

CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

This chapter comprises (1) background to the study, (2) hypothesis, (3) objectives of the study, (4) significances of the study, (5) definition of terms, and (6) thesis organization.

1.1 Background to the Study

Writing, as one of the four language skills, is not less important than listening, speaking, and reading in learning a language. Through the mastery of writing, the individual comes to be entirely effective in intellectual organization, not only in the management of everyday affairs, but also in the expression of ideas and arguments (Frith, 2001). Nevertheless, it also has been argued that learning to write fluently is the most difficult of macro skills for all language users, apart from whether the language in question is a first, second or foreign language (Nunan, 1989:33). Hence, learning to write effectively is a very crucial section of students' education and the writing competence can be a great asset during their lives (Collerson, 1989:1).

Since it is a very crucial section of students' education, writing has always been formed as part of the syllabus (curriculum) in the teaching of English (Harmer 2004:31), the fact which is also found in language curriculum and syllabus in Indonesia. The two latest curriculums in Indonesia are *Kurikulum Berbasis Kompetensi* (Competence-based Curriculum) during 2004-2006 period and *Kurikulum Tingkat Satuan Pendidikan* (School-based Curriculum) from 2006

until this period. The two latest curriculums also set writing as a part of English curriculum and the curriculum of *Bahasa Indonesia*.

Meanwhile, for language learning, and for writing development in particular, *genre* is one of the most contentious topics in curriculum theory today, and important practical issues are at stake (Reid 1987:86). Recent development in writing research and pedagogy also focuses on the linguistic concept of genres (Christie, 1983; Kress, 1982; Martin, 1984a; Rothery, 1984 in Green 1987, in Reid 1987: 84). Green (1987) subsequently states that learning literacy and learning to write particularly involves a developing competence with regard to genre; that is, learning to write stands for developing the competence to recognize and use a range of written genres, or forms of writing. Genre theory and classroom research has established a typology of genres, which are valued more highly than others in education system; these valued genres need to be made explicit and taught so that all students have equal access to means for learning (Richardson 1994, in Freedman and Medway 1994:127).

In relation to the concept of genres, fiction—in which narrative is included—is usually students' favorite in which they want to create characters in situation of their own design (Graves, 1994:287). The narrative text is the most valued in primary school where much of the early reading experience of children in primary language arts program involves reading stories, and teachers frequently ask young children to write their own stories (Couture 1986:225). Couture also points out that the narrative is the first structure for extending texts that children acquire and the only one that many basic writers handle with ease.

In viewing the importance of narrative, the two latest curriculums used in Indonesia, as highlighted before, also set 'narrative texts' as a part of the writing materials. In English syllabus, students of junior high schools are prescribed to learn narrative paragraph and text on the second semester of the second and third year of study, while in the syllabus of *Bahasa Indonesia*; they are prescribed to learn narrative materials (*dongeng*/folk story) in the first semester of the first year of study (*Diknas* 2006).

With reference to teaching and learning two different languages such as English and *Bahasa Indonesia*, native language of (every) learner is an extremely significant factor in the acquisition of a new (target) language by mean of exercising and interfering effect (Brown, 2001:65-67). However, it should not be assumed that the ability to write in the mother tongue can be transferred to the foreign language, although some global transfer, as with reading ability, often seems to take place (that is, people who are highly literate in their own language easily become literate in another) (Byrne, 1988). These views, however, indicate that students' ability in writing narrative text in Indonesia will either negatively or positively correlate to their ability in writing narrative text in English.

In relation to the language transfer, according to the behaviorist theory of second language learning, learning could take place easily through positive transfer of the native-language pattern, but where they were different, learning difficulty arose and errors resulting from negative transfer were likely to occur (Ellis 1994:299-301). The study of learner errors (Error Analysis) showed that although many errors were caused by transferring L1 'habits', many more were

not. In fact, learners often contributed creatively to the process of learning (Ellis 1994:19).

All the statements indicate some relation between students' L1 and L2 learning, the case which can be identified in the process of L1 and L2 writing (composition). The more specific case can be identified in writing such a narrative text in both two languages. The present study examines and analyzes the correlation between students' competence in writing narrative text in *Bahasa Indonesia* and their competence in writing narrative text in English and the correlation of aspects of a narrative text in the two languages relate to its textual features.

1.2 Hypothesis

The present study starts from a neutral position. Therefore, the *null hypothesis* is preferred for this study (See Hatch and Farhady, 1982:86). The null hypothesis for this study is stated as follows:

There is no correlation between students' competence in writing narrative text in Bahasa Indonesia and their competence in writing narrative text in English.

1.3 Objectives of the Study

This study looks forward to some objectives related to the stated research problems. The first objective is to examine the correlation between the students' competence in writing narrative text in *Bahasa Indonesia* and their competence in

writing narrative text in English. Second, this study aims to examine whether the correlation of aspects of a narrative text in *Bahasa Indonesia* and English relates to its textual features.

1.4 Significance of the Study

The significances of this study can be viewed from two angles, i.e. theoretically and practically. Theoretically, this study is expected to enrich the horizon of relation among language competence such as L1 and L2. Practically, the present study can give information about correlation between the students' competence in writing narrative text in *Bahasa Indonesia*, and their competence in writing narrative text in English to language teachers, curriculum designers, and other related parties to be a resource of evaluation, discussion, prediction, and decision making in language education.

1.5 Definition of Terms

This section comprises some definitions of terms related to the study. The definitions include correlation, students' competence in writing narrative texts in *Bahasa Indonesia*, students' competence in writing narrative texts in English, and narrative texts.

- a. *Correlation*, in this research, is the analysis of mutual relationship between students' competence in writing narrative text in *Bahasa Indonesia* and their competence in writing narrative text in English. This relation is

examined statistically (See Hatch and Farhady 1982:198, Fraenkel and Wallen, 1993:175, Coolidge, 2000:116).

- b. *Students' competence in writing narrative text in Bahasa Indonesia* refers to the ability of students of selected population in producing/composing a written narrative text using *Bahasa Indonesia*.
- c. *Students' competence in writing narrative text in English* refers to the ability of students of selected population in producing/composing a written narrative text using English.
- d. *Narrative texts* refers to the text (from genre story) which has the basic purpose to entertain, to gain and hold the reader's interest in a story, (Derewianka 1990; Gibbons 2002), and has the social purpose to instruct via reflection on experience and deals with problematic events which individuals have to resolve for better or worse (Macken-Horarik 2002 in Emilia 2005).

1.6 Thesis Organization

This thesis includes five chapters. The first chapter is introduction which covers background to the study, hypothesis, objectives of the study, significances of the study, definition of terms, and thesis organization. The second chapter discusses literature review which includes the discussion of writing, texts, narrative texts, narrative texts' assessment, and previous study. The third chapter deals with research methodology, which covers research question, research design, data collection, and data analysis. The fourth chapter presents research findings, and

discussion on students' competence in writing narrative texts in *Bahasa Indonesia*, students competence in writing narrative texts in English, correlation analysis and hypothesis testing, and the correlation of aspects of a narrative text in the two languages relate to its textual features. The last fifth chapter sketches out conclusions and recommendations.

