

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the background of the study, the significance of study, the scope of the study, the research questions, the method of the study, the instruments, and the organization of the paper.

1.1 Background of the Study

English nowadays exists as one of the foremost international languages. Consequently, it has huge impact in educational curriculum in many countries including Indonesia, especially in establishment of English as one of subject matter that is evaluated in national standard evaluation (better known as *Ujian Nasional* or *UN*) every year in junior and senior high schools. Considering this urgency, all educational institutions such as schools and *bimbingan belajar* places are in rush every year to help their students passing examination, particularly in English subject.

Talking about material tested in *UN* in junior high and senior high, we deal with a lot of competencies that every school and *bimbingan belajar* hope their student will achieve. These competencies are standardized in a form called *Standar Kompetensi and Kompetensi Dasar (SKKD)*. One of the materials that students have to master is genres of text. These genres include Report, Descriptive, Procedure, Narrative, and Recount in junior high schools and senior high ones (plus some additions such as Spoof, Anecdote, News Items, Analytical Exposition, Hortatory Exposition,

Explanation, Discussion, and Review).

Having been teaching at one of a *bimbingan belajar* in Bandung specialized in junior high students, the writer figured out that there were still lot of students who struggled to answer questions in those texts mentioned before.

However, investigating phenomenon in all these texts was considered to be too wide to conduct. Based on this reason, he only focused on a type of text called narrative. The reason why he chose this type of text was because he assumed that examining only one type of text had already been a right decision to uncover students' problems in reading. He believed that if he could find main reading problems in a narrative text, he could therefore have generalization towards students' problems in reading text across genres. He believed that their difficulties in reading were not only witnessed in narrative text but also in the other ones. Therefore, he was certain that this research would be also a representation of his junior high school students' problems in understanding the other types of text. Moreover, narrative or story text is beneficial in developing discourse skill that is close to daily activities. "A story creates a world of characters who talk to each other and this discourse world present opportunities for communicative activities and work on discourse skill" (Cameron, 2001).

Narrative teaching, as well as the other types of text teaching, seemed to be inappropriate at the *bimbingan belajar* where the writer worked. Due to time allocation that was limited in *bimbingan belajar* teaching (about 60 up to 90 minutes per meeting but only 45 minutes for English in his work place), teachers only taught

students theories of narrative text instead of giving them opportunity to internalize the text by giving them modeling orally or visually. The teachers assumed that students had gained the materials at their school and in the place was just for emphasizing. Most of the time, the teachers did not give a pre-reading activities in which they were supposed to give vocabulary introduction in whatever way they desired such as presenting them in games. As a result, students often asked about the meaning of words in question as they were not given each of the words and the meanings in teachers' theory explanation before. Then, teachers simply helped them by giving translation of the words meaning. In this kind of teaching learning activity, students failed to internalize words in the text since in narrative, students at least have to listen to the same word 6 up to 12 times in order for them to remember it (Elley, 1989) or at least find it five or six time in text book unit (Nation, 1990). On the next test, when the words were shown in whether narrative or other genre of text tasks, they would again asked about the meaning of the words. They seemed very easy to forget the words meaning. English teaching context in as a foreign language Indonesia became an excuse for students not too seriously learn English vocabularies since the words were not used outside the classroom. This was only one thing that the writer thought became the reason why his students found it hard to answer text-based questions, especially in the narrative text in form of multiple-choice. Moreover, the students had been very much thinking that learning to read an English text was a distressing task. Their lack of exposure in acquiring English words and grammars made them were not ready enough to deal with text genres, especially narrative. He believed that these

deluded teaching later on would give negative effect for students' readiness in handling narrative tasks.

Actually, several attempts in giving good narrative teaching had been conducted in other places. One of them was an experimental research conducted by Susilowati (2008) to enhance students' creativity and awareness to local culture to make their own narrative text from their neighborhood. The study finally resulted in students' positive attitude on narrative text. However, it had not been proven that this teaching could totally help them in facing narrative task in *UN*. In order to get full explanation in how students comprehend a narrative text, this research focused on revealing the reason of how several students dealt with narrative text task-based and studying how they answered the questions based on text.

1.2 Research Questions

This research was aimed at answering the following research questions.

1. What kind of difficulties do students find in answering multiple-choice questions in narrative text?
2. What is the most difficult type of question do students find in answering multiple-choice questions in narrative text?
3. Why do the difficulties arise?
4. How do teachers help the students to handle the difficulties?

1.3 Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the study were to find out:

1. Kind of difficulties do students find in answering multiple-choice questions in narrative text.
2. The most difficult type of question do students find in answering multiple-choice questions in narrative text
3. The cause of the difficulties.
4. The solutions for teachers help the students to handle the difficulties.

