

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Developing the students' communicative competence both in oral and written forms to achieve a certain functional literacy stage is the objective of English teaching. This communicative competence involves four language skills, namely listening, speaking, reading, and writing. As each of the four skills is important in communication, each must get sufficient emphasis for development. Therefore, the Indonesian government has been always making an attempt to achieve the objective by continuously improving the English curriculum namely from Curriculum 2004 or Competence-Based Curriculum (Kurikulum Berbasis Kompetensi: KBK) till the latest one used throughout Indonesia, the Indonesian Educational Unit-Oriented Curriculum: (Kurikulum Tingkat Satuan Pendidikan: KTSP).

Educational Unit-Oriented Curriculum is the result of developing the former one i.e. Competence Based Curriculum. The target of language teaching expected by the curriculum is *to give students the ability to use the language in communication*. This curriculum stresses that the language competences should be formulated as a model of competences preparing the students to communicate within the target language in the language users' community. This model is formulated as a communicative competence.

The main competence aimed in language teaching-learning is the discourse competence. Saragih (2006) states that a discourse is defined as more and less a text which means any functional linguistic unit in a context. It means that

whenever someone communicates either in spoken or written text form, one must be involved in a context. The context itself is both linguistic and social ones. With respect to that, discourse competence is the ability to use a set of strategies or procedures to realize the meaning in language units, structure, pragmatic signs in interpreting and expressing the messages. It shows that communicative competence model is realized with the discourse competence where it can be realized if the students have the supporting competences such as linguistic competence, rhetoric/actional competence, socio-cultural competence and strategic competence. Besides, the communicative competence model, the curriculum also implements a language model which regards language as a social semiotic system.

The curriculum also urges that the procedure of presenting a standard competence is divided into four steps i.e. the building knowledge of the field, the modeling of the text, the joint construction of the text, and free or independent construction of the text (the steps implemented in genre approach). It suggests these procedural steps to guarantee the teaching-learning process so that the students can achieve the whole competences.

However, the facts indicate that the English teaching in Indonesian has not been satisfactory. A survey conducted by the Department of Education and Culture of the Republic of Indonesia (Departemen Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan: Depdikbud, 1990) has reported that teachers (95.4 % of state and 91.9% of private schools teachers) admitted that the English instruction was unsuccessful.

The fast development of the English courses is one of the facts indicating the failure of the formal language institution. If the system of language education

has been sufficient to the students, they would not take an extra English course after school any more. The other fact that can be observed is that there are many students, who graduated from high school, who are not able to give a good response in English language communication despite their high scores of English subject in National Final Examination (Ujian Akhir Nasional: UAN). There are also many other things indicating this failure such as less application of English in the instructional processes due to the language facility of the students or even the teachers, low ability of the university students in English lecture, and so on.

The unsatisfactory results might be due to some factors, namely the set of techniques implemented in the instructional process in the class which may mostly be teacher-centered, no English (speaking) community to practice the students' language, the students' thought of English as a very difficult language to learn so that their teacher will always correct them instantly whenever they make mistakes in using it which, of course, will affect their motivation and self-esteem and etc.

This is also found by the researcher as an English teacher. Some observations which had been made showed that there were still many students at SMAN 2 Kisaran having difficulties in expressing their ideas through writing. The informal interview with the teachers in pre-study showed that the students did not have the confidence in writing down their ideas on paper. Despite their high scores in English in UAN, it should be admitted that most students are still far away from being regarded as a good writer. It may be caused by the emphasis on reading comprehension is much more than writing skill teaching. This phenomenon also occurs to those who are still learning in Grade XI. The students

are reluctant to write their ideas in a composition. They might feel difficult to organize the ideas and put them together in a coherent organization and appropriate language structure. This problem can be seen from the product of the students' writings.

Due to the problem, there should be an attempt to make writing class become more interesting and effective for the students as well as the teaching-learning process itself. In this research, an instructional model of teaching writing is proposed as an alternative to improve the students' writing ability, namely Process Genre Approach which is regarded able to develop students' awareness of different text types and of the composing process as well.

In summary, this study is an attempt to discover the effect of Process Genre Approach in teaching English writing skill on the writing achievement of the students of Grade XI at SMAN 2 Kisaran, in this case the students' achievement in writing an expository text. This text type was chosen because such a text is one of the compulsory text types which are supposed to be taught, in the English curriculum of Educational Unit-Oriented Curriculum, to the students of Grade XI. The students' level of vocabulary mastery, as one of the linguistic competences which play an important part in any language skills, is blocked to control the effect of the treatment.

1.2 Problems of the Study

In relation to the background of the study, the problems of this research are formulated as the following.

1. Are the students' writing scores taught with the Process Genre Approach higher than those taught with conventional teaching?

2. Are the students' writing scores with high vocabulary mastery higher than those with low vocabulary mastery?
3. Is there an interaction effect between the Process Genre Approach in teaching writing and vocabulary mastery on the students' writing achievements respectively?

1.3 Objectives of the Study

It is necessary to state clearly what the objectives of the study in relation with the problems posed. The objectives are to examine:

1. whether the students' writing scores taught with the Process Genre Approach are significantly higher than those taught with conventional teaching,
2. whether the students' writing scores with high vocabulary mastery are significantly higher than those with low vocabulary mastery,
3. whether there is an interaction effect between the Process Genre Approach in teaching writing and vocabulary mastery on the students' writing achievements respectively.

1.4 Scope of the Study

There are many approaches used in teaching writing to the students. This study is focused only to the use of Process Genre Approach in teaching writing at SMAN 2 Kisaran of Grade XI 2008-2009 School Year. The school is chosen due to its feasibility to the researcher and the school is the place where the researcher conducted his preliminary study by interviewing some English teachers and

students, observing their writing products, and collecting other prior data. The writing text chosen is expository text which is one of the genre texts in writing Competency Standard on Educational Unit-Oriented Curriculum for Grade XI SMA. The Process Genre Approach in this study is compared with the conventional teaching i.e. Product or Product-like Approach. To give focus to the study, the students' vocabulary mastery is selected as the intervening variable. By controlling the students' vocabulary mastery, the study is expected to give clearer description on the effect of Process Genre Approach on teaching writing of expository text to the students with certain vocabulary mastery level.

1.5 Significance of the Study

A study on the effect of teaching writing approaches on the students' writing achievement will be very interesting to improve the students' writing ability. This study is expected to be useful for English teachers to improve the instruction in writing expository text and also for other researchers in language use and instructional research. It is hoped to provide information, which may have practical as well as theoretical values for English language teacher. Theoretically, the result of the study will hopefully add up what has been found in the area of English teaching as foreign language. Meanwhile, the result of this study will practically provide valuable information to English language teachers in their attempts to decide which of the best method and approach in increasing the student's writing achievement and for teachers and students in solving one of many problems in writing.