

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Introduction

This introductory chapter delineates seven areas. The first area, to be discussed in section 1.1, elicits the introduction of this research. The second area, to be described in section 1.2, concerns the background of the research. The third area, to be presented in section 1.3, takes up the research questions. The fourth area, to be discussed in section 1.4, deals with the purposes of the research. The fifth area, to be presented in section 1.5, relates to significances of the research. The sixth area, to be described in section 1.6, conveys clarification of main terms that are used in this research. In addition, the last area, to be shown in section 1.7, deals with overview of the thesis. Each aforementioned area will be elaborated comprehensively in the following sections.

1.2. Background of the research

Storytelling is an activity to pass the information from person to person and from one generation to the next generation (McDrury & Alterio, 2003). Storytelling is simple and practical because stories, which are used as the media, are easily obtained (Wajnryb, 2003). Consequently, the use of storytelling as a teaching tool has been conducted in the areas of teacher education, higher education, early childhood education, and nursing education.

Storytelling shows some benefits, especially storytelling as a pedagogical tool. It can motivate students (Wright, 2008), help children in memorizing words learned (Arietawati, 2011), improve their vocabulary mastery (Widiastika, 2011), encourage children to learn English (Slattery & Willis, 2001), increase their moral value (Rusdi, 2006), provide inexpensive media in teaching rich language experience (Wright, 2008) and enhance students' interest in reading (Slattery & Willis, 2001). Moreover, storytelling is categorized as one of teaching techniques that enable Asian EFL students in elementary and secondary school to enjoy reading and writing (Paul, 2003) and to build students' interest in literacy and

learning English (Jianing, 2007). It means that storytelling can be an alternative way to enhance student's literacy in an EFL classroom. Not only in EFL setting, storytelling is also substantial in ESL setting. Storytelling is able to stimulate ESL students to be more enthusiastic during learning process in England (McClelland, n.d in Hana, 2011).

Furthermore, storytelling is important to improve students' listening and writing skills (McGrath Speaker, 2000). It means that storytelling is a part of literacy practice that may influence students' language proficiency. Literacy practice has some important characteristics, such as to develop language and brain, to practice logical thinking and critical thinking (Metcalf *et al.*, 2013), and to apply value or moral (Taylor, 2000).

Indonesia is in low level because Indonesia stands on 57th of 65th countries in the world in terms of students' literacy level (Republika Online, 2015). The low level of literacy in Indonesia is influenced by students' reading and writing habit of the students in which students in junior high school in Municipality of Malang only allocate their time around 168 minutes a day to read. They stated that reading is not one of their hobbies, most of them said that doing sport, playing game and playing musical instrument as their hobbies (Nurhadi, 2011). Moreover, another problem that influences the low level of literacy in Indonesia is lack of teachers' awareness of literacy (Republika Online, 2015). Literacy in Indonesia is influenced by two factors, including students' reading habit and teacher's awareness of literacy.

In Indonesia, the term of literacy is mentioned in the Law Number 20 Year 2003 Verse 5, which states that one of ways to organize or to develop education is that through developing the culture of reading, writing, and counting (Departemen Agama, 2003). It can be inferred that literacy has a crucial position in education.

Relating to EFL context, English should be a medium to develop students' literacy in Indonesia. Thus, it is essential for EFL educators to reconceptualize the teaching of English in order to bring the betterment and improvement of students' literacy in Indonesia. One alternative way to increase literacy in Indonesia is through the use of storytelling in the classroom. Literacy can be defined as

students' ability to read and to write (Christie, 2005). Besides that, literacy is aimed at encouraging students to communicate and negotiate meaningful content of texts (Lankshear & Knobel, 2010 in Metcalfe *et al.*, 2013).

There are various research about storytelling in Indonesia. For example, storytelling to improve students' listening skill (Inayah, 2014; Fitria, 2009), speaking skill (Setiawaty, 2012; Eliwanti, 2003; Mulya, 2014; Rahmawati, 2014), and vocabulary or grammar mastery (Ariestawati, 2011; Widiastika, 2011). Besides that, there are also research about the influence of storytelling in improving students' literacy ability (Fredericks, 1997; Miller & Pennycuff, 2008). Therefore, storytelling can be selected as the appropriate technique in teaching language.