1.4 Significance of the Study

As the writer had been teaching English, especially reading skills for approximately two years in a *bimbingan belajar*, he had frequently heard his students moan about how hard they understood long English reading texts provided on textbooks or worksheets. They kept asking the best way to access the content of the reading materials. They also frequently asked him about basic writing skills that enabled them to fill the “cloze procedures” and rearrange jumbled sentences or paragraphs in multiple-choice questions. He always tried to help them. However, he thought he had not yet given them the best solution to their problems. He felt responsible to do this research because as a teacher, he would be very pleased if his students could pass *UN* successfully.

This research tried to uncover the most dominant factor leading to reading failure as well as basic writing skill in English text for junior high school students when they

answered multiple-choice questions. Later on, these data can be employed as references for English teachers in junior high school in Indonesia, especially in Bandung to optimize their teaching especially in narrative text teaching as the text is one of material that is tested in *UN* (at least until *UN* 2008/2009). The writer also hoped that examining this text could have positive domino effects for students to understand the other types of text since later on he and all English teachers could have a better way in helping students to comprehend the texts.

1.5 Scope of the Study

This study was narrowed to find out students' difficulties in answering narrative text-based questions served in multiple-choice forms based on *Standar Kompetensi Lulusan (SKL)* for junior high school academic year 2007-2008 published by Indonesian Department of National Education. The standard covers only two skills which are reading and writing. Students' comprehension in reading and writing was tested through seven indicators, which were: identifying main idea (IMI), identifying detailed information (IDI), identifying implied information (III), identifying word reference (IWR), identifying word meaning (IWM), arranging jumbled sentences (AJS), and completing paragraph (CP). Later on, he needed to find out some alternatives to help his students in answering these types of question.

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1.6 Method of the Study

The writer had 20 students but he did not give him any intervention or treatment. He only gave them 20 narrative text-based tasks in form of multiple-choice in which the result had represented their ability in comprehending narrative text. The techniques required and tested in this worksheet were based on standards indicated in *SKL* mentioned before.

However, the writer had to go well with the teaching schedule at the site where the writer was teaching. At this place, the writer had three sessions of teaching. A study group consisted of only five students for each session.

The time allotted for this test was based on the time estimation in *UN* for English subject. In *UN*, students have to answer 50 questions in 120 minutes. Based on this time condition, they have approximately 2.4 minutes to answer each of the questions. As the writer gave them 20 numbers of tasks, the test was lasted only for 48 minutes.

When the result was on his hand, the writer analyzed his students' work result focusing on numbers in which they had answered incorrectly. The analysis itself was supported by students' testimony through short interviews.

1.7 Instruments

Task-Giving gave us factual evidence on students' achievement in answering narrative question which next was analyzed. The result score of the task-giving would then represent the quality of students' comprehension in narrative texts.

Interviews were required to ask students. These interviews were conducted to

students to find out their testimony concerning the questions given. It gave clear explanation to some task numbers in which students thought hard to cope with and their rationales in choosing each of the answering options.

1.8 Organization of Paper

This research is divided into five chapters. The first chapter is the introduction of the research. The second chapter is the exploration of theoretical view on narrative text and multiple choice-questions in narrative text as one of the test alternatives to measure students' comprehension toward the text along with the problems that follow. The third chapter is the method of data analysis. The fourth chapter is findings and discussions and this paper is closed by conclusions and recommendations in the fifth chapter.

1.9 Clarification of the Key Terms

Bimbingan Belajar is a non-formal educational institution that is established to help students in elementary, junior high, and senior high schools to pass *UN* successfully. Customarily, subject matters that are taught in this place are those that will be tested in national examination (*Ujian Akhir Sekolah Berstandar Nasional (UASBN)* for elementary and *Ujian Nasional (UN)* for junior or high school). As mentioned above, English is one of the subjects included.

Junior high school students are those who have passed their elementary school education. Their age are ideally ranged from 12 up to 15 years old.

Multiple Choice Question is a set of questions in which students are provided alternative answers. Junior high students are usually given four options (option A, B, C, or D)

“Narrative is a piece of text which tells a story and, in doing so entertains or informs the readers or listener “(Anderson and Anderson, 1997:8).

Standar Kompetensi Lulusan (SKL) is a standard that students have to pass on. It covers all of task numbers given to students in *UN*. It is then assumed that if the students have not achieved most of the test standards yet, they will not pass the exam.

Test contents are those that students have to comprehend in narrative text. The difficulties are in reading and writing skill needed for *UN*.

Students’ difficulties in this research are students’ inability to access test contents.

Students’ comprehension is students’ ability to access test contents.