

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

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

1.1 Background of the Study

Teaching English as the first foreign language at junior and senior high school has been obliged by the Indonesian government since 1945 (Sahiruddin, 2013). Moreover, teaching English as a subject at schools has been regulated in the Indonesian curriculum. It is known that the current curriculum applied in Indonesia is 2013 curriculum. Indeed, the implementation of 2013 curriculum got some positive and negative reviews from educators. According to Tantra (2015), educators claim that “it is a creative and innovative plan organized in some sequence of framework, while others argue that it requires qualified and competent teachers to implement the 2013 curriculum systematically”. By means of these reviews, teachers should be able to think critically to increase their quality of teaching in order to achieve the goals of 2013 curriculum. Furthermore, when teaching English by applying 2013 curriculum, there might be some considerations that need to be taken by English teachers. Perhaps, one of the considerations is how to integrate the curriculum into teaching language skills.

When teaching English, there are four crucial skills in English language teaching and learning namely listening, speaking, reading and writing. Writing could be the most difficult skill compared to others since it has several difficulties that cannot be found in other skills (Harmer, 2007). When students are involved in the writing process, they do not only need to focus on grammar and structure, but they also need to develop ideas to deliver their thought. According to Barnett (1989), teachers and students are usually frustrated to the quantity of mistakes and

the lack of enhancement in students' writing. Megaiab (2014) found some weaknesses in the writing skills of the first year secondary stage students in Indonesia. She elaborated that students often get low scores on their writing tasks and they develop a negative attitude towards writing. Thus, it can be said that students are usually less motivated in writing because they do not find any interest to write. However, problems are not only faced by students themselves, but they also commonly emerge because of some factors found in the teachers.

The most common problem encountered by teachers is they teach English in traditional ways or conventional teaching. In conventional teaching, it is known that teachers dominate the lesson or be the centered of it. Furthermore, teachers do not provide interesting medias to support the process of teaching and learning. Perhaps, to some teachers, it seems insignificant; however, lack of interesting medias can cause students' boredom in the lesson. Besides, teachers rarely give feedback to students' writing. That may be the reason for students to repeat their mistakes in writing. Therefore, teachers should find a motivation to create a good teaching strategy. According to Broughton et al. (2003), "motivation is a basic principle of all kinds of teaching". It means that not only students who need a motivation, but teachers should also motivate themselves when teaching writing.

Based on those problems, teachers need to find out a technique to be applied in the classroom when teaching writing to students. Generally, before teaching a lesson to students, teachers should prepare any requirements needed for the lesson. Planning begins with preparing the materials, objectives, medias, approaches, techniques, assessments, and so forth. Moreover, when teachers choose a technique to be applied in the classroom, it is essential to understand how the technique will support the lesson and what its implication towards students' achievement.

The researcher finds that project based-learning has been widely used as the technique in the process of teaching and learning English in recent years. Many of the researches observe project-based learning to teach non-literary texts

to students. However, the implementation of project-based learning in writing text types especially descriptive text is still less common to be applied in Indonesia. Thus, it may become the gap of this study compared to the previous researches that have carried the same topic in the field of the implementation of project-based learning. Besides, it is believed that in the process of the implementation of project-based learning, students are “learning by doing” and facing the “real-world problems” that are involved in their task (Harmer and Stokes, 2014). Furthermore, through project-based learning, instead of learning by listening to the teachers, students will be actively engaged in the lesson. Since students will create a product as the final result of the project, it may increase their motivation and creativity in the process of learning itself. Therefore, by knowing the key features in project-based learning, the researcher figures out that there might be a chance to teach students’ writing skills through the implementation of project-based learning. Moreover, in this study, the researcher focuses on implementing project-based learning in teaching writing descriptive text.

1.2 Research Questions

In relation to the situation above, this study aims to answer the following questions:

1. How is the implementation of project-based learning in teaching writing descriptive text?
2. What are the students’ responses to the implementation of project-based learning in teaching writing descriptive text?

1.3 Purposes of the Study

Particularly, the study has purposes as follows:

1. To analyze the implementation of project-based learning in teaching writing descriptive text.
2. To find out the students' responses to the implementation of project-based learning in teaching writing descriptive text.

