CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

This chapter presents an overview of the methodology of the study. It describes the research design, research site and participants, data collecting techniques, data analysis, and validity of the study.

3.1 Research Design

Corresponding to the research questions and purposes of the study mentioned in Chapter One, this study employed a case study design for at least three reasons. First, it is concerned with "a small scale, a single case" and focused on one particular instance of educational experience or practice (Stake, 1995; Freebody, 2003 in Emilia, 2005). A single case of this study referred to the students' ability and problems in writing a research proposal at one university in Banten. Second, it used multiply data collection techniques and analytic procedures to increase the validity of the study, i.e. the documentation of students' research proposals and interview (Cohen and Manion, 1994). Third, it used text analysis which is also another characteristic of case study design (Travers, 2001). Specifically, this study used text analysis to analyze the students' research proposals.

3.2 Research Site and Participants

This study was carried out at the undergraduate English study program in one university in Banten. This research site has been chosen for two reasons. First, as a member of the teaching staff with more than five years teaching experience, it is expected that the researcher would get easy access to the research site, and hence, increase the feasibility of the study (Bogdan and Biklen, 1998:54). Second, this English study program had a research proposal workshop for their seventh-semester students to submit their research proposals to be discussed with some instructors. Therefore, the research proposals analyzed would show the students' own performance since they were not written for this study.

The participants of the study were nine students and two lecturers of Research on ELT subject. The nine students were selected for two reasons. First, the students involved in this study were accessible for the researcher to get the data since they were still active as the seventh-semester students finishing their study in the research site. Second, their temporary GPA represents the low achiever (<3), mid achiever (3-3.5), and high achiever (>3.5). Meanwhile, the two lecturers of Research on ELT were selected because they were assumed to understand the students' ability and problems in writing a research proposal since the students were assigned to write a research proposal as one of the requirements of this subject.

To gain the data, the nine students' research proposals were documented and analyzed. After the process of the text analysis was completed and the

participants were asked for their willingness to be interviewed, all the participants were voluntary involved in the interview.

3.3 Data Collection Techniques

This study employed two data collection techniques, namely: the documentation of students' research proposals and interview.

3.3.1 Documentation of Students' Research Proposals

The first method of data collection was the documentation/selection of the students' research proposals. It has been carried out by choosing nine students' research proposals from fifty seven students to represent different levels of achievement – low (research proposals 1, 2, 3 with temporary GPA <3, mid (research proposals 4, 5, 6 with temporary GPA from 3 to 3.5) and high (research proposals 7, 8, 9 with temporary GPA >3.5). The research proposals were then analyzed in terms of the elements and linguistic features to answer the first research question, i.e. to identify the students' ability and problems in writing a research proposal. Furthermore, possible solutions were offered to solve the problems reflected in the research proposals to answer the third research question, i.e. to propose possible solutions to solve the students' problems based on their work.

3.3.2 Interview

The second source of data was the interview with all participants of the study. It was carried out after the process of the students' research proposal text analysis had been completed. It was used to obtain more comprehensive data on their perspective, especially on two areas related to the second and third research questions, i.e. the possible causes of the problems in writing a research proposal and the possible solutions that can be proposed to solve the students' problems based on their works.

In this case, individual semi-structured interviews with open-ended questions (Cohen & Manion, 2004:273) were preferred to enable the researcher to get all information required while at the same time permitted the participants' freedom of responses and description to illustrate the concept (Field and Morse in Emilia, 2005). The content and procedures of the interviews were organized in advance based on the data gained from the text analysis. Each student was given questions based on the problems they face; while the lecturers were given questions based on the general problems faced by the students (see the interview guide in Appendix 3).

In addition, in determining the interview language, Bahasa Indonesia as the participants' native language has been chosen to be used to make the participants easier to elaborate their answer.

3.4 Data Analysis

The data were analyzed through qualitative data analysis on the basis of the research questions. As discussed in data collection section, there were two sources of data in this study, namely: the students' research proposals and interview. The followings are the steps of data analysis for each source of data.

3.4.1 The Students' Research Proposals

As pointed out by Travers (2001), the procedure of text analysis in case study follows the procedures laid out in the related theory. For this purpose, this study used the theory of genre analysis and SFL to analyze the students' research proposals. The analysis was in terms of the elements and linguistic features the students employed in their research proposals to achieve the communicative purpose of each element in the research proposals.

There were six steps of text analysis applied in this study.

First, the research proposals were grouped into one of the three categories (high achiever, mid achiever, and low achiever) and analyzed as a whole to see its major elements (see Appendix 1 for the list of students' research proposals). *Second*, each chapter of the research proposal, i.e. introduction, literature review, and methodology, was analyzed to see its elements and linguistic features.

Third, the analysis of the elements and linguistic features were carried out to compare and contrast to those proposed by theorists mentioned in Chapter Two. It has shown the students' ability and problems to apply appropriate elements and linguistic features of a research proposal to convey its communicative purposes.

As a result, it has answered the first research question, i.e. to identify the students' ability and problems in writing a research proposal.

Fourth, each student's ability and problems were categorized in the following form (see the results of the analysis in Appendix 2):

Student # … (*1-9*)
(i)   The major elements in the research proposal
(ii) The elements and linguistic features of each chapter

	Ability			Problems		
	Introduction	Literature Review	Methodology	Introduction	Literature Review	Methodology
Elements						
Linguistic features						

Fifth, the results of the analysis of all students' research proposals were described and discussed in two major points: (i) the major elements in the research proposals, (ii) the elements and linguistic features of each chapter.

Sixth, the possible solutions to solve the students' problems reflected in the research proposals were proposed to answer the third research question, i.e. to propose possible solutions to solve the students' problems based on their work.

3.4.2 Interview

The data from interview were analyzed in four steps. *First*, the interviews were transcribed or converted in written forms. *Second*, the transcripts were given back to the respondents to check whether it has reflected what they meant to provide data for analysis (Cohen and Manion, 1994). *Third*, the transcripts were condensed into briefer statements in which the main sense of what is said is rephrased in a few words (Kvale, 1996:192). *Finally*, the data were coded and

categorized by using thematic data analysis with regard to the research questions i.e. the problems faced by the students, the possible causes of the problems, and the possible solutions that can be proposed to solve the students' problems based on their work (see the interview coding in Appendix 4).

3.5 Conclusion

This chapter has reviewed a concise account of the methodology in the present study. It includes the research design, research site and participants, data collection techniques, and data analysis. The next chapter will present data presentation and discussion based on the results of the analysis of each source of data, i.e. the students' research proposals and interview.