

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter describes an introduction to the study. It covers the background of the study, aims of the study, research questions, scope of the study, significance of the study, clarification of terms, organization of the paper and concluding remarks.

1.1 Background of the Study

In general, there are four skills to be mastered by students who learned English: reading, writing, speaking and listening. However, in spite of years of learning English, some of the students have problems in English mastery, especially in writing skill. The students consider writing as difficult. Richards (1997) stated, “Learning to write well is a difficult and lengthy process, because it induces anxiety and frustration in many learners” (p. 100). Teaching writing has been a challenging task for teachers because students, in some cases, do not know what to write, do not understand the differences between one genre and the other and have difficulties in getting started with their writing. In order to help students to overcome the difficulties that they encounter, teachers are encouraged to use explicit teaching strategies in teaching writing. Knapp and Watkins (2005, p. 14) stated that “learning to write is a difficult and complex series of processes that requires a range of explicit teaching methodologies throughout all the stages of learning” (p. 14). Explicit teaching is important to help students gain a shared understanding of the different genre (Emilia & Tehseem, 2013). Thus, this fact leads the writer to conduct a study on teacher’s strategies in teaching writing.

In teaching the four essential skills in language learning, which are speaking, writing, listening and reading, the teacher should make a lesson plan based on the English curriculum used in the school. English curriculum in Indonesia has changed for several times with the aim to achieve better students’ results in

learning English (Emilia, 2011; Sahiruddin, 2013). Some schools in Indonesia still use the School-Based Curriculum or the 2006 Curriculum for Junior High School. The 2006 Curriculum emphasizes that the English subject focuses on the functional level in which the language is used for daily communication, both spoken and written (BSNP, 2006). Based on the curriculum, the English teaching for Junior High School has to do with genres and it is underpinned by systemic functional linguistic (SFL) and involves some approach; one of them is the genre-based approach (Depdiknas, 2006; Emilia, Hermawan & Tati, 2008, Emilia, 2010; Nurviyani, 2013).

The Genre-Based Approach is becoming an important approach in the field of English language teaching (Derewianka, 2003). It requires teachers to be able to teach students many types of text. There are at least five text types taught in Junior High School level in Indonesia: descriptive, procedure narrative, recount, and report (Kementerian Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan, 2013). This study focused on narrative text because it is convenient with the time of the research and relevant with the curriculum. Narrative texts are usually taught in forms of folktales and fairytales. Narrative aims to entertain the readers; show the readers how individuals deal with problematic events which have to resolve for better or worse; and it often found across all aspects of cultural life (Emilia, 2011; Dymock, 2007).

There are two teaching cycle in the genre-based approach as suggested in the 2007 English curriculum of Indonesia (Depdiknas, 2007 as cited in Emilia, 2010), they are written cycle and spoken cycle. A written cycle aims to develop students' reading and writing skill (Emilia, 2010). Spoken cycle aims to help develop students' language ability (Emilia, 2010). In both cycles, all stages of genre-based approach can be implemented, such as Building Knowledge of the Field, Modeling, Joint Construction and Independent Construction (Emilia, 2010; Enli, 2015). Since the focus of this study is writing skill, the study will be focusing on written cycle.

There is a framework of teaching genre, called as Teaching Learning Cycle or Curriculum Cycle which consists of three major stages: Modeling, Joint

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TEACHER'S STRATEGIES IN BUILDING THE STUDENTS' KNOWLEDGE OF THE FIELD (BKOF) IN TEACHING WRITING NARRATIVE TEXT

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Negotiation of Text and Independent Construction of Text (Emilia, 2011). Some writers, as cited in Emilia (2011), add one or two other stages to the cycle, such as Preparation stage proposed by Derewianka (1990) and Negotiating Field and Deconstruction stages proposed by Rothery (1996) or Building Knowledge of the Field stage proposed by Feez (2002). The model used in Indonesia is Rothery's model which covers *Building Knowledge of the Field (Negotiating Field)*; *Modeling (Deconstruction)*; *Joint Construction*; and *Independent Construction* (Emilia, 2011).

