

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents a brief description of the whole contents of the study which includes background of the study, questions of the study, aims of the study, significant of the study, scope of the study and study methodology. At last, organization of the paper is also presented at the end of this chapter.

1.1 Background

Basically, there are four skills that should be mastered by students in English language learning namely speaking, reading, listening, and writing (Depdiknas, 2006). Comparing with the other English skills, writing skill is considered as a difficult skill to be mastered by students in both a first language and a second language (Zemach and Islam, 2005). The reason for this condition is that writing encourages the students to the “final written product” (adapted from Shih 1986, as cited in Brown, 2009) as the result of thinking, drafting, and revising procedures that requiring specialized skills in which not everybody can develop it naturally (Brown, 2009), so they should master some aspects. Moreover, one aspect that the students have to master in this skill is developing their ideas in their text. Therefore, most of teachers try to find out some effective ways to help the students in developing their ideas in which one of them is Theme-based Teaching.

Theme-based Teaching (TBT) is a way used by teacher which linked the learning activities around a specific theme. According to Brown (2001), theme-based is different with traditional language classes since it is an alternative way in which the class is structured around themes or topics. From the definition of theme-based above, it can be seen that the major point of this teaching approach is a theme.

Theme is the main idea that sets the units of curricula in which it is chosen based on the students’ need and interest, the expectation of institution, the

program resources of and the abilities and interests of teachers (Stoller & Grabe, 1997). This means that when a theme is selected, it has to consider many sides.

First, theme should be appropriate for student's need and interest. Students' need here is "awareness of the need". It means the knowledge (of sponsor, learners, and teachers) of why the learners need English in which it affects to the content of language course and the potential can be exploited (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987). Thus, the students' interest here means that the theme should relate to students' life, for example, *My Inspiration* or *Friendship*. Second, the theme should fulfill the institution's expectation in terms of the teaching-learning aims and objectives. Third, the theme is selected based on what program resources are possible to be exploited and used to support the teaching and learning process. The last, the theme considers the abilities and interests of teachers. Of course, the teacher first should know what will be taught in the class since it becomes the "connecting threads" (Cameron, 2001) in the class.

According to the explanation above, it can also be seen that theme-based actually relates to teach young learner. The reason for this is that theme-based teaching has been adopted in UK primary classroom in 1960s. It was an integrated learning of the different areas of curriculum rather than separating them into subject areas (Cameron, 2001). In this teaching, the teacher chose a theme or topic, in which the theme was "People who help us". Then students were given some tasks in learning activities based on the theme above.

Moreover, the other related study about theme-based teaching approach has been conducted by Yang (2009). The major finding of this study is that theme-based teaching can increase learners' interest in English learning if teachers provide interesting activities and suitable materials. This finding is supported by Freeman and Freeman (2006, as cited in Yang, 2009) that proposed "when the content of the lesson is relevant and interesting, students are more likely to try harder to understand and to stay focused". Therefore, the interesting content influences the students' interest.

Basically, the previous studies have adopted theme-based teaching in the primary level context. However, this study was conducted in EFL context at

junior high school level in which the English teacher adapted theme-based teaching to teach writing descriptive text. In addition, theme-based teaching can be used to teach writing since skills are integrated (Shih, 1986). According to Shih (1986), the traditional belief argued that the students just should write. However, they listen, discuss, and read about a topic before they write in university course work. Therefore, theme-based teaching is used since the students should think about a theme or topic through some skills, in this study, writing skill.

As the previous study, writing skill was used as an alternative way to develop students' ideas. According to Brown (2001:335), the writing pedagogy focuses on how to generate students' idea as the result of compositional nature of writing. Many students find that writing freely about a topic helps them generating preliminary ideas when the topic has influenced them personally (Clark, 2003:85). Therefore, the use of theme in this study can encourage students to develop their idea because it relates to them. This notion that theme can develop students' idea is also related to the concept that the theme should be selected based on the students' interest.

Concerning to teaching genre, teaching descriptive will be the focus on this study since it becomes one of genres which is taught in Junior high school (see 2006 Indonesia Curriculum). This text type deals on how the teacher can leads the students to be able to describe a theme into specific descriptions. Description means "the verbal visualization of human, object, appearance, scenery, or event (Alwasilah & Alwasilah, 2007). In this study, the teacher will focus on describing people.

According to the background above, this study aims to find out on how the English teacher uses theme-based teaching approach in teaching writing descriptive text and explore what advantages and disadvantages of the use of theme-based teaching in teaching writing descriptive text in eighth grade of junior high school. In order to get clear idea of theme-based teaching, the data information will be gained from an English teacher of Junior Public School in Bandung.

