

## **CHAPTER I**

### **INTRODUCTION**

This chapter presents general outline of the study. It consists of seven sections: background of the study, purposes of the study, research questions, scope of the study, significance of the study, clarification of terms, and organization of the paper.

#### **1.1 Background of the Study**

Writing is an important skill to be learnt in the process of teaching and learning English since it plays a central role in students' successful learning (Harmer, 2004, p. 79). Regarding that, writing becomes one of core subjects to be taught in many schools including universities. To achieve the goal, writing skill should be firstly well-mastered by teachers as well as pre-service teachers.

Linking to the above statements, Ministry of Education in Indonesia requires every English teacher in school to possess several competences. One of which is professional competence that realizes content knowledge as one aspect included to the competence (Shulman, as cited in Ball, et al, 2008, p. 389). Content knowledge refers to what teachers need to know about what they teach including what they know about language teaching itself and constitutes knowledge that would not be shared by teachers of other subject areas (Richards, 2011, p. 5). As a result, students in English Education Study Program, who are specially prepared to be English teachers, are required to learn writing some text types as one of language teaching materials. One of the text types is Discussion text. It is an argumentative genre that provides more than one point of view on an issue or discusses both sides of an argument (Feez & Joyce, 1998, p. 140). Furthermore, they are expected to have sufficient ability in writing such a text.

Meanwhile, writing an argumentative genre has been reported to be difficult (Moore & Parker, 1995; Fulkerson, 1996; Connor & Laurer, 1988;

Cahyono, 2001). The need to explore various perspectives before coming to an informed decision has been found as one of common difficulties in writing a Discussion text (Sudarwati & Grace, 2007). As a result, students might find it difficult not only how to develop their ideas into a set of schematic structure and linguistic features ruled, but also how to convey meaning. Therefore, the ability to convey the message through the writing form is also a critical skill and an important attribute for academic success and professional competence (Geiser & Studley, 2001).

Regarding the explanation above, investigating Discussion texts developed by pre-service teachers is important to conduct in order to reveal their ability and difficulties since the subject matter has been considered as an important feature in preparing the pre-service teachers to enter to a practice setting (Farrel, as cited in Pasaka, 2014, p. 1). In relation to that, Systemic Functional Linguistics has been introduced by Halliday (1994) as a tool to analyze the text and as a theory of making meaning by implementing some strands of meaning; Mood system, Transitivity system, and Theme system.

Several studies on the analysis of Argumentative texts had been conducted. One of the recent studies was carried out by Fauziah (2014), which involves senior high school students categorized into three levels of achievement; low, mid, and high achievers, as participants. She found out that in terms of schematic structure, the low and the middle achievers encounter problems in elaborating the arguments and writing the *Recommendation* stage. However, all students have the ability to create the text by using appropriate linguistic features and to apply various types of Theme and Thematic progression to make the text coherent aside from less progress of topic in low achievers' texts.

Despite the increase in the studies on SFL analysis of students' Argumentative texts, the studies on it in university level are still limited. Thus, this paper intends to fill the gap by analyzing Discussion texts developed by pre-service teachers' from one state university in Bandung, Indonesia, in terms of

their schematic structure and linguistic features and to do with the textual and experiential metafunctions. The Theme and Transitivity systems of SFL analysis will reveal the pre-service teachers' ability and difficulties reflected in their texts.

## **1.2 Research Questions**

This study aims to address the following research questions:

- 1.2.1 How are the Discussion texts developed by the pre-service teachers in terms of their schematic structure and linguistic features?
- 1.2.2 What are the difficulties encountered by the pre-service teachers in writing Discussion texts?

## **1.3 Purposes of the Study**

The purposes of the research are stated as:

- 1.3.1 To investigate how the Discussion texts are developed by the pre-service teachers in terms of their schematic structure and linguistic features.
- 1.3.2 To reveal the difficulties encountered by the pre-service teachers in writing Discussion texts.

## **1.4 Scope of the Study**

This study focuses on analyzing Discussion texts written by six pre-service teachers from one state university in Bandung, Indonesia. Furthermore, the analysis will be limited to investigate the schematic structure and linguistic features of their Discussion texts by using Systemic Functional Linguistic framework proposed by Halliday (1994) and also to find out the difficulties encountered by them in writing the texts.

## **1.5 Significance of the Study**

This study focuses on investigating the pre-service teachers' ability and difficulties in writing Discussion texts. The result of this study is expected to give

support to certain aspects. First, for the theoretical benefit, the result of this study is expected to enrich the current related theory. Second, for practical benefit, it will contribute to give information about how to analyze students' writing by using Systemic Functional Linguistics, and for students, hopefully they will be more careful in writing such text. Finally, for the professional perspective, it will give contribution to professional development, in which teachers as well as lecturers will be able to know better what the difficulties faced by their students.

## 1.6 Clarification of Terms

In order to avoid misunderstanding, several terms are clarified.

1.6.1 *Systemic Functional Linguistics* (SFL) refers to a social theory of language.

It regards language as a meaning-making resource through which people interact with each other in given situational and cultural contexts (Emilia, 2014, p. 63).

1.6.2 *Pre-service teachers* refer to students trained and prepared with English competence and knowledge of teaching methodology in order to teach English as second or foreign language (Thomas, 1987, p. 39).

1.6.3 *Discussion text* refers to an argumentative genre that requires the writer to adopt a position and argue for it by debating two or more sides of an issue before reaching a conclusion (Christie & Derewianka, 2008, p. 133).

## 1.7 Organization of the Paper

This paper will be organized in five chapters. Each chapter has some subtopics to help readers go to a more detail information. The paper of this study is organized as follows:

### Chapter I. Introduction

This chapter provides background of the study, research questions, purposes of the study, scope of the study, significance of the study, clarification of terms, and the paper organization of the study.

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**Chapter II. Literature Review**

This chapter contains theoretical condition as the background of the study.

**Chapter III. Research Methodology**

This chapter consists of research questions, research design, research site and participants, data collection, and data analysis.

#### **Chapter IV. Data Presentation and Discussion**

This chapter presents findings followed by discussion based on the data obtained during the study.

#### **Chapter V. Conclusions and Suggestions**

This chapter provides conclusions and several suggestions based on the findings of the study.

#### **1.8 Concluding Remarks**

This chapter has generally introduced the study. The upbringing topic and the problems that become the research background have been presented. The purposes and significance of the study in the academic field have been proposed along with the research questions, the scope of the study and some clarification of related terms. The forthcoming chapter will address the theoretical frameworks underlying the current study.