As the description above, although there is research about storytelling in teaching literacy, there is still lack of similar investigation, which conducts storytelling in teaching literacy in Indonesia, especially English as a foreign language. The location of school also can influence the result of the study. Limited equipment that is provided by school has to be the element in conducting a research where in a location that does not serve the students with digital devices.

Address this gap, this study focuses on teaching literacy through storytelling to the eighth grade students of junior high school in Cipatat, West Bandung, West Java, Indonesia. This study aims to investigate the way teacher develops students' interest in learning both reading and writing through storytelling and finding out benefits and challenges toward the activities.

1.3. Research questions

This research is conducted to investigate the following questions:

1. How is storytelling implemented in developing eight grade students' literacy ability in Indonesian junior high school?
2. What are the students' perspectives on the benefits and challenges of the implementation of storytelling in teaching literacy?

1.4. Purposes of the research

The purposes of the research are based on statements in the research questions described earlier. They are:

1. to investigate the implementation of teaching storytelling in developing students' literacy ability;
2. to find out the students' perspectives on benefits and challenges of the implementation of teaching storytelling in developing students' literacy ability.

1.5. Significances of the research

This study is expected to give theoretical, practical, and policy benefits in English teaching. Theoretically, the result of this study enriches literature about teaching technique. Practically, it further gives new information or ways for teachers in accommodating fun and interesting atmosphere to increase students' reading and writing habit. In terms of policy, it is expected that the results of the study become a useful input for *Dinas Pendidikan*, as decision maker, to support teachers' development not only in the city but also in the suburb with training which relate with creating attractive atmosphere for students' in learning.

1.6. Clarification of main terms

To avoid misunderstanding, some main terms are defined as follows:

Storytelling: A practice of passing the information or the social interaction through various stories from person to person and from one generation to another (McDrury & Alterio, 2003). This term focuses on the improvement of students' reading comprehension and vocabulary development (Trostle & Hick, 1998).

Literacy: Students' ability to read and to write (Christie, 2005) which uses images in varied forms of storytelling. Literacy is aimed at encouraging students to communicate and to negotiate meaningful content of texts (Lankshear & Knobel, 2010 in Metcalfe *et al.*, 2013).

EFL Classroom: Classroom activities in English Foreign Language (EFL) teaching and learning are the focus of this research. For foreign language learners, the classroom is the primary medium for them to use English. English as foreign language means that students learn English only at school, wherein English as a school subject (Pinter, 2006). Students as foreign language learners have limited opportunities to practice English outside school and no immediate clear motivation to use and learn English. Consequently, teachers should have skill to prepare, organize and manage classroom environment.

1.7. Overview of the thesis

This thesis contains six chapters. The first chapter elaborates the background which employed the powerful impacts of literacy, the evidence of literacy development in Indonesia, and the need of storytelling in developing students' literacy ability. This chapter also delineates the aim of this research and the significance of this research in addressing to the literature enrichment, English teaching and learning process, and *Dinas Pendidikan*.

In chapter 2, the literature review draws the relevant literature that lends some support to this study in relation to concepts and theories of literacy and framework of teaching storytelling. Chapter 3 focuses on a clarification of the study's research design, a description of research method, a depiction of site and participants, and an elaboration of the instruments of data collection and data analysis.

Chapter 4 delineates teaching program which has been implemented in this study. This chapter consists of the various stages of activities in implementing the teaching program, namely preliminary activities to the implementation of the teaching program and the teaching program itself. Chapter 5 presents results and discussions of the research. The data of the chapter 5 is complemented by the data from observation and interview.

Furthermore, this chapter focuses on the process of the implementation of the storytelling technique in second grade of junior high school. The chapter also

figures out the model of professional learning employed in the study and identifies students' perspective of some benefits and challenges in the implementation.

In the concluding chapter, all data analyses are reviewed to draw conclusions about the process and students' development in literacy ability through storytelling and students' perspective toward the implementation. This concluding remark draws the picture of teaching storytelling in relation to develop students' literacy ability in English language teaching in Indonesia.