CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

This chapter consists of background of the research, research questions, aims of the research, scope of the research, significance of the research, research methodology, clarification of key terms, and organization of paper.

1.1 Background of the research

Reading is one of the most important skills in human life because it can make someone think critically. In the case of children, reading is very important as stated by Taylor (2000), when children want to integrate their skills in listening, speaking, reading and writing, a good starting point is to read stories. Reading story itself can be done by letting the children read stories by themselves or doing reading aloud session (letting the children to listen to the stories which is read by others to them). Nowadays, most children are not really aware of reading, especially in Indonesia. *International Education Achievement* had conducted a survey in 2000, which result that Indonesian children's interest in reading is in the rank of 29th from 31 countries (Bimbingan Minat Baca dan Belajar Anak, 2013). According to *Bimbingan Minat Baca dan Belajar Anak* (2013), they prefer watching television and going to the mall to reading, especially reading fairy tales, whereas most fairy tales contain more valuable things to be learned by them.

Fairy tales are the easiest reading for children. Many stories in fairy tales are appropriate for children because they have universal themes (Jones, 2002). The content of the stories introduces children readers to characters, places, and situations that they may not experience before. It may have led the children to think critically. Bettelheim (1976 in Milner 1982) found it to be beneficial for both cognitive and emotional development. Baker (1981 in Milner 1982) stated that most fairy tales give children a life lesson. It is supported by O'Donnell (1978 in Milner 1982) who believes that self-understanding development, language development, and awareness to literature can be improved from reading fairy tales.

In addition, giving children fairy tales in reading aloud session is also one of the ways to increase children's development in many ways like oral development. Milner (1982) states that the importance from giving fairy tale curriculum to children by letting them listening to the stories while the teacher read the stories to them is gaining oral language development. Besides, Favat (1977 in Milner 1982) adds that children are also increasing their interest toward fairy tales by listening to them.

In terms of reading and listening to fairy tales, two of the most famous ones are *Cinderella* and *Snow White*. There are similar patterns in both stories such as (1) Cinderella and Snow White lived with their stepmother and stepsister and were treated badly by them; (2) both stories contained magical things; (3) Cinderella and Snow White lived happily ever after (happy ending). Those similar patterns show the strengths and weaknesses in human nature by contrasting good and evil; rich and poor; and villain and virtue to children. In fact, the stories introduce the children to learn the good and bad things with its consequences.

During reading, most children usually have some responses to what they read with their experiences like what Rosenblatt (1994 in Bressler 2007) and Church (1997) state that there is a relationship between the reader and the text. Relationship between the reader and the text is not only gained from reading but also from listening to the text. McGee (1992 in Morrow and Temlock-Fields 2004) states that there is process of making meaning in listening to the text between the listeners and the text. When parents or teachers read stories to the children, the children will respond to that. According to Allan and Pearson (2005), there is a literature circle**,** allowing children to respond to what they read by sharing their opinion with others. Allan and Pearson (2005, p. 16) also add that "literature circles demand concentration on talking and listening." Furthermore, Huck and Kiefer (2004, p. 55) said that "the meaning of response of a story will be different from reader to reader depending on age, knowledge about literature and experience." In addition, the differences of children responses are influenced by different cognitive development between each child (Piaget, 2002).

One study about children's responses to fairy tales was conducted by Sipe (2008). His findings showed that there were five basic types of children's response, namely analytical, intertextual, personal, transparent, and performative. First, analytical, the way children interpret narrative structure of the story. Second, intertextual, is children's abilities to relate the story to other cultural products. Third, personal, the ways children make connections between their lives and the stories. Fourth, transparent, is when children act as if they were actually in the story. The last is performative, in which children use the story for their creative purposes (Sipe, 2008). From his research it can be concluded that literary knowledge is important and also leads the children to their intellectual and emotional growth. Besides, there is also a research about children's responses which is conducted by Milner (1982). Milner's research tells about how curriculum intervention using fairy tales affect preschool children's empathy level, reading readiness skills, oral language development and concept of a story. Children in the age of three to five years old are involved in Milner's research. The results show that curriculum unit based on fairy tales can have positive effects on young children's development (Milner, 1982).

