles and teaching model of Process-Genre based approach for EFL classroom in Indonesia especially to teaching writing.

Practically, the research is expected to make at least one major contribution to the areas of English-writing-teaching in Indonesian context. It can give the information to teachers to implement the Process-Genre based approach to teaching writing for different text types and topics. It is also expected that the research will provide various approaches for teachers to choose alternative approach to teaching writing that suit the time and students' ability.

1.6 Clarification of Related Terms

To make a clear understanding and avoid misunderstanding, these are some terms that related to this research

a. Descriptive text

In this section, it is a clarification of Descriptive text that was used in this study. Descriptive is "saying what something or somebody is like" (Oxford Learner's Pocket Dictionary, 2008). According to Gerot and Wignell, Descriptive is "to describe a particular person, place of thing" (1994).

In this study, the topic was about the flower structure that is still relate to science course for junior high school since nowadays it is suggested to relate one course to other course. The topic was still in line with English curriculum and science curriculum for junior high school, the technical terms, other linguistic features of Descriptive text that were given during Modeling and Joint Construction stage. It is also in line with students needs' for their science course,

specifically on plant structure of flowers. As Lakrim said, “it is possible to enhance students’ understanding of the biology (science) context through writing” (2006, p.21).

In conclusion, this student perceives Descriptive text as a text type that describes a specific flower based on its appearance, its structure and its characteristic.

b. The Process-Genre based approach

As the main focus in this study, this term has to be clarified to guide the research. Process is “a series of things that are done in order to achieve something” (Oxford Learner’s Pocket Dictionary, 2008). Meanwhile genre is “particular style of type of literature, art, film or music” (Oxford Learner’s Pocket Dictionary, 2008). Therefore Process-Genre based approach to writing is an approach using series of action of writing to particular genre based on the social purpose of the text.

According to Badger & White (2000), Process-Genre based approach “cover the process by which writers decide what aspects of the topic should be highlighted, as well as the knowledge of the appropriate language.”. It is a synthesis of process-based approach and genre-based approach that involves knowledge about language (genre approaches), knowledge of the context in which writing happens and especially the purpose for the writing (as in genre approaches), and skills in using language (as in process approaches) (Badger & White, 2000). For further explanation, see Chapter II.

c. Students’ writing product

As mentioned earlier, students’ writing product was the main focus to see the students’ writing ability towards the implementation of Process-Genre based approach. In this study, diagnostic text and students’ final product will be collected, analyzed and discussed based on the schematic structure and linguistic features of Descriptive text. The topic was flowers structure based on science curriculum for junior high school. Students went through two or three times of drafting, revising and editing before they produced final writing product.

1.7 Organization of the Paper

The research consists of five chapters. Each chapter is subdivided into subtopics that will be moreover elaborated in the investigated problems.

CHAPTER I is the introduction of the research. It consists of background of the study, research question, aims of the research, scope of the research, significance of the research, the clarification of related terms and the organization of the paper.

CHAPTER II is the theoretical foundation. It consists of nature of writing, the review of approaches to teaching writing; process based approach and genre based approach. Then, the elaboration of Process-Genre based approach as well as the stage and teaching model of Process-Genre based approach are presented. Moreover, the explanation of SFL GBA as the tool for analyzing students' text is elaborated as a core element for exploring students' writing products of Descriptive text in terms of schematic structure and linguistic features. The overview towards Descriptive text and the conclusion of the chapter are presented in this chapter.

CHAPTER III presents some aspects related to research methodology that was used in the study. Site and participants of the study, research design and methods, data collection and data analysis techniques are elaborated. The concluding remark is also put forward.

CHAPTER IV is the findings and discussions of the data collected. The findings and discussions of the data were obtained from preliminary observation and the teaching phases of Process-Genre based approach. In addition, students' writing products are discussed as well as the students' responses towards the implementation of Process-Genre based approach.

CHAPTER V is the conclusion and the suggestions from the finding and discussion. It elaborates the conclusion of the research and what suggestion given to future research.