

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents some general information about the study. It covers the background of the study, research question, purpose, and significance of the study, scope of research, clarification of key terms, thesis organization, and concluding remarks.

1.1 Background of Study

Writing activity is one of the curial aspects of learning a language to complete the communication process by transferring the writers' idea to written form to make it clear and comprehensible (Nunan, 1995; Urquhart & McIver, 2005). Writing is also a productive skill that is very important to be mastered by EFL students in day-to-day life. It is essential in junior, high school, and college to help students practice and work with language (Harmer, 1988; Nunan, 1993; Zemach & Rumisek, 2005; Hyland, 2009). However, in actual learning to write, students find writing challenging. In EFL contexts, writing is the most difficult skill because it involves knowledge of vocabulary, ideas, and grammar in making meanings and it is not only about generating and organizing students' ideas, but also about constructing the ideas into a readable text (Richard & Renandya, 2002; Rahimivand & Kuhi, 2014; Martin & Bolliger, 2018).

In terms of writing difficulty, Martin and Bolliger's (2018) study proved that most EFL students find writing challenging, so they do not engage much in classroom writing activities. Further, in some previous studies Chen (2002), Barkaoui (2007), Adeyemi (2012) and Martin and Bolliger (2018) elaborated on some problems faced by the students during writing activity, especially in writing subjects that might be caused by the complexity of the writing system including the comprehension of the content, organization, vocabulary, languages, and mechanics. Based on the complexity of the writing system, students find it difficult to choose proper words to express their idea in their writing. Therefore, teachers need to find a strategy to help

students overcome the problems and promote students' writing ability by getting involved in every social interaction of writing activity to make them learn maximally (Vygotsky, 1978; Means & Lindner, 1998).

When students produce texts, they not only do writing-presenting ideas in a textual form but also create a variety of meanings in the writing situational context. Therefore, writing involves a social process that should be done continuously with social interaction (Vygotsky, 1978; Means & Lindner, 1998; Lantolf, 2011; Storch, 2018). Social interaction creates a good atmosphere to help students to learn well by sharing ideas to each other. Specifically, in writing activity, social interaction plays an essential role in a higher level of collaboration in which social interaction emphasizes the process of learning writing activity (Hosseinpour & Biria, 2014; Lantof & Thorne, 2006; Storch, 2011). Teachers firstly conduct an idea-generation activity, such as brainstorming or group discussion to collect ideas or to solve problems of 'what to say' in the text; then, students develop the ideas of the text with the teacher's help until they finish the text. During the writing process activity, students are involved in many interactions with teachers and other students in group discussions. Thus, writing is essentially done by social learning, not teaching (Hyland, 2003), for which Vygotsky (1978) argued. Vygotsky claimed that social interaction in learning occurred during students' experiences in the context of learning.

Within social interaction, students' engagement contributes to their learning writing process as they are more involved in collaborative work (Ammar & Hassan, 2018). Social interaction provides social learning spaces that allow students to interact with their friends and teacher and take action over their learning (Jamieson, 2003; Jamieson et al., 2000; Oblinnger, 2005). Social interaction creates and develops students' knowledge (Vygotsky, 1978). Students can critically think and solve academic problems with their friends and teacher through social interaction; therefore, student engagement occurs and helps students to facilitate their learning through social experience (Vygotsky, 1978; Hunter et al., 2007). Specifically, cognitive engagement occurs in social interaction in which students are engaged in

meaning-making from interaction, purposefully creating, and reflecting (Fredricks et al., 2004; Vygotsky, 1978; Rovai, 2002).

The term engagement has been linked to the orientation of learning, which involves social learning to emphasize the dynamic nature of the engagement between students and other students or teachers (Marton et al., 1997). During the learning orientation, teachers also have a vital role to play in increasing engagement (Marton et al., 1997; Kelly, 2003). The role of the teacher in selecting a teaching strategy is needed to promote student engagement such as; behavioral, emotional, and cognitive during the learning writing process to have them pay attention to, participate, and get interested in learning, especially writing context (Fredricks et al., 2004; Beltran-Martin, 2019; Hamid et al., 2019). Therefore, teachers should find a suitable strategy in teaching writing to make students engage during classroom activities. One of the strategies that can be used to promote students' engagement in writing is implementing the Genre Based Approach (GBA).