Considering the two previous studies above, this research offers two new aspects which were not discussed in the previous studies. First, this research used fairy tales entitled *Cinderella* and *Snow White*. There are at least two reasons why this research uses *Cinderella* and *Snow White* as the instrument of the research. First, *Cinderella* and *Snow White* are familiar to children. Second, the moral values in *Cinderella* and *Snow White* are very close to children's daily life. In addition, the similar pattern in the story can be used as a tool to show their ability to recognize and distinguish the plot. Second, this research involves middle elementary students in the age of eight rather than middle school students or college students. It is because the implied reader of the text is middle elementary children.

Departing from Sipe's (2008) and Milner's (1982) findings and pattern of the two stories, this research aims to investigate children response in order to know the meaning of children's responses. It will use reader's response theoretical framework and the theories of the five basic types of children responses from Sipe (2008).

Therefore, this research will investigate children's responses to *Cinderella* and *Snow White* by employing qualitative approach under reader response criticism.

1.2 Research questions

This research is conducted to answer two following questions:

1. How do children respond to *Cinderella* and *Snow White*?
2. What do their responses mean?

1.3 Aim of the research

The aim of the research is to:

1. Examine the way children respond to literature especially fairy tales.
2. Discover the meaning behind their responses

1.4 Scope of the research

This research is limited to discussion and analysis of how children respond to the stories without considering their action during giving response. This research focuses on what children say, interpret, reflect and comment to the stories while listening to the stories. From the analysis, the research will show how children's ability is in responding to the fairy tales.

1.5 Significance of the research

The findings of the research are expected to make people aware that the children also think critically when responding to the text, especially fairy tales. Hopefully, this research can make a contribution to reader response approach. In addition, it is expected that this research will make contribution to pedagogical values such as suitable reading for children, increasing children awareness of reading and introducing children to literature.

1.6 Research Methodology

Since this research aims to retrieve descriptive data from the transcription of children's responses, qualitative method is applied. Alwasilah (2007) states that qualitative research is objective to find the descriptive data. In addition, qualitative research also focuses more in words rather than in number. As stated by Bricki and Green (2002, p. 2), "Qualitative research is characterized by its aims, which relate to understanding some aspect of social life, and its methods which (in general) generate words, rather than numbers, as data for analysis." Qualitative method helps the researcher to understand the meaning from the transcription of children's responses. This method is applied to elaborate and identify the responses from the children. This research involves five middle elementary children at the age of eight. They are regarded as considerable source because in that age, they are relatively able to respond to the fairy tales well.

The data were collected through questionnaire, classroom observation (reading aloud session) and interview. Meanwhile, the analysis was conducted over this procedure: (1) giving the questionnaire with guidance question to the children; (2) reading the two fairy tales to the children; (3) interviewing the children toward the fairy tales; (4) transcribing children's responses; (5) identifying and categorizing the responses in accordance with Sipe's (2008) five basic types of children responses; (6) interpreting the results of data analysis; and (7) making conclusion and suggestions for further research.

1.7 Clarification of Key Terms

There are some important terms in this paper. To avoid misunderstanding, the terms are clarified in this section:

1. **Reader Response Theory:** the way a reader and listener (people who listen to story being read to them) interpret the meaning from the text that they read or listen (McGee, 1992).

2. **Fairy Tales:** fictional stories, often in timeless settings like "once upon a time", unidentified place, with one-dimensional characters (completely good or bad), involving magical, characters, events, or symbols. The function is to entertain, inspire, and enlighten the reader. (Magoulick, 2014).

3. **Children (middle elementary):** Young human in the age of eight until nine who develop standards of right and wrong and begin to see viewpoints of others. (Huck and Kiefer, 2004, p. 49).

1.8 Organization of the paper

The research will be organized as follows:

Chapter I Introduction

This chapter consists of background of the research, research questions, aims of the research, scope of the research, significance of the research, research methodology, clarification of key terms, and organization of paper.

Chapter II Literature Review

This chapter discusses related theories of the research which are used to analyze and interpret the data of the research. This chapter also presents some previous studies that are related to the issue.

Chapter III Research Methodology

This chapter provides the methodology of the research to answer the research questions.

Chapter IV Findings and Discussions

This chapter consists of findings and the discussion of the research.

Chapter V Conclusions and Suggestions

This chapter presents the conclusion of the research. It also provides suggestion for further research.