

## CHAPTER V

### CONCLUSION

This concluding chapter is summarizing the major findings of the study. It particularly summarizes the key findings which are aligned with the two research questions: *“Is the theme-based instruction applicable for nurturing literacy?”* and *“What are the students’ responses towards the application of theme-based instruction in nurturing literacy?”* To provide more immediate concern in this field, this chapter then outlines the implications of theme-based instruction for EFL teaching and learning practices, offers the possible limitations of the following study and sets the recommendations for further research.

#### 5.1 Conclusion of the Study

This study focused on the application of theme-based instruction in nurturing literacy. After conducting a qualitative study, there are several findings ascertain that the notion of theme-based instruction might support substantial aspects of literacy (Brown, 2001; Cameron, 2001). Through a contextual and integrated instruction, generally it was found that the use of themes in the instruction linked two dimensional aspects where intradisciplinary and interdisciplinary models could be integrated in the instruction. Hence, the foreign language teaching and learning covered not only reading, writing, speaking and listening as four major skills in language learning but also covered other curricular areas such as math, science, social, or arts that provided a more contextual learning for the instruction. As other area of studies and four language skills were integrated in the lesson, this resulted a more rich literacy experience where students dealt with many different texts from various topics found in everyday life.

For the context of this study, literacy teaching and learning were explored through integrating reading and writing skills as well as assimilating other area of studies in the lessons, so that the instructions might optimally expand the students' prior knowledge about particular topics and expose reading activities in the instructions. From a series of theme-based instruction, in general, it was found that the theme-based instruction is applicable for nurturing literacy, because this method may support a collaboration between teacher and students as well as supported students' autonomous learning, joint participant, and activity selection (Richards & Rodgers, 2001). From this process, the teacher may involve the students to choose and develop a theme or subthemes for the instructions. Besides, this method is also effective for nurturing literacy, because the students could link several ideas related to the themes. From linking the themes, then, the students could learn contextual vocabularies, so that vocabularies could be repeated naturally. The students' literacy development could also be seen from their ability to use language in more contextual forms started from the word, the sentence, and the text levels. In this case, the students were able to link several related topics and expanded their understanding about the theme that became a focus of the instruction. At last, after conducting a series of theme-based instruction, it is evaluated that the application of theme-based instruction met the objectives of the instructions and the students' literacy progression were improved significantly.

As theme-based instruction involved several stages in its implementation and the development of students' literacy is viewed from three major levels, therefore, to have more manageable conclusion towards the key findings in this study, in this chapter, I will thoroughly summarize the results of the study aligned with the two major research questions as follows:

### **5.1.1 The Applicability of Theme-Based Instruction in Nurturing Literacy**

After a series of theme-based instruction, it is found that the stages of theme-based instruction (planning the theme; planning the content; applying the learning tasks, and evaluation) provide more manageable instruction where literacy teaching and learning can be structured around thematic contents. In practice, each stage in theme-based instruction is intertwined one another. First, in planning the themes for the instructions, the main theme chosen in the instruction may influence the subthemes that will enrich the teaching and learning. From this particular stage, there are at least three benefits of theme-based instruction. First, teachers may involve students to choose and to develop a theme into subthemes. This method is then called as Theme Immersion (Sundayana, 214) where a theme is developed collaboratively by the teacher and the students, so that this method provides a wide chance for students to explore their interests in language learning. Second, this stage may become a need analysis process where teacher collects information about students' needs, characteristics, desires, demands, expectations, and motivations towards learning (Richards, 2001; Brindley, 1984). From this prior stage, the teacher can arrange the purposes, aims, or goals and objectives of the lessons. In more advance, the contents, the materials, the classroom processes, and language uses may be identified and analyzed (Richards, 2001). Third, in planning the theme, the teachers can select what language skills managed in a specific instruction and what area of studies linked in the instruction. From this stage, furthermore, intradisciplinary and interdisciplinary models are significantly applied, since four language skills and other area of studies are integrated within a lesson (Cameron, 2001; Sundayana, 2014).

The second stage applied in this study is planning the contents. The contents designed in this study are apparently developed from the textbook used in the first grade of junior high school and enriched by authentic sources as supplementary materials.

Since this study applied both Thematic Unit and Theme Immersion models, the contents were not only designed and developed from the unit of the textbook, but also elaborated by the use of authentic materials that contain real-world language uses. In practice, the contents served in each instruction provide interesting content topics into the language classroom. From its findings, it is also noted that the students can use the target language to read, to comprehend, to discuss, and to express their thoughts through writing. Besides, the contents stimulate the students to explore their prior knowledge about the topic of relevance.

