

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 The Background of the Study

In learning English as a Foreign Language (EFL), narrative texts have a significant contribution in developing students' language skills. This text not only functions for entertainment, but also to teach life values, introduce cultural elements, and enrich vocabulary and grammar used in daily activities. According to Kim et.al (2023), narrative texts typically tell a story evolving around characters and associated events, actions, and conflicts. According to Anderson and Anderson (2003), narrative texts aim to tell an event that has occurred with a regular flow, and aim to entertain or convey an ethical message to the reader. According to Abbot (2008), narrative text is a representation of one or more events that are interrelated and occur sequentially. An event is an action taken by an actor in a certain situation.

However, in reality, students' understanding of narrative texts varies widely. Not all students can understand the whole story or capture the hidden moral meaning. This variation can be influenced by a number of factors, such as students' background knowledge, English language skills, and personal experiences when reading the text. One crucial element that influences how students understand a story is the way the story is structured and presented to the audience, including the plot structure, perspective, and narrative voice present in the story.

Differences in narrative can lead to varying understanding of the story content, even though the stories have similar themes. For example, the texts presented chronologically can be easier for students to understand because the time sequence makes sense. In contrast, texts that contain flashbacks or forwards and backwards require students to be able to connect story elements in a more complex way. Genette (1980), explains that narrative discourse is a key element in narrative structure because it determines how information in the story is understood by the reader.

In the context of EFL students, understanding narrative texts with various forms of narrative discourse is a challenge in itself. This is due to the fact that students not only need to understand a foreign language, but also have to adapt to a way of telling stories that they may not have known before. Reading is an intentional and active meaning-making process, involving coordination of word recognition, language comprehension, and strategic processing (Afflerbach, 2022). According to Snow (2002), reading is not just about recognizing words and sentences, but also involves a complex thinking process to understand, interpret, and evaluate texts. Therefore, when the way of telling stories varies, students' strategies and comprehension results can also differ. Good reading skills are crucial in helping students understand various types of texts, including narrative texts. In reading activities, students are required to connect existing knowledge with the latest information obtained from reading. Constructivism theory argues that readers actively create meaning through their engagement with the text (Rumelhart, 1980). According to Piaget (1972), constructivism is a learning

theory that emphasizes that knowledge is constructed by individuals through the processes of assimilation (incorporating new information into existing cognitive structures) and accommodation (changing cognitive structures to fit new information). Therefore, the form of the narrative can influence how students construct that meaning, and can be a major factor in whether they understand the story correctly or not. In addition, it should be noted that differences in understanding between students don't always indicate errors, but can reflect how the structure of the text and the cognitive strategies applied affect the results of understanding. Students who have good inference skills or often read complex texts may find it easier to understand texts with non-linear plots when compared to students who are only used to reading texts with simple structures. Therefore, this is interesting to study in more depth in discussing the comprehension of a story in different narrative discourses.

However, until now, there has been very few research that specifically examines how variations in narrative discourse impact EF students' comprehension of story content. Most previous studies tend to only evaluate students' comprehension from a literal or inferential perspective without considering the way the story is presented. In addition, the reasons why students understand narratives in a certain way have also rarely been studied comprehensively. This gap suggests the importance of further research on the relationship between narrative forms and how students interpret the meaning of the texts they read.

According to the theory, a story can maintain the same meaning, although it is delivered with different narrative discourses, and this is greatly influenced by the cognitive process and experience of the reader in interpreting the text (Bruner, 1991). This study tested the truth of the theory by analyzing the way of third semester students in class C comprehend a story of narrative text with different narrative discourses and their reasons.

1.2 The Problems of the Study

Based on the background of this study, there are two problems formulated:

1. What story do the students comprehend of the text with different narrative discourses?
2. Why do they comprehend the story the way they do?

1.3 The Objectives of the Study

Based on the problem of this study, there are two objectives of this study:

1. To investigate what story that students comprehend of the text with different narrative discourse.
2. To investigate the reasons why that students comprehend the story the way they do.

1.4 The Scope of the Study

This study in the scope of comprehension of text. Text comprehension covers a wide scope. It might deal with reading or writing. In reading, the scope of comprehension might cover a wide range too. It might deal with reading comprehension skills, literal or inferential comprehension, etc. Texts intended to be comprehended, might also cover a wide range, such as descriptive,

argumentative, procedures, etc. This study was limited to the comprehension of story as a part in genre of narration. A story (ies) was / were action by an actor in certain time, place, and situation. The actions could be narrated in different text discourses. Specifically, this study aims at finding how the same story in different narrative discourse would be understood.

1.5 The Significances of the Study

This research is expected to provide valuable information and contributions theoretically and practically as follows:

1.5.1 The Theoretical Significances

This study theoretically contributes to the development of studies in the field of applied linguistics, especially in the realm of reading comprehension and narrative discourse. The results of this study are expected to enrich the understanding of how forms of narratives discourse (such as linear flow, backward flow, or mixed flow) affect the way EFL students construct meaning from the texts they read. In addition, the findings of this study can also be a basis for developing theories of discourse-based reading learning and constructivism theory in text comprehension. This study supports the idea that the process of comprehending a story depends not only on the ready.

1.5.2 The Practical Significances

1. For Teachers

This study can provide insight to English teachers, especially at the college or high school level, about the importance of paying attention to the form of narrative discourses in selecting teaching texts. Teachers can adjust their reading

teaching methods based on the form of narrative discourse used, and adjust them to the abilities and characteristics of students. By understanding how narrative discourse affects comprehension, teachers can help students to develop more appropriate and effective reading strategies.

2. For EFL Learners

For EFL Learners, the results of this study is useful in helping them understand that the different forms of story delivery in narrative texts can affect the way they capture meaning. By realizing it, students can be more aware of the reading strategies they use and improve their ability to understand various forms of narrative. This study also encourages students to be more active and critical in the reading process.

3. For Another Researcher

For another researchers, the results of this study can be a reference and basis for further research in the field of reading comprehension and narrative discourse. This study opens up opportunities to further examine other aspects that have not been reached, such as the influence of genre types discourses difficulty levels, or students' affective factors on story comprehension. Further researchers can also develop more innovative reading learning models based on the results of this study.