

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, I would like to discuss the point aspects related to the background of the research, significance of the study, and the organization of thesis.

1.1 Background of the Research

Changes and innovations in English education in Indonesia has been most likely reflected in the changes of curriculum. Suyanto (2001) argues that the curriculum changes are driven by (i) some innovation in theories about the teaching of English and (ii) the failures of implementing one after another curriculum. One of the aspects of the curriculum that is subjected to change is teaching approach.

As an illustration, in the 1994 curriculum, it was stated that the students were required to be able to communicate in English using the four English language skills (listening, speaking, reading, and writing). The teaching approach to be adopted was “the meaningful approach”, which was basically the communicative approach. The teachers were expected to integrate the four language skills, the grammar, and the vocabulary creatively, so that the teaching objectives could be reached in the time available.

Based on the government’s review and feedback from the practitioners and scholars, the 1994 curriculum was changed. The change was also motivated by the influence of political movements, one of which was the movement towards autonomous provision for the provinces and regions. The new curriculum had to cater for, and be suitable for, the needs of each province and region and, at the same time, it also had a national standard. Because of that, the new 2004 curriculum was designed on the basis of

some basic competencies the students had to master. The new curriculum sought to fill what was lacking in the previous ones. In the new curriculum it was stated that the graduates were expected to have both a language competency and a general competency. For the language competency, the students were expected to be able to understand English texts, to communicate in English and to use English for enjoyment (Pusat Kurikulum-Balitbang Departement Pendidikan Nasional, 2001). In the new curriculum, in accordance with the underlying language principles and the description of teaching and learning activities, even though it is not explicitly stated, a genre-based approach is adopted.

English teachers are supposed to be able to teach their students both language components and language skills. One of the language skills they are supposed to teach is writing skill. Despite the emphasis of teaching on reading comprehension and the limited time provided for writing activities, teachers should provide students with opportunities to develop their writing skill.

Writing makes a special contribution to the way people think. A piece of writing composes meanings. Alwasilah (2001: 15) in his longitudinal study of writing process involving 29 graduate students revealed that 62.1 percent of the respondents believe that Indonesian education-from elementary to college-has failed to provide them with writing skills. Facts and ideas are put to make something new, whether in a letter home, in a college essay, or in a report at work. In writing, meaning is created in which sentences have special relationships to each other. Some sentences are general and some specific; some expand a point and others qualify it; some define and others illustrate (Axelrod,1988:2).

Writing makes another important contribution to learning. Writing helps us to find and establish our own network of information and ideas, as it is always a composing of new meaning. It allows us to bring together and connect new and old ideas. Writing enables us to clarify and deepen our understanding of a new concept and to find ways to relate it to other ideas within a discipline. Thus, writing test, clarifies, and extends understanding (Axelrod,1988:2). Learning to write is like learning to speak, involves the gradual mastery of a complex series of language conventions for constructing meanings at different levels of organizations for constructing meanings at different levels of organizations, including letter formation, spelling, syntax, discourse and genre (Fox, 1993). He further states that the learner has to learn how to use, control, and understand the writing process across a wide series of genres and contexts.

There are various reasons for significant writing. Firstly, a wonderful idea which is not expressed clearly and logically, will not have benefit to anyone. Secondly, the act of writing is a thinking and learning act. Learning to write means learning to think. Thirdly, educated people need writing ability. Finally, from psycholinguistics viewpoint, low reading interest among people at all age levels and educational levels may result from the fact that writings-books, literature and other references-are not interesting, out of readers' interest, and do not attract readers to read (Rasyid,1999:2). Those writings are poorly written and badly organized.

One of the most challenging tasks English teachers face nowadays is making their students write different genres as required by the new competence-based curriculum (CBC). To carry out this task, teachers need to have clear ideas regarding what micro and macro skills students need to develop so that they can develop essays of different types.

This means that writing activities are no longer geared around what to write (topics), but how to write (skills of writing). This is by no means saying that topics are not important; they are still important, but they are used as a means of acquiring the writing skills. Topics are always needed, but high school students do not need to address topics that are not very relevant to their immediate needs. With limited time allotment, teachers need to focus on the key issue, that is, teach and show students how to write.