Genre Based Approach (GBA) is concerned with the social purpose of language and how particular linguistic characteristics of specific genres achieve a certain communicative goal (Ivanic, 2004). Further, developed by 'Sydney School' educational linguists (Martin & Rose, 2008; Rothery & Stenglin, 1995) based on Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) (Halliday, 1978), Genre Based Approach (GBA) is applied to teaching writing. The approach provides teaching procedures, widely known as Teaching-Learning Cycle (TLC), that include explicit instructions. This Teaching-Learning Cycle (TLC) consists of four stages that aim to progressively shift students' gaze in producing text. The first step includes setting and the context, as beginning step to introduce the topic and genre chosen. The second step includes analyzing successful written genres to creating texts that is called modeling and deconstruction. The third step includes having expert guidance or collaborative activity is called joint construction. And the fourth step, students individually doing written construction is called independent construction (Martin & Rose, 2008; Emilia, 2005). Focusing on the steps Teaching Learning Cycle (TLC), especially the stage of Joint Construction, is a stage in genre-based approach commonly used in teaching

writing to help students construct a text based on specific genre and in this stage, teacher scaffolding could contribute to a significant guide that helps the students to write (Vygotsky, 1978; Ivanic, 2004; Aunurrohman et al., 2017).

Joint Construction has been in many studies to contribute to the studies on writing. Joint Construction gives an opportunity for the students to construct their writing with their peers and along with the teacher's guidance. The students are encouraged to write the text individually through group discussion, so they can figure out the obstacles with the assistance of their surroundings. In this teaching model, the phase of joint construction, involving students and teachers work collaboratively to produce written text (Hyland, 2004; Martin & Rose, 2013). However, research on Joint Construction that is still limited. Some previous research about Joint Construction relates to the effectiveness of Joint Construction in teaching writing focusing on students' writing, critical thinking, students motivation, and teacher practice of Joint Construction in their teaching styles (Hermansson et al., 2019; Mauludin, 2020; Suharyadi & Basthomi, 2020; Aunurrohman et al., 2017).

To add to the plethora of studies on exploring how significant genre based approach is for developing students' writing, this study aims to investigate how Joint Construction stage of genre based pedagogy which is based on Systemic Functional Linguistic (SFL) is implemented to support student engagement in the teaching of writing. Concerning on the process of teaching writing to help students' writing in constructing text, this study is a part of bigger study on training teachers on implementing Genre Based Approach (GBA). Thus, this study aimed to develop teachers' strategy in the teaching of writing through Genre Based Approach (GBA), which more specifically focused on Joint Construction as part of Genre Based Approach (GBA). Therefore, the process of writing could be promoted students' cognitive engagement. This study referred to the scheme movements of teacher scaffolding (Hammond & Gibbons, 2005) and the framework of Genre Based Approach (GBA) grounded in Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) (Halliday, 1978; Martin & Rose, 2008; Rothery & Stenglin, 1995) in making sense of the data and explaining the results of the analysis.

1.2 Research Question

Based on the background of the study and the gaps that exist, this study aims to find out the way teacher scaffolding of the Joint Construction process in a genre based approach to teaching writing that improves students' cognitive engagement by formulating research questions as follows:

- 1) How does teacher scaffolding contribute to student learning in the process of Joint Construction?
- 2) What kinds of cognitive engagement are involved in the process of Joint Construction?

1.3 The Purpose of Study

Based on the research questions, the purpose of this research can be stated as follows:

- 1) To investigate how the teacher scaffolding contributes to the process of Joint Construction of text.
- 2) To find out what kinds of cognitive engagement are involved in the Joint Construction process.

1.4 Significance of Study

This research is expected to be beneficial in theory, practice, and policy:

1. Theoretically
 - a. The result of the study is hoped to enrich the literature theory and knowledge of Joint Construction, genre-based pedagogy, student engagement, and teacher scaffolding, specifically described the process of teacher scaffolding in Joint Construction to engage students into writing activity especially in context writing at Junior High School level in Indonesia.
2. Practically
 - a. The result of the study can be a reference for English teachers to recognize the use of Joint Construction in teaching writing and how the process of

Joint Construction should be conducted effectively in writing activity to help students to write from a simple task into complex as required by the curriculum.

- b. The result of the study is hoped to be used as a reference for further researchers who want to dig in more deeply about genre-based pedagogy in the phase of Joint Construction especially in the context of Indonesia.
3. Policy
 - a. The result of the study is hoped to lead to the release of a policy language learning, EFL learning in particular of the pedagogical field, prominently in Indonesia to enrich the body of knowledge in language learning in an educational context especially in the context of Indonesia.