1.4 Significance of the Study

This study is hopefully able to give useful contribution to the field of teaching and learning English, both as theoretical and practical influence. Theoretically, this study is expected to enrich the theory of implementing project-based learning in teaching writing descriptive text. Furthermore, it is hoped to give understanding of how students learn through project-based learning. Practically, through the implementation of project-based learning, students are expected to get their motivation to learn English, especially in writing skills. As this study required students to make a project of writing in form of wall magazine, it is expected that students' collaboration ability could improve since they worked together with their friends in creating it. Thus, they could share ideas and gave suggestions to each other which might increase their interest in writing. Moreover, to English teachers, it is hoped that the implementation of project-based learning could be an alternative way to teach writing to students.

1.5 Scope of the Study

This study focuses on analyzing the implementation of project-based learning in teaching writing descriptive text. Furthermore, the theory of project-based learning stages used in this study was taken from Patton (2012). Besides, this study aims to find out students' responses to the implementation of project-based learning in teaching writing descriptive text. According to Bull (2011), response means "answer; an action done in answer to something". Thus, it is

Karista Kaltyana, 2017

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different with perspective or opinion. Bull (2011) defines perspective as “way of thinking about something” and opinion as “feelings or thoughts about something”. Since this study used questionnaire, the term response was suitable to be used to find out students’ answers or responses to the implementation of project-based learning in teaching writing descriptive text.

In addition, this study was conducted in a public Senior High School in Bandung for four meetings including the writing process and creating the wall magazine as an end product of the project. Therefore, those became the limitation of this study.

1.6 Clarification of Terms

There are three major aspects need to be clarified in this study: writing skill, descriptive text, and project-based learning.

1. Writing skill

Brown (2001) defines writing as:

the result of thinking, drafting, and revising procedures that requires specialized skills on how to generate ideas, how to organize them coherently, how to use discourse markers and rhetorical conventions to put them cohesively into a written text, how to revise a text for clearer meaning, how to edit a text for appropriate grammar, and how to produce a final product (p.335).

In relation to this study, writing skills mentioned above was the process of writing descriptive text for Senior High School students in an urban area, whereby English is used as a foreign language or EFL.

2. Descriptive Text

Descriptive writing, according to Oshima and Hogue (2007), “appeals to the senses, so it tells how something looks, feels, smells, tastes, and/or sounds”. In addition, they further explain that a good description refers to a word picture;

which means that the reader can imagine the object, place, or person in his or her mind.

3. Project-based learning

According to Patton (2012), “project-based learning refers to students designing, planning, and carrying out an extended project that produces a publicly-exhibited output such as a product, publication, or presentation”.

In relation to the definition above, the term of project-based learning in this study means students involved in the process of designing, planning, and carrying out the writing project of tourism place which produced an output in form of wall magazine.

The use of project-based learning in the teaching and learning process suits the Indonesian 2013 curriculum. However, the development of project-based learning in Indonesia has not been too rapid. Therefore, in this study, project-based learning was implemented as an alternative way in teaching writing descriptive text.

1.7 Organization of the Paper

This paper is organized into five chapters as follows.

Chapter I Introduction: This chapter presents background of the study which elaborates the reason why implementing project-based learning is important to teach students’ writing skills, especially in writing descriptive text. Moreover, this chapter also contains research questions, purposes of the study, significance of the study, scope of the study, clarification of terms, and organization of the paper.

Chapter II Literature Review: This chapter provides theories that become the frameworks of the study. The theories which are covered in this chapter are the nature of writing, descriptive text, teaching writing in senior high school, project-

based learning, types of the projects, project-based learning to teach writing, the model of the project, and some related studies.

Chapter III Research Methodology: This chapter explains how the study is conducted. It consists of six major sections: research design, research setting and participants, research instruments, research procedure, data collection, and data analysis.

Chapter IV Findings and Discussion: This chapter elaborates the results and discussions of the study which are gained from data collection namely classroom observation, students' writings, and questionnaire.

Chapter V Conclusion and Recommendation: This chapter presents the conclusion of the study and some recommendations for English teachers and other researchers who will conduct the same field of research.