It is important to note that at SMP (Junior High School) level students are not expected to write in written style of English. For example, if they can write a narrative text using “spoken English written down”, that would be acceptable as long as they can produce simple grammatical sentences, well organized text or create a unified whole.

1.2 The significance of the Study

This study provided certain results about the effectiveness of learning in the development of writing skill. The research findings intended to be highly valuable for English learners, teachers, practitioners, and curriculum planners. Generally, the study is to introduce and familiarize teaching narrative writing.

For English curriculum planners, the research findings may be used as consideration in developing curriculum which includes teaching method. It accordingly can enrich the English learning teaching method to come to the most effective and efficient teaching method.

For English teachers, the study can also give a significant contribution towards the writer’s institution. The study may improve the teaching and learning process of writing as a complex skill in which other skills involving.

For students, as English learners, this study can prove them that collaborative is more effective in solving some learning problems. It may also develop their social interdependence as stated by Deutsch (1949); Johnson & Johnson, 1989 cited in Johnson & Johnson, 2000. they state that social interdependence exists when individuals share common goals and each individual's outcomes are affected by the actions of the others.

The findings of the study expected to supply the readers with a significant difference in the achievement of writing, especially in the five stages of narrative, they are (1) Orientation, (2) Complication, (3) Evaluation, (4) Resolution, and (5) Reorientation or Coda the ideas into good paragraphs

The techniques and activities used by the English teachers from this study are also expected to enrich the students' motivation in learning English narrative writing. Briefly, this investigation may enlarge the teachers' view regarding the current issues, especially on the techniques of teaching narrative writing.

1.3. The Organization of Thesis

The subsequent chapters will be organized as follows. Chapter II presents my own perspective on relevant literature comprising the theories, which have given shape to this study. The theories are to do with values of narrative writing and approach to teaching Chapter III describes the research methodology and design of the study. The research methodology and design of the study. The research methodology comprises the participants, setting, data collection technique, data analysis, and narrative text as a tool for analyzing students' texts. Chapter IV will delineate the research findings concerning the participants' strategies of developing skill as well as in narrative writing, procedures

taken in the process of data collection as well as analyses made for data collected, particularly from observation and interview. Finally, the thesis will be concluded in chapter V, elicited from the discussions in chapter IV. In this chapter, the writer will also declare the limitations of the study and be closed with the recommendation for further research.

1.4 Methodology

This study uses descriptive method. There are two techniques of data collection that are used observation and interview. Regarding the function of observation and interview, they were used to gather information relevant to answer the research questions including the kinds of teaching and learning activities.

I used field notes and during the observation I sat next to the teachers in the classrooms to observe the teaching learning activities. Observation in this study is intended to dig the whole data needed. It is the main technique used by researcher in this study. To support data obtained through the observation, I used the research instruments. The main instrument of this research was the researcher himself. I tried to be more sensitive, responsive, and interactive to my research sites in order to gain data.

Nevertheless, I also used a video camera to help me gain more accurate data. The videotaping took place at all of activities, more specifically, during the teaching and learning activities. Through videotaping, I attained clearer conversation to the teachers and captured the respondents' facial expressions. By video recording, I knew whether they enjoyed the activities or not. Since this was a qualitative study, I needed very detailed information that mostly occurred in the class. Video taping served two different

purposes in this study: ensuring the descriptive validity of my observations, and stimulating recall and reflection as a component of the interviews with teachers and students. Related to this, Maxwell also mentions that observation enables you to draw inferences about someone's meaning and perspective that you couldn't obtain by relying exclusively on interview data.

For more detail information and to cross-check information found in observation, I felt that I needed to interview each respondent. I provided lists of questions before the interview session began. The interviews were carried out after the class. Therefore, I had to make an appointment to the respondents so they could spare their time with me. In interviewing the teachers, I interviewed two English teachers. I interviewed the teachers both informally after teaching learning activities and formally at the end of the period. The teachers were interviewed formally and informally and the formal interview was transcribed. The interviews occurred throughout the process as well as after the activity of teaching and learning. In general, the interview questions were about the issues of giving feedback/conferencing at the teaching and learning activity.