CHAPTER ONE
INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background of the Study

The popularity of the idea of scaffolding among educators has increased as educational researcher and practitioners has focused on the quality of teaching (Verenikina, 2004:5). They used the concept of scaffolding as the metaphor to describe and explain the role of adults or more knowledge-able peers in guiding children’s learning and development. Teachers find the concept of scaffolding appealing because it resonates with their own intuitive conceptions of what it means to intervene successfully in students’ learning (Mercer, 1994 in Hammond 2001:2). Scaffolding is claimed as an innovative method of supporting students’ learning and development (Bedrova and Leong, 1998:1). Scaffolds are therefore valuable teaching and learning resources that can help students to both manage learning tasks and understand difficult concepts associated with the content material (Cheong and Goh, 2002:58).

The significance of scaffolding lies in its potentials in maximizing students’ zone of proximal development (ZPD) that defines development as the space between the child’s level of independent performance and the child’s level of maximally assisted performance (Bedrova and Leong, 1998:2). The ZPD is co-constructed through the talks that occurs between a teacher and students as they participate together in a particular task. In other words, effective scaffolding is able to extend the upper limit of the ZPD.
One of the areas for which scaffolding is potentially applicable is the teaching writing, the most difficult skills for L2 learners to master (Richards and Renandya, 2002:303; Gibbons, 2002:52). The difficulties lie not only in generating and organizing ideas, but also in translating these ideas into readable texts. L2 writers have to pay attention to a higher level of skills of planning and organizing as well as the lower level of skills of spelling, punctuation, word choice and so on. This is in relevant to the observation carried out by Alwasilah (2001 cited in Emilia, 2005:12) which shows that writing is the most difficult language skills to learn by the majority of students. Students were barely exposed to the practice of writing and teachers lacked information and knowledge on what they should do regarding their students’ composition.

The study of scaffolding instruction to improve writing skills can be traced to the work of Vygotsky (1978). He proposes that social interaction plays a fundamental role in the development of cognition and social activity where scaffolding is certainly crucial to child development as learner (Burch, 2007:13). Learning must be guided and supported by adult modeling and corrective feedback. The studies on scaffolding were later developed by Bruner (1976) who found that parents’ talk is scaffolding provided for children to mediate the world and to help them to solve the problem (Cameron, 2001:8).

Another study on scaffolding instruction was conducted by Roehler and Cantlon (1997) who discovered five types of scaffolding in social constructivist classroom. Furthermore, Dufficy (2001) found that a Vygotskian-inspired sociocultural framework can assist teacher to develop new narratives for
classroom practices. Bedrova and Leong (1998) revealed that scaffolded writing is effective method in supporting children’s emergent writing. In 2005, Sam found that the implementation of three types of purposeful scaffolding influence leaner’s achievement level in relation to the assigned task. The following study is conducted by Priyatni, et al. (2008) who showed that scaffolding technique is significantly effective to improve the students’ competence in paragraph writing. Afterward, Cotteral and Cohen (2003) argued that scaffolding promotes learners’ autonomy focusing on authentic task by making the expectation of the task explicit and providing flexible supports for the learner as they approximate the target performance. The next study conducted by Dewanti Laksmi (2006) showed that students have become more confident in expressing their ideas in writings after actualizing scaffolding in process writing.

Moreover, the study of scaffolding instruction also revealed in teaching and learning cycles in genre-based approach (see Firkins, et.al (2007) who integrate instructional scaffolding techniques with the cycles of teaching under the genre-based and activity-based pedagogical approaches. Another study was conducted by Kurnia (2009). He found that scaffolding instruction improved the students’ descriptive writing performance significantly and the way the teachers provided instructional scaffolding in teaching descriptive writing are different throughout the lessons framed in the four staged teaching cycles and the other related research performed by Emilia, (2005) who concluded that the genre-based approach which applies the scaffolding principles is great importance to develop Indonesian students’ academic writing ability,
Overall, from the previous studies which have been mentioned, only a few studies discussed the implementation of scaffolding based on teaching and learning cycles in genre-based approach for teaching writing of high school in Indonesia particularly hortatory exposition text. As supported by Gibbons (2002:67) scaffolding is a significant term which must be put into practice throughout the curriculum cycle.

The present study seeks to examine the use of scaffolding instruction in teaching writing. The genre under focus is hortatory exposition. The study is conducted at a senior high school in Bandung, in which hortatory is a compulsory text to be taught.

1.2. Research Question

In accordance with the background of the research mentioned above, this particular writing hopefully could provide the answers of the following research question:

1. How is scaffolding actualized in writing instruction of hortatory exposition text in selected class? This research question is elaborated as follows:
   a. What types of scaffolding does the teacher use?
   b. Do types of scaffolding relate to each curriculum cycle?
   c. Do teachers’ awareness of scaffolding relate to their realisations of scaffolding in class?

2. What difference is evidenced in the students’ writing before and after scaffolding instruction?
1.3. Research Objectives

Related to the background of the study and the research problem above, this study is conducted to do the following:

1. To find how the teachers actualize scaffolding in the writing instruction of hortatory exposition writing.
2. To find the difference between the student’s writing before and after scaffolding instruction.

1.4. Significance of the Study

There are some contributions which the study may offer. The result of this study is expected to:

1. provide additional informative input for other researchers who intend to carry out research in the same field with certain interest.
2. become a basis of policy making in education which can lead to the betterment of the quality in teaching English generally and in the teaching and learning writing specifically.
3. provide useful information for the readers especially English teachers about the scaffolding instruction that can be used in teaching writing and teaching English generally.
1.5. Definition of Key Terms

To avoid misunderstanding, misinterpretation, and ambiguity, a number of key words in this study need to be defined. They are defined as follows:

1. Scaffolding

Scaffolding is “social interaction in which a knowledgeable participant can create supportive conditions in which the novice can participate in, and extend his or her current skills and knowledge to higher levels of competence” (Donato, 1994 in Hyland & Hyland, 2006). Scaffolding refers to “support that is designed to provide the assistance necessary to enable learners to accomplish tasks and to develop understanding that they would not quite be able manage on their own” (Hammond, 2001:3). Scaffolding is “row of teachers and others in supporting the learner’s development and in providing support structures to get to the next stage or level” (Raymond, 2000, p. 176, cited in Van Der Stuyf, 2002). The support is integrated in the four-staged curriculum cycle as stated by Gibbons (2002:60-67), Derewianka (1990:6-9), Hammond (2001:28).

2. Writing

Writing is the act of producing a sequence of sentences arranged in particular order and linked together in certain ways (Byrne, 1988:1).

3. Hortatory exposition

Hortatory exposition is a piece of text that presents one side of an issue (Anderson & Anderson, 1997). It also defined as a type of text that is used to explain and interpret, which presents more than one argument in favor of a
judgment (Martin, 1985:13). The purpose of hortatory texts is to argue a case for or against a particular position or point of view and it proposes a suggestion at the end of the argumentation (Joko Priyana et al, 2008).

1.6. **Organization of the Thesis**

This thesis organized into five chapters. Chapter one covers a general introduction of the study. It provides background of the study, research questions, purpose of the study, and significance of the study, definition of key terms and organization of the thesis. Chapter two discuss relevant theories by which the present study underpinned. It covers historical overview of scaffolding, genre-based approach, exposition text, students’ response, advantages and disadvantages of scaffolding, systemic functional grammar and related researches. Chapter three constitutes research methodological aspects of this thesis. It consists of research design, research site, participants, data collection techniques and data analysis. Chapter four elaborates data presentation and discussion of each research finding. Finally, chapter five is the conclusion part and possible recommendations.