Third, after planning the themes and the contents for theme-based instruction, the stage then moves to planning and doing the learning tasks. In this study, the instructions were held for four major meetings where each meeting had its subthemes correlated to the main theme. In practice, the learning tasks generally cover the initiating activity, the general activity, the reading activity, and the culminating activity (Sundayana, 2014). After conducting the theme-based instruction, it can be concluded that this method provide a systematic and a large amount of valuable learning experiences. First, in the initiating activity, the theme of the instruction is introduced to the students. This activity then stimulates the students to explore their prior knowledge and understand the topic that is being discussed. When a teacher raises several questions about the topic, tries to activate their prior knowledge, creates a motivating context, and encourages participation (Fredericks, 1993; Manning, et.al, 1994; and Cameron, 2001), the literacy teaching and learning may be arisen simultaneously. This pre-activity then leads the students to the general activity where literacy teaching and learning can be taking place on the basis of reading and writing activities. By this stage, literacy teaching and learning are explored through reading various texts aligned with the topics and articulated by writing activities. At last, in the culminating activity, the topic of the instruction is reviewed and enlarged to another related topic for the following instruction.

Fourth, to evaluate the theme-based instruction, in this study, I apparently used a continuous and collaborative evaluation (Sundayana, 2014). By this notion, the evaluation was conducted during as well as after the instruction. To assess the implementation of theme-based instruction, in this study, I used observer's checklists as a continuous and collaborative evaluation conducted during the instructions. Based on the observation, it is noted that this qualitative study had captured essential aspects in theme-based instruction methods. In general, it can be concluded that the instructions achieved its goals, since it particularly nurtured literacy learning for students. In practice, the themes proposed in the instructions might encourage students to actively conceive things beyond the topic, so that it might stimulate higher level thinking skill. Besides, since intradisciplinary and interdisciplinary approaches were applied in the instructions, the instructions integrated not only reading and writing skills but also other curricular areas such as social, science, or art studies. This seemingly resulted a rich literacy experience for students, because they learned literacy closed to their lives.

#### **5.1.2 Students' Responses towards the Application of Theme-Based Instruction in Nurturing Literacy Learning**

The students' self-evaluation was conducted after the instructions. It was aimed to administer the students' reflection towards literacy learning that had been experienced in the instructions and to explore the possible themes that would be learned in the following instructions. From students' self-evaluation, in general, the students discovered that they could use language in contextual ways. In this case, the themes served in the instructions recalled their retentions towards other curricular studies such as social, science, or arts. In general, the students discovered that the instructions in this study were increasing students' understanding in learning English. Most students remembered the topic of interests that had been experienced in the instructions. Most of them mentioned the themes about My World, Countries,

Tourism Places, and Travelling, although some of students could not answer the question coherently. In case of this finding, the themes might provide a wide chance for students to deal with literacy learning that closed to their lives, interests, and experiences. Besides, the students also stated that they could use language in more contextual ways. Therefore, this resulted a wide opportunity to enlarge their understanding of new vocabularies exposed in certain themes.

## **5.2 Implications for EFL Teaching and Learning Practices**

The notion of theme-based instruction has actually been used in the previous Indonesian curriculum and in practice, this method is still relevant to the new 2013 Indonesian curriculum that emphasizes on higher order thinking. As one of the teaching methods that is frequently used in primary, secondary, and tertiary levels, theme-based instruction provides an integrated instruction that links the subject matters and other areas in the curriculum (Garvie, 1991; Holderness, 1991; Scott & Ytreberg, 1990 as cited in Cameron, 2001). This method also provides a wide chance for EFL teaching and learning practices, because this method can be used in varying concentrations such as in teaching discourse skills, vocabulary, grammar, literacy skills, and some aspects of language that require focused-attention (Cameron, 2001). However, after conducting a qualitative study about the implementation of theme-based instruction in teaching literacy, this study reflects a major prerequisite for provisions and supports in introducing, implementing, and evaluating an approach applied in a new curriculum. As consequences, effective professional teacher development is required, so that EFL teachers may have in-depth experiential understanding in implementing a method in the classrooms.

The study findings also suggest that in nurturing literacy teaching and learning in EFL classroom, EFL teachers must be able to identify the learners' characteristics such as the age of the learners, the learners' first language literacy experiences, the

learners' ability to read and write in their first language, and the level of exposure to English as a foreign language (Cameron, 2001; Pinter, 2006). Furthermore, the English literacy learning considers the students' language development in their first and second/foreign languages.

### **5.3 The Limitation and Recommendation for Further Studies**

As theme-based instruction can be developed for varying concentrations in foreign language teaching and learning (Cameron, 2001), this method can be used to teach literacy in more focus and specific attention. Thus, the limitation and recommendation of the study may relate to the approaches of literacy that become the focus for further studies. To make the following study become more specific, related approaches such as functional and critical literacy may become main concentrations for further studies. These area of literacies are also in line with recent 2013 curriculum that promotes literacy in educational settings. In addition, in order to develop individuals' literacy, other themes that close to students' life may be more explored, so that the students' ability of foreign language literacy supports them to cope with everyday life or to fully participate in the community or wider society especially in this digital and globalization era.