

# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background of the Study

Novels, though they are fiction in nature, are generally about the story of the characters in doing their everyday life with all the complexity of their problems so that Abrams (1981) argues that as a *mimetic* aspect of literary works so that the fictional stories reflect or imitate the reality. The problems in novels often seem very real because many books are written by the author with the influence of their personal life. Some novels are even completely based on the real life and experience of a person. This type of novel is called a biography novel. Biography novels usually are about the real-life story of a person, but supplemented with the imagination of the author. Many biography novels contain fictional elements, such as conversations between the characters to help bring the characters and their experiences to life. In line with biography novels, there is an autobiography novel. It is exactly the same with a biography novel in terms of the contents, the main difference is, an autobiography novel is written by the person whose real life and experience being told in the novel.

In the autobiography titled “Totto-chan: The Little Girl at the Window”, the main character named Totto-chan is none other than the author, Tetsuko Kuroyanagi, herself. Kuyoyanagi wrote the novel based on her real childhood experience of being expelled from an elementary school because her teachers thought she was such a mischievous kid who cannot listen to the teacher’s instructions while she was simply being curious. Her mother, aware of her daughter’s needs for an unusual educational system, sent her to an unusual school named Tomoe Gakuen where the extraordinary founder and principal, Mr. Kobayashi held a fundamental concept that a teacher's primary role is to encourage students in constructing their own knowledge based on their unique individual experiences.

The learning approaches and methods applied by Mr. Kobayashi are considered in accordance with constructivism theory because according to Piaget

(1964) in his theory of cognitive development, learners are seen as human individuals whose personal experiences are needed to construct their own knowledge. Hence, the main goal of the teacher is encouraging students to explore and experience many things so that they can create their own meaningful knowledge. In her novel, Kuroyanagi wrote in detail about how the principal, Mr. Kobayashi, founded Tomoe Gakuen according to children's needs and created a curriculum that is ahead of its time just so the students could see themselves as unique individuals that experience unique things. At Tomoe Gakuen, children have the freedom and independence in learning. The students of Tomoe Gakuen could choose the subjects that they want to learn or the tasks that they want to do according to their interest because Mr. Kobayashi hoped that children can truly develop themselves through this choice-making opportunities. Jolivette et al. (2002) says that allowing students to make choices in academic tasks provides many benefits for both the teacher and the students, including minimizing unwanted behaviour of students and increasing students' engagement in the teaching and learning process.

The teaching approach employed by Mr. Kobayashi, in which students have greater freedom in making decisions in learning, is one of the characteristics of active learning (Bonwell & Eison, 1991; Barnes, 1989). There has been a number of research on "Totto-chan: The Little Girl at the Windows" novel by connecting it with theories of learning or education such as Paulo Freire's Perspective (Jamaluddin, J., & Ghofur, Abd., 2020) and Ki Hadjar Dewantara's Leadership Trilogy (Lestari, 2019). There was also a study on "Totto-chan: The Little Girl at the Windows" ' novel that focused on the role of school in developing students' character (Muttaqin, 2021). However, there has been limited research on connecting it with active learning. There is an interesting question left to the writer: what is the evidence of the implementation of the active learning approach by Mr. Kobayashi in the novel. Therefore, the researcher would like to do a literary analysis of the novel that focuses on the implementation of active learning in "Totto-chan: The Little Girl at the Windows" novel.

## **1.2. Statement of the Problem**

There is a problem found based on the background study above, it is formulated as follows: how is Mr. Kobayashi's active learning approach depicted in "Totto-chan: The Little Girl at the Window" novel?

## **1.3. Objective of the Study**

Based on the statement of problem, the objective of this study is: to identify the evidence of the implementation of the active learning approach by Mr. Kobayashi in "Totto-chan: The Little Girl at the Window" novel.

## **1.4. Theoretical Framework**

Active learning is described as an educational approach where learners are participating actively in the learning process instead of passively listening to the teacher (Bonwell & Eison, 1991). Thus, it emphasizes the fact that learners construct their own knowledge or understanding through their active participation. Meanwhile according to Barnes (1989), a teaching approach can be identified as an active learning approach when there are seven principles that act as the main construct of it: purposive, reflective, negotiated, critical, complex, situation-driven, and engaged. The writer used active learning theories (Barnes, 1989) in exploring the principles of active learning approach implemented by Mr. Kobayashi "Totto-chan: The Little Girl at the Window" novel.

The more detail of the active learning approach as the main theory employed in this study was explored in chapter two.

## **1.5. Scope and Limitation**

The scope of this study focused on the active learning approach implemented by Mr. Kobayashi in "Totto-chan: The Little Girl at the Window " novel, not by other teachers in the story. The limitation of this study is on the criteria of the approach, as it should also match the indicators of seven principles of active learning theory by Barnes (1989); and the implementation of the strategies used.

## **1.6. Significance of Study**

The writer hopes the findings of this research can contribute to English teaching and learning in some ways that explained as follows:

- a. To provide evidence of the implementation of the active learning approach in “Totto-chan: The Little Girl at the Window” novel.
- b. To give additional information for other researchers who want to conduct further research on similar topic.
- c. To inspire teachers or educators to implement active learning in their teaching.

## **1.7. Definition of Key Terms**

There are several key terms of this study, the definition for each term is explained as follows:

1. Novel is a type of fiction narrative that displays a realistic depiction of the state of a society and is extended in length (Abrams, 1981).
2. “Totto-chan: The Little Girl at the Window” is a novel by Japanese author Tetsuko Kuroyanagi that was first published in Japan, 1981 with *Madogiwa no Totto-chan* as the original title. The English version of the novel that is translated by Dorothy Britton is the one being analyzed in this study.
3. Constructivism is a learning theory that explains how people acquire knowledge and learn, which requires students to participate actively as an active agent in the learning process (Golder, 2018).
4. Active learning is an educational approach where learners are participating actively in the learning process instead of passively listening to the teacher (Bonwell & Eison, 1991).

## **1.8. Thesis Organization**

The writer organized this thesis in order to make this research content become clear to read and understand. This thesis is divided into five chapters.

1. Chapter I presents an introduction which consists of the background of the study, statements of the problem, objective of the study, theoretical framework,

2. scope and limitation, significance of the study, definition of key terms, and outline of the study.
3. Chapter II discusses review of the related literature including the previous studies and the related literature.
4. Chapter III describes the methods of research. It deals with the object of the study, types of the study, types of the data, technique of data collection, and techniques of data analysis.
5. Chapter IV presents the literary analysis with the aim to answer the research problem stated in the first chapter by using Barnes's Principles of Active Learning.
6. Chapter V discusses the conclusion of this study and the suggestions for the readers of this study.