

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents a comprehensive description of the research. It comprises the background to the problem, formulation of the problem, operational definitions, aim of the study, and significances of the study.

1.1. Background

Children's literature course in the Department of English Education at a university in Tasikmalaya used fable to develop students' literacy works. In this course, the students are expected to write their creative writing in the form of fable stories which are their original work. The writing template has been prepared by the lecturer, where students are encouraged to write a fable story by determining the characters, setting, problem and solution, and the moral lesson to be conveyed in their story. Their works are then submitted to Google Classroom to be reviewed and assessed by the lecturer.

To develop students' creativity and their writing skills, literature applied as a topic of learning must be in the written form. As previously mentioned, one example of written literature is short stories, and in this case is fable story. From the various types of short stories in children's literature, fable is the most familiar of them. Kayhan (2017) defined fable as a literary genre in which its characters such as animals and plants aim to give advice or a moral lesson, which is usually written at the end of the story. Fable is certainly identical with animal stories, which aims to create a powerful impression on the readers (Ruby, 2001). For further detail, the meaning of animal stories here is animals that behave like humans, such as being able to think and speak.

There are various obstacles found by the students in writing fable. It relates to the aspect of language, content, motivation, etc. In the aspect of language, poor English grammatical competence and lack of vocabulary have become central issues affecting students' challenges in writing (Ali & Ramana, 2018; Amalia et al., 2021). Regarding to the content, this is probably the most difficult part for the students. Moreover, the writing process consists of several stages before finally

becoming a systematic and readable text. Richards and Renandya (2002) stated that there are four steps in the writing process, namely planning, drafting, revising, and editing. They also emphasized that writing is a challenging activity due to the difficulties in producing, organizing, and transferring such ideas into words. In addition, even though the fable is classified as a short story, it is very typical with animals or natural objects as the characters that always convey moral lessons in each story. Thus, students must also pay close attention to those when writing fable. On the other hand, lack of motivation or demotivation is also a challenge that students often face in writing (Alkhaldi, 2023; Amalia et al., 2021). This can happen because students first find it difficult to write, so they give up early. Considering all these things, it can be concluded that even though a fable is a short story and looks simple, the writing process may become a challenge for the students.

In educational research, fable have been widely examined as an interesting topic of learning, and the findings always show positive outcomes. As an example, Ummah (2022) conducted a study about the use of fable in teaching writing skill. Her study used descriptive qualitative as the research method, and used observation, interview, and documentation as the technique of collecting the data. Then, through the steps of reducing and describing the data, the findings revealed that fable helps the students provide stimulus in finding ideas and increase students' creativity in writing. She also emphasized that through fable, teachers can teach the students about good behavior within the moral values contained in every fable story. Nevertheless, in her study, the researcher focused on the use or the benefit of fable for students' writing skills, and she involved senior high school students as participants. Meanwhile, in this study, the researcher focuses on what challenges students face when writing a fable story, and how they overcome those challenges to complete the story. Furthermore, studies about an investigation in this field at the university level remain underexplored.

In conclusion, based on the phenomenon and the previous study, the researcher is fascinated to investigate students' challenges and solutions in writing fable at the university level, specifically in the Children's Literature course at a university in Tasikmalaya. Thus, this study is entitled, "Investigating Students'

Challenges and Their Solutions in Writing Fable as An Assignment in Children's Literature Course." Ultimately, this study is expected to contribute as a reference for people in writing a fable story.

1.2. Formulation of the Problem

Based on the background above, the current problems are formulated in a question, "What are the students' challenges and solutions in writing fable as an assignment in Children's Literature course?"

1.3. Operational Definitions

The researcher provides three definitions related to this study to avoid misunderstanding about the terms set out in this study as follows:

- 1.3.1. Fable : Fable is a short story that features animals or non-human things that act like humans as its characters and always convey a moral value. In this context, fable becomes a writing assignment for the students in which they have to write their own fable story.
- 1.3.2. Students' Challenges and Solutions in Writing : Challenges refer to the difficulties experienced by the students in the writing activity. Meanwhile, the solution refers to something students do to solve those challenges. In this context, the challenges come from the students during the process of writing a fable, then students deal with their challenges, so that they are able to finish their fable story.

- 1.3.3. Children's Literature Course: Children's Literature course is an elective course offered by the Department of English Education at a university in Tasikmalaya, in which students learn about literature for children, such as fables, historical fiction, fairy tales, children's poetry, myths, and children's book authors. In this context, fable will be highlighted as the main topic of this course.

1.4. Aim of the Study

This study aims to investigate the students' challenges and their solutions in writing fable as an assignment in Children's Literature course.

1.5. Significances of the Study

1.5.1. Theoretical Use

This study supports the existing theory about writing a fable story in the classroom, especially in the students' perspectives about the challenges and the solutions.

1.5.2. Practical Use

This study can be used as an overview to the lecturers in implementing fable writing in the classroom.

1.5.3. Empirical Use

This study provides empirical insight and understanding for the researcher dealing with the challenges and solutions in writing fable.