1.5 Scope of Research

This study focuses on the implementation of genre based pedagogy especially the Joint Construction stage. This study specifically looks into the scaffolding the teacher provided in the Joint Construction stage. The scheme movements of teacher scaffolding are proposed by Hammond and Gibbons (2005), such as; 1) linking to prior experience and pointing to new experiences, 2) recapping, 3) appropriation, 4) recasting, 5) cued elicitation, 6) increasing the prospectiveness. Further, this study also investigates how the scaffolding can contribute to the students' engagement, especially cognitive engagement. There are fifteen indicators categories to promote students' cognitive engagement that are proposed by Fedricks et al. (2004), such as: interesting, deep understanding, optimal challenge, collaboration, real-world, relevant, personal goals, interests and preferences, choosing, feedback, fun, enthusiasm, adjusting teaching, assessing students' understanding, background knowledge, asking question.

1.6 Clarification of Terms

To avoid ambiguity and misinterpretation, the definition of operational terms used in this study is presented here:

- **Teacher Scaffolding**

Teacher Scaffolding can be considered support that helps students to achieve their potential level of performance by adaptation of the level control (Wood et al., 1978). In this study, teacher's scaffolding is intended for the process of writing composition which specifies Interactional scaffolding as proposed by Hammond and Gibbons (2005). Interactional scaffolding involves the role of the teacher in making explicit connections with students (Hammond & Gibbons, 2005).

- **SFL Genre Based Pedagogy**

SFL GBA for teaching writing is grounded by Systemic Functional Linguistic (SFL), shares the view that literacy is a social practice and a form of social action, where language and context contribute to making business meaning with a critical view on social literacy (Halliday, 1978). In this study, the term GBA refers to the Teaching-Learning Cycle (TLC) model of teaching which was used to help students in writing.

- **Joint Construction**

Joint Construction is one of the stages of the TLC of Genre Based Pedagogy model in that teachers and students jointly construct a text in a given genre to reveal the text's communicative purposes through teacher and students' interaction and negotiation (Hyon, 1996; Martin, 1999). In the process of constructing a text, the teacher-led the Joint Construction of texts as a way to support students to write (Caplan & Farling, 2017; Dreyfus et al., 2011). This study focuses on natural learning and personal voice where the teacher and students can actively collaborate to construct a text. Then, the researcher will investigate both students' and teachers' interactions toward the stage of Joint Construction.

- **Student Engagement**

Student engagement is student involvement. Further, student engagement is students' willingness to give time and physical energy to the learning process to get the most optimal outcomes of the learning process (Khan et al., 2017; Astin, 2003). In this study, the term student engagement refers to cognitive engagement

which is focused on the way students engage with teachers and peer groups' discussions. As Astin (2003) stated that students engaging in classroom activity have the greatest impact on students' cognition. Then, student cognitive engagement will be analyzed by Fedricks et al. (2004) to find out what indicators are involved in this study.

- Writing

Writing is one of the skills in learning English that includes productive skills. In addition to speaking, writing is also a form of communication that allows students to put their feelings and ideas on paper, recognize their knowledge and beliefs into convincing arguments, and convey meaning through well-constructed text (Abbas & Herdi, 2018).

1.7 Thesis Organization

Chapter 1 presents some general information about the study. It covers the background of the study, research questions, the purpose of study, the significance of the study, clarification of key terms, the scope of the study, thesis organization, and concluding remarks.

Chapter 2 delivers the theoretical framework used in this study. The literature review relevant to this research is presented in the form of a synthesized concept to provide readers with a thorough understanding of the topics discussed in this study. The literature review includes the concept of Genre Based Approach (GBA), Joint Construction, student engagement, specifically cognitive engagement, teacher scaffolding during Joint Construction, writing learning, previous studies, and closing remarks.

Chapter 3 discusses the methodology that was employed in the study. There were five parts to this chapter. They were the research design, research site and subject, data collection technique, data analysis, and concluding remarks.

Chapter 4 exposes detailed results and discussions of this study. This chapter represents the data analysis and the presentation of data collected through the steps

described in the previous chapter. This chapter discusses the answers of the research questions proposed in Chapter I.

Chapter 5 presents the study's conclusion and recommendation based on the data reported in Chapter IV. This chapter is divided into four sections: conclusions, implications, limitations, and recommendations.

1.8 Concluding Remarks

This chapter has discussed the introduction of the research. It covers the research background as the foundation of this research, which encourages researchers to do research. Following that is a research question that supports the study aims and emphasizes the value of research as an extra insight to readers and instructors about the use of Joint Construction in teaching writing. Chapter one also discusses the definition of essential terminology to elucidate each argument, as well as the arrangement of the thesis, which refers to each chapter in this research. The chapter finishes with a final statement that summarizes each chapter's point.