CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

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

1.1 Background

The best materials in teaching language in EFL classroom is yet to be found although there are some good tools that are found and implemented in teaching foreign language around the world, and the use of literary texts is one among them. Using literary texts is considered enriching the students' intellectual, personal, and emotional world (Moecharam & Amirulloh, 2011). Because literary texts are timeless and placeless, it relates to students' daily life either in good or bad situations, happiness or sadness (Barlow, 2009). Furthermore, reading literary texts for EFL students might also promote and strengthen their motivation in learning language (Carter & Long, 1991; Collie & Slater, 1997; Erkaya, 2005; Lazar, 1993). That the content of literary texts mirrors student's lives and enhance their motivations might be some of the reasons why teachers select literary texs as their EFL materials.

However, the application in real classroom might be challenging and problematic. Many teachers are still arguing whether canon literature are still relevant and make sense among 21st century students. The students are more interested in leisure books three times more than reading old and dull books (Cart, 2003), which become a stereotype for literary texts because of their difficult words and distant concepts. For instance, even though some related studies found several beneficial effects of using canon literature in teaching language, it will turn to be no use after some periods (Moecharam & Amirulloh, 2011). In addition, not only is a teacher required to have a good command of English to teach English using canon literature, but also they should know the content knowledge—to

evaluate and appreciate the works—as well as knowing the teaching methodology (Halliday, McIntosh, & Strevens, 1964). This implies, there are a number of teachers who might not use literary texts in teaching language because of their lack of ability to understand and appreciate literary texts. The teachers also have problems in making sense of the texts to the students, either the texts that are too difficult to understand or the students who are demotivated because of the 'old book' stereotype. Therein, the students most usually find them difficult, especially in understanding the texts because of its diction and distant concept. Thus, using literary text in EFL classroom brings intricacies with which the teacher must deal.

To overcome the abovementioned intricacies, the use of more interesting, contextual, and student-favorable books is needed; contemporary texts are seen as a solution for them. Contemporary texts are a literary product that is born and owned along with the progressive and recent development in their societies (Westerhuis, 1995). With the characteristics of sending forth in-trend issues in non-rigid manners, the texts offer more flexible cultural contexts related to familiarity of modern era of their readers. Moreover, the texts also employ language from that has more colloquial where the readers may easily make meanings out of them; hence better understanding of the students will be more possibly achieved (Hong Xu, 2005). Therefore, contemporary texts have a tendency to help young people make connections to more contextual messages and concepts in contemporary texts as academic (Morrell, 2003), so that they will more likely be able to understand the literary texts and participate in the learning process. Besides, Miller (2005, cited in Rybakova, et al, 2013) contends that contemporary texts intensely raised the motivation of unenthusiastic students in the classroom.

Departed from the points above, it is to deal with fact that there has been much research about reading literary texts in ELT classroom, but most of them only focus on using canon or contemporary texts in unspecified learning contexts. For instance, Ernest Morrell (2002, pp. 72-77), an expert who is famous of

popular culture theory, illustrated how contemporary literature is used to produce powerful academic and social results among students. He used hip-hop, film, and mass media as materials. At the end of his research, he found that the students were able to understand the connection between canon literature, popular culture, and their everyday lives. The research was amplified by Anastasia Stamoglou's research (2009, pp. 26-43) which tried to compare and juxtapose some canon books in literature school textbooks, mainly about Greek literature, which is considered as a canon as its focus. She found that even though the canon is old and less interesting, canon is still a powerful tool to enhance students' cultural value for ages. Both of the research respectively engaged in unspecified use of literary texts (only contemporary or canon). The two of them did not specifically explore the potentials of both texts to be used as complementing one and another. Thus, the present research attempts to explore teacher's ways of utilizing contemporary texts to mediate the students' understanding of canonical texts. The research observed classroom preparations (how the teacher adopted literature-teaching approaches to teach literary texts) and classroom performance (how the teacher used contemporary texts to make sense of canon texts and how the students responded to the teaching performances). The participants are undergraduate students from English education major in an Indonesian university, who were taking Exploring Drama class subject.

1.2   Statements of Problems

The research is conducted based on the following questions:

1. What approaches does the teacher adopt in teaching canonical drama?
2. How does the teacher utilize contemporary texts to mediate students' understanding toward canonical texts?

1.3   Aims of the Research

The aims of the research are:

1. Finding out the approaches that are adopted by the teacher in teaching canonical drama.

2. Finding out the how teacher utilizes contemporary texts to mediate students' understanding of canon texts.

1.4 Limitation of the Research

The research is limited to the classroom context. Even if the focus of the research lies in the use of literary texts, however the explorations are mainly contextual to language learning in English education department. This affects the selection of texts and text discussions that are situated and adjusted with the background of the student-participants (who are not purposively taking up the class to explore literature in depth). Furthermore, the participants of the research are Indonesian students who took English education major at university and considered to have intermediate level of English.

1.5 Significance of the Research

It is expected that the research will contribute theoretically and practically in teaching methods, especially in teaching English literary texts in non-English countries that have different backgrounds, settings, environments, and habits. In addition, this research tries to examine the approaches adopted by the observed teacher in constructing the plot and the implementation of those approaches in teaching process. Furthermore, the research can give an insight for the teacher when adopting a suitable approach in teaching literature, which will help constructing a better understanding of canon literature through contemporary texts.

Moreover, the research is expected to fill the gap among previous researches, which are considered unspecific in canon literature teaching context. The research will focus on how the teacher mediates the students in making sense of canon literary texts through using contemporary texts. Thus, it is expected that

the students will become an active leaner and eager to read difficult literary texts, especially in English language teaching (ELT) context.

1.6 Clarification of Terms

There are concepts that need clarification in this research. Each will be described below.

1. *Canon* refers to a formation in literature [that] must always proceed to a selection of classics texts (Fowler, 1979). It is the term, which is used to cluster a good package of literature that students have to learn. It means that every literary text that is included into canon is considered good and safe-to-read, not only by students, but also by people throughout the world.

2. *Contemporary texts* here are seen as modern literary works that will be compared and juxtaposed with the canon literary works. Contemporary itself is related to popular culture which is defined to everyday (and updated) culture which becomes a terrain of exchange expressed through, but not limited to, the forms of music, film, sports, comics, fashion, television, advertisement, cyberspace, mass media artifacts, language, costumes, and values (Hong Xu, 2005).

3. *Approach* is a base to provide a framework, or sequence of operations to be used when coming to actualities (Moody, 1983, p.23).

4. *Drama* is communication between people. It is a form of communication among two or more people. (Via, 1987, p. 110; as cited in (Barbee, 2013)

1.7 Organization of the Paper

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

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

CHAPTER II is the theories of reference. In general, this chapter is divided into three sections, as follows: literature and language teaching; literary works: canon versus contemporary literature; mediation in learning: reading contemporary texts to understand canon texts; and, several related researches.

CHAPTER III presents aspects related to research methodology used in the research. They are research problems, research design, research site, data collection method, and the data analysis.

CHAPTER IV is about the findings and the discussions on data gathered in the previous chapter. The data from interviews, video recording, and document analysis will be elaborated and discussed in this chapter.

CHAPTER V is the last chapter presenting the conclusion of this research. In addition to the conclusions, there are also suggestions for further research.