

## **CHAPTER III**

### **RESEARCH METHOD**

This chapter provides a comprehensive explanation about how the research was conducted. It begins with the design used to achieve the purpose of the research. Next, it describes the research site and participants, followed by research instruments, data collection procedures, and steps in data analysis. Afterwards, the concluding remarks are presented.

#### **3.1. Research Design**

This research is designed to explore how an English teacher's religious beliefs shape her understanding of English and teaching practices and how she deals with the conflicts arising from her religious beliefs in classroom practices. To achieve this, I conducted a narrative study to help understand the teacher's religious beliefs and their role in professional identity, including how she encounters conflicts in English teaching. Connely and Clandinin (1999) state that identities are formed through stories to live, emphasizing participants' narratives to make sense of their experiences and themselves. They further stated that a narrative inquiry is useful to help investigate an individual's lived experience and realities, as well as the social contexts in which they are constructed. Therefore, it implies that narrative study is helpful to collect stories related to the teacher's experiences. Such information is required to investigate people's stories as a series of events (Barkhuizein, 2016; Pinnegar & Daynes, 2007). This is supported by Carter (1993), who states that narrative inquiry is one of the most useful research techniques for exploring teaching and teacher education. This type of study is a way of understanding experience where collaboration between the researcher and the participants is conducted over time, within a series of places and in social interaction with milieus (Clandinin & Connely, 2000). In conducting the study, I, therefore, believe narrative inquiry to be a suitable design to attain the objectives

because it can help explore the participant's identity construction through her lived experiences.

In the type of narrative inquiry, having a theoretical predisposition may influence the flow and analysis of the study. I am a Muslim teacher seeking to understand how another teacher perceives and interprets her religious beliefs and how this understanding impacts her professional identity and teaching practice. Being familiar with these beliefs grants me access to an insider's understanding of the context, fostering a rapport with which I aim to comprehend and create biases. Regarding biases, in conducting this kind of study, researchers believe that all individuals have biases. Rather than denying these biases or asserting complete objectivity, I choose the path of transparency by explicitly articulating these biases and assumptions and then monitoring and bracketing these biases (Creswell & Miller, 2000). This involves the suspension of preconceived ideas to minimize my prior assumptions. Therefore, I explicitly state my assumptions (that is, that a teacher's religious beliefs can influence her identity as a teacher in multifaceted ways and may present as an asset or detriment). I consistently reminded myself about biases that I have and bracketed them throughout the process of analysis.

### **3.2. Research Site and Participants**

This study involves an English teacher in a private integrated Islamic school (*Sekolah Islam Terpadu*) in Indonesia using purposive selection. The purposive selection allows me, as the researcher, to select the participant based on the people and places that can best help me understand the central phenomenon (Creswell, 2012). This technique is selected due to some predetermined criteria set to accommodate the research objectives (Ary et al., 2010). First, the school was chosen because of its popularity in promoting students' English proficiency through some English language programs while emphasizing its commitment to instilling Islamic values in the curriculum. On its official website, the school also claims to use an integrated

educational curriculum that combines that of the national curriculum and its own tailored Islamic-based curriculum. The school uses its own English coursebook for English learning, which integrates English materials with Islamic cultural values. Their coursebooks have also been widely used by more than 30 integrated Islamic schools in Indonesia.

The teacher who participated in this study is a senior English teacher who has been teaching English at this school for more than 17 years. Working as an English teacher in the same year the school was established, the teacher is currently the Head of the English program department responsible for creating and managing language programs. She is also leading the project to write English textbooks, where she leads other English teachers in the school to design syllabi and materials for the textbooks that they annually revise. The participant's demographic information is presented below.

**Table 3.1. Teacher's Information**

Name	Gender	Age	Qualification	Teaching Period	Level of Teaching
Tiara	Female	43	Bachelor Degree	17 years	Teaching Grade 11 students in a private Islamic School

### **3.3.Data Collecting Technique**

The type of study was conducted to attain a specific description and obtain an in-depth understanding of the study. Therefore, accurate and well-sequenced data collection procedures were applied through several forms of data (Creswell, 2007). The study was initiated to reveal how the teacher's religious beliefs influence her identity. To address the research questions, I conducted semi-structured, in-depth interviews, observations, and documentation. Further details of the data collection techniques are elaborated below.

### 3.3.1. Interviews

Interviews are conducted to get more valid data related to the study's objectives in investigating the interplay between the teacher's religious beliefs and her identity construction. Semi-structured, in-depth interviews become essential in qualitative data as they involve written records of observed behaviour analyzed qualitatively (Meristo & Eisenschmidt, 2014). In obtaining data from the interviews, I gained informed consent to indicate that I was required to provide specific details of the research to the participant, which included the topic of the research, the reason for selecting the participant, and the upcoming action to be taken with the obtained data from the participant (Bell & Waters, 2014). Kumar (2010) asserted that the interview is suitable for complex situations and helpful in gaining in-depth information about a particular phenomenon. In doing the semi-structured, in-depth interviews, I used a set of questions prepared as an interview guide. Then, I also asked some follow-up questions during the interviews (Barkhuizen et al., 2013). This allowed me to follow up on ideas, probe responses, and address some additional questions for clarification to gain a detailed answer from the participant.