1.2 The aim of the study

In line with the questions, this study aims to:

1. Examine the implementation of the use of theme-based teaching in teaching writing descriptive text in eighth grade of junior high school.
2. Explore the advantages and disadvantages of the use of theme-based teaching that the teacher finds out in teaching writing descriptive text in eighth grade of junior high school.

1.3 Study Questions

This study is designed to answer the following questions:

1. What are the ways in which the teacher used in implementing theme-based teaching in teaching writing descriptive text in eighth grade of junior high school?
2. What are the advantages and disadvantages of the use of theme-based teaching does the teacher find out in teaching writing descriptive text in eighth grade of junior high school?

1.4 The scope of Study

The scope of this study focuses on finding out on how the English teacher uses theme-based teaching in teaching writing descriptive text in eighth grade of junior high school and explores what advantages and disadvantages of the use theme-based teaching in teaching writing descriptive text in eighth grade of junior high school. Teacher in this study is English teacher of 8th grade in junior high school. This study is a qualitative case study in which the English teacher of 8th grade uses Theme-based Teaching.

1.5 The significance of the study

The study represents a qualitative study about the students' English language learning through theme-based teaching in order to give theoretical, practical, and professional benefits of English teaching especially to teaching writing skill.

1. Theoretical benefits

The study is expected to give a perspective and concept to use Theme-Based Teaching in teaching eighth grade of Junior high school students as its contribution toward the research about theme-based teaching especially in teaching writing descriptive text.

2. Practical benefits

This study will be useful for teachers, students, and the readers who are interested in teaching writing skill. For teacher, this study provides an alternative way to teach writing skill. For students, this study helps them to develop and then organize their ideas through selected theme to make a good written text. At last, for the readers who are interested in teaching writing, this study is expected to give some information about the use of theme-based teaching in teaching writing descriptive text for their purposes for example for their research or as a teaching reference or source in the classroom.

3. Professional benefits

This study is expected to provide information of teaching skill in order to improve teachers' competence in teaching English writing skill by developing and organizing the lesson through the theme. Therefore, a meaningful, organized, and collaborative English learning process can be created in the classroom. For the last, this study can be used by the schools as a resource to improve English teaching by using some approaches, methods and techniques for English teaching competences.

1.6 Study Methodology

The study methodology covers design of the study, site and participants, data collection and data analysis that will be explained as follow:

1.6.1 Design of the study

Dealing to the main aims of the study, this study employs descriptive case study method since it is considered as the most suitable method to examine the study. Some instruments are also employed in order to collect the data which consists of observation and interview. The ways of how these instruments are employed will be discussed in Chapter III.

1.6.2 Site and Participant

This study took place in one of the public junior school in Bandung. The participant of this study is an English Teacher in eighth grade class of public junior high school.

1.6.3 Data Collection

In collecting the data, there are two instruments used in this study, namely observation and interview. Observation is used to get the real overview in the class. The observation was recorded by using video camera. Besides, the interview is also used to cross-check the data based on the teacher knows about the case.

1.6.4 Data Analysis

The qualitative method is employed in this study in order to identify the ways in which the teacher used in the use of theme-based teaching to teach writing descriptive text and explore what advantages and disadvantages that the teacher faced in the use of theme-based teaching to teach writing descriptive text. Therefore, the instruments are used in this study would be observation and interview.

In analyzing the data, the raw data in form of video and interview are explored and transcribed into language transcript. After that, the transcripts are coded by using labels which consists of teacher (T), students (S), and Interviewer (I). By using this coding, the data will be gained to be interpreted based on the

theories that has been explained in chapter II. Therefore, the result of the study will be found based on the interpretation by answering the aims of the study.

1.7 Paper Organization

This paper will be presented into five chapters, as follow:

1. Chapter I: Introduction

In this chapter, the paper elaborates the background of the study. Theme-based teaching in teaching writing descriptive text is the focus of this study. The chapter also states the research questions, aims of the study, scope of the study, significance of the study, research method, and Paper Organization.

2. Chapter II: Literature Review

This chapter discusses some theories about Theme-Based Teaching, Writing, and Descriptive text.

3. Chapter III: Research Methodology

This chapter gives clear explanation about how the study is conducted and analyzed. It clarifies why theme-based teaching approach is important in teaching writing especially to teach descriptive text. The data collection and analysis will also be briefly explained. In addition, the clarification of terms will also be presented in this chapter.

4. Chapter VI: Findings and Discussions

This chapter analyzes and discusses the findings of the study clearly. It shows the elaboration of data analysis based on the theories in order to find out the result of the study.

5. Chapter V: Conclusion and Suggestion

This chapter shows the conclusion and some suggestions of the study based on the analysis in chapter four. The conclusion states the answer to the study questions. There are also several suggestions for further research related to theme-based teaching approach.