

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. Background of the Study

Language plays a very important role in human life. Hornby (1987:473) states that language is human and a non-distinctive method of communicating ideas, feelings, and desires by means of a system of sounds and sound symbols. The definition implies that humans need language as a mean of communication to express their ideas, feelings, and desires to others.

The need of mastering a language especially English is urgent. English becomes the first international language widely spoken by millions of people from different countries. English is also used as a foreign language in which it has instrumental characteristics used for certain purposes such as for transferring knowledge of science and technology, getting a job, going abroad, and so on. It shows that mastering English is urgent. As a result, in Indonesia, English even has been taught since kindergarten level up to senior high level.

According to Harris (1969:9), language includes the four skills namely listening, speaking, reading, and writing as language skills. The four skills are very closely related to learn a language.

Fromkin (1990:342) states that writing is one of the basic tools of civilization. Without it, the world could not exist. It implies that the spoken language is not the important one, but the written form of language has a very important role in human life, especially in academic life. Martlew (1983), as

quoted by Bruce Sadler, stated that academic progress in school depends on students' ability to write fluently. Furthermore, writing is the principal medium by which teachers evaluate performance (Christenson, Thurlow, Ysseldyke, & McVicar, 1989; Graham & Harris, 1988). Also Randall S. Hansen, Ph.D and Katherine Hansen, Ph.D in their article stated that writing skills can be the ticket to better college grades and greater academic achievement. From the explanation, it can be concluded that the need of mastering writing is unquestionable.

Most people tend to have the same opinion that writing skill is the most difficult skill among the other skills. They consider that an ability in writing is a talent that one either has or does not have. So do the students.

There are some reasons which make writing difficult. Those reasons can be divided into linguistics factors and non-linguistics factors. The linguistics factors are vocabulary, grammar, structure, orthography, and so on. Non-linguistics factors are reading habit, motivation, knowledge of the world, and learning strategies. Though, writing is not easy, it can be learned. Writing is learned behavior that takes a long time to master. Writing ability takes study and practice to develop this skill. One must note that writing is a process in which practice must be exercised.

Based on the Educational Unit-Oriented Curriculum (Kurikulum Tingkat Pendidikan), students are expected to be able to write simple paragraph of report, recount, and news item. The curriculum highlights that the students have to be able to write various types of the text genres, one of them is anecdote.

Anecdote is a short little scene or story taken from a personal experience. Anecdotes can be useful for setting the stage for speech or personal essay. An anecdote often relays a story that can be used as a theme or lesson. Anecdotes are usually true stories about real people. Sometimes humorous anecdotes are not jokes, because their primary purpose is not simply to evoke laughter, but to reveal a truth. Anecdotes are very, very short stories told to make a point. A writer or a speaker hopes that associating their point with memorable story will make the point memorable, too.

Since academic progress in school depends on the students' ability to write fluently, it is important to make the writing not only interesting but also fascinating. The ability to represent themselves well on paper will help students to get greater achievement. One of the best ways to make this happen is to use anecdotes in their writing paper. But first of all, students must know what anecdote is and what its purpose is. On the other hand, it is important that the students must be able to build an anecdote first.

In reality, only a few students know anecdote and the primary purpose of it. Based on the writer's observation, from 10 students, 7 said that anecdote is a funny story whose purpose is to entertain readers and the rest said "What is anecdote?" This indicates that anecdote is not well-known by students which predicted that their achievement on writing anecdote must be still low.

There are several relatively innovative language instruction approaches such as Whole Language Approach (Blanton, 1992), Content-Based Second

Language Instruction (Brinton, Snow and Wesche, 1989), Text-Based Syllabus Design (Feez, 1998), and Task-Based Language Instruction (Prabhu, 1987a; Crookes and Gass, 1993; Willis, 1996). Task- Based Language Instruction also known as Task-Based Language Learning or Task-Based Language Teaching, or Task- Based Instruction. This approach focuses on the use of authentic language and on asking students to do meaningful task using the target language.

As Joko Priyana quoted Nunan, 1998; Markee, 1997 in his article ‘Task-Based Language Instruction’, Task-Based Language Instruction can be described as language course whose syllabus or teaching and learning activity are organized around tasks. Assesment is primarily based on task outcome rather than on accuracy of language forms. The syllabus is organized around tasks and what is emphasizes is developing the learner’s capabilities in applying, reinterpreting, and adapting the knowledge of rules and conventions during communication by means of underlying skills and abilities (Breen, 1984).

Task-Based Language Instruction is not just about getting learners to do one task and then another task and then another but it is more complicated as Willis makes it clear, by suggesting three basic stages, namely Pre-Task, Task-Cycle and Language Focus

An important of Task-Based Language Instruction is that learners are free to choose whatever language forms they wish to fulfill as well as they get the task goals. So this approach can facilitate the teaching of writing to the students because Task-Based Language Instruction not only helps the teacher to connect

the materials to the students' real world but also can motivate the students to apply their knowledge in their daily life.

From the explanation above, it concludes that Task-Based Language Instruction is very important to be applied to improve students' achievement in writing, particularly anecdote writing. It will assist students in developing knowledge about writing, especially write an anecdote. The use of the tasks as the core of teaching learning will provide chances to the students to practice as well as and are free to use whatever language that they master and given opportunity to explore their understanding based on their capability. So in this study, the research will be conducted to see how the application on Task-Based Language Instruction can improve students' achievement on writing anecdote.

B. The Problem of The Study

Based on the background of the study, the problem of the study is formulated as follow:

“To what extent is students' achievement on writing anecdote improved by using Task-Based Language Instruction Approach?”

C. The Objective of the Study

The objective of the study is to investigate features of Task-Based Language Instruction to be fulfilled to gain effective learning in writing anecdote.

D. The Scope of the Study

This study will focus on the application of Task-Based Language Instruction Approach to improve students' achievement on writing anecdote. So

this study is restricted to cover the area of Task-Based Language Instruction Approach and anecdote writing.

E. The Significance of the Study

Findings of the study are expected to be useful for:

1. The teachers to improve their way of teaching writing especially anecdote writing. It means that the improvement is to maximize the students' achievement to make a good writing.
2. The students to realize that the demand on writing is not only to be able to write some words or sentences as they usually do, but also share information and express themselves through some process of thought that can be seen from their writings.
3. The reader, as information to improve writing skill.