Building Knowledge of the Field (BKOF) aims to build students' background knowledge to be able to write about the topic being discussed (Emilia, 2011; Svinicki, 1993; Beck & Jeffery, 2009). This stage is the most fundamental stage in the cycle that should be conducted to assist students' to gain an understanding of the context and it affects how students perceives new information (Emilia, 2010; Emilia, 2011; Svinicki, 1993). Equipping students with the appropriate and sufficient background knowledge is similar to Lev Vygotsky's scaffolding theory. Students cannot comprehend the content they are learning if they cannot understand what they are learning (Cameron, 2000 as cited in Thomson, 2012) and they need teacher's assistance to help them understand the topic being learned (Gibbons, 2015; Maybin, Mercer & Stieter, 1992; Wilson and Devereux, 2014). Teacher as a controller plays important role in developing students' knowledge of the field as what Harmer (2007) says

When teachers act as controllers, they are in charge of the class and of the activity taking place and are often 'leading from the front'. Controllers take the register, tell students things, organize drills, read aloud and in various other ways exemplify the qualities of a teacher-fronted classroom. (Harmer, 2007, p. 108)

There are varieties of teaching strategies that can be used by teacher when preparing students to write. For example, teaching strategies that can be used in activating students' background knowledge is brainstorming. Brainstorming is a technique which allows students to hear and share knowledge and ideas. There are varieties of teaching strategies that can be used in classroom and teachers have different reasoning in implementing particular teaching strategy because when choosing a teaching strategy, the teacher also take the students' ability into

consideration. Regarding this, the study is aimed at investigating teacher's strategies in building the students' knowledge when teaching writing narrative text.

1.2 Aims of the Study

This study aims to investigate what teacher's strategies in building the students' knowledge of the field are and why teacher choose that strategies in teaching narrative text, focusing on teaching writing skill. The building knowledge of the field is important because when teaching a new material, a teacher should be able make a connection between what the students have already know with new material. Students need sufficient background knowledge to help them to write about the topic being discussed.

1.3 Research Questions

In line with the aims above, the study will be conducted to address the following research questions

1. What are the strategies used by the English teacher of eight graders in preparing the students on the stage of building knowledge of the field in teaching writing a narrative text?
2. Why did the teacher choose the strategies to teach writing a narrative text?

1.4 Scope of the Study

This study is a descriptive qualitative research of one class of grade eight at one public junior high school in Bandung, West Java. The study focused on investigating teacher's strategies in teaching written narrative text. Particularly, this study aimed at investigating how teacher builds students' knowledge of narrative text using the curriculum-cycle within genre-based approach.

1.5 Significance of the Study

This study intended to explore the teacher's strategies in building the students' knowledge in teaching writing narrative text for eighth grade. As such,

upon the completion of this study, the result of this study was expected to enrich teaching strategies on the stage of BKOF. Any lacking attributes found in the teacher's strategies would be able to help the improvement of the teacher's strategies in the future which will be beneficial for teachers and students in the process of teaching and learning English.

1.6 Clarifications of Terms

- **Building Knowledge of the Field (BKOF):** in this study, it refers to teacher's strategies where teacher prepares students in understanding and experiencing the topic or subject being taught in the class, in this case, written narrative text.
- **Field:** in this study, it refers to the topic that is written about (Emilia, 2010; Martin & Rose, 2007)
- **Scaffolding:** a term used in the study refers to an essential support to assist the learners as they move towards new skills (Gibbons, 2015; Maybin, Mercer & Stieter, 1992; Wilson & Devereux, 2014).
- **Teacher's Strategies in Teaching Writing:** refers to the strategies used by teacher in teaching writing.
- **Narrative Genre:** in this study refers to narrative texts usually found in form of folktales or fairytales which were taught in eighth grade.

1.7 Organization of the Paper

This research paper is organized into five chapters. Chapter I presents the background of the study, aims of the study, research questions, scope of the study, significance of the study, and clarifications of terms. Chapter II discusses the literature used in the study. The methodology of the study will be elaborated in Chapter III that includes research questions, research design, research setting and participants, data collection and data analysis. Furthermore, findings are elaborated and discussed in Chapter IV. Lastly, in Chapter V, conclusion and suggestion for further research are presented.

1.8 Concluding Remarks

This chapter has discussed the background of the study dealing with the relevance and the importance of building the students' knowledge of the field and teaching writing, particularly when teaching narrative text. Two research questions aligning with the aims of the study regarding teacher's strategies in building students' prior knowledge in teaching writing narrative also mentioned in the sub-chapter following the background of the study. Furthermore, this study has revealed its significance of the research theoretically and practically. Finally, this chapter ends with the clarifying the terms used in the study and the organization of the paper.