In conducting the interviews, I used Seidman's (2006) three-interview model, which comprises three sets of questions. The first set was exploratory in nature to seek information about the participant's biographical background, her past language learning experiences, her reasons for becoming an English teacher, and her previous and ongoing language teaching experiences. The second set of questions focused on the participant's views on religious beliefs in her participant's personal and professional lives (e.g., her personal definition of religion, the development of her religious identity, how religion is integrated into her daily lives, her views on any possible links between religion and her personal and professional identity, and how her religious beliefs shaped both her current beliefs about language teaching and learning

as well as their pedagogical practices). The third set of questions is when I asked the participant to reflect upon the meaning of her experience as a Muslim English language teacher in the specific context of the Islamic school and explored whether there were any conflicts she encountered. Even though there were three sets of questions, the interviews were conducted four times because the time in the third interview was limited, so the participant and I could only discuss the first half of the questions set. Therefore, we continued discussing the second half of the questions in the next meeting and had four-meeting interviews in total. The interviews were conducted in Bahasa Indonesia, which is the native language of the participant. Then, I recorded, transcribed, and translated the excerpts into English.

### **3.3.2. Observation**

The aim of conducting observations was to understand how the teacher taught, interacted with the students, implemented classroom practices, and how the students behaved and responded to her teaching. Mack et al. (2005) stated that observation is a powerful check against participant's statements and reports during the interviews. Therefore, the aim of conducting classroom observations was for me to experience first-hand what happened in the classroom. In other words, in-class observations were based on the data obtained from the in-depth interviews.

During the research, school only allowed me to conduct the observations twice instead of the initially planned three times. In the observation, I took a non-participant role, which means that I was in the classroom but did not participate actively. I also wrote down some field notes to describe findings related to the teacher's teaching practices and her interaction with the students, including the excerpts from the teacher-student interactions. Additionally, I analyzed how the teachers designed their lesson plans and implemented them in the classroom.

### 3.3.3. Documentation (Lesson Plans)

I also collected the data from documents by analyzing the teacher's lesson plans. The documents provided an understanding of the teachers' practices within their professional spaces. I analyzed how the teacher designed her lesson plans and implemented them in the classroom. The analysis was conducted after the classroom observation. Other than lesson plans, I also collected the textbook that the participant used and designed along with her colleagues at the school. I did an analysis of the content of the textbook to support the data from the interview with the participant.

### 3.4. Data Collection Procedure

In conducting the research, I initially sought permission from the school. Following that, I discussed the timeline with the participant. Next, I conducted two semi-structured, in-depth interviews. After that, I conducted observations in the participant's classroom two times. The third interview then took place after the observations. Next, I analyzed data from documentation, the lesson plans and the English textbook. Then, the final interview was conducted to validate the data with the participant. Lastly, I did a follow-up interview with the participant. The timeline of the research is presented in the following table.

3.2. Research Timeline

No	Procedure	Time
1	Doing a preliminary interview with the participant.	The third week of December 2022
2	Asking permission from the school.	The third week of September 2023
3	Asking permission and discussing the timeline with participant.	The fourth week of September 2023
4	Doing the first interview with the participant.	The fourth week of September 2023
5	Doing the second interview with the participant.	The third week of October 2023
6	Doing the first observation with the participant.	The fourth week of October 2023
7	Doing the second observation with the participant.	The fourth week of October 2023
8	Doing the third interview with the participant.	The fourth week of October 2023

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9	Asking and analyzing the participant's lesson plan.	The fourth week of October 2023
10	Doing follow-up interviews with the participant.	November – December 2023

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### 3.5. Data Analysis

Some steps were taken to analyze the data obtained from the student. The steps in the study include making sense of the narratives, coding for themes, reconstructing narratives for a storyline, interpreting the findings, and validating the accuracy of the findings (Creswell, 2010; Liu & Xu, 2011). Each of these steps is elaborated subsequently.

#### **-Making sense of the narratives**

First, the data from the interviews were transcribed. The transcription of the interviews is required to make meaning of the participant's stories. Then, I went through the teacher's narratives and made notes of points from the participant's significant moments with the objective of developing the initial sense of her subjective experience. The process of transcribing the interview aimed at constructing a comprehensive written text of the recorded interviews.

#### **-Coding for themes**

The next step was to read through the data in order to obtain a general sense of the narratives. Then, I did the coding to describe the teacher's identity construction in relation to her religious beliefs. Code defining is a way to provide meaning to the data and generate a method for presenting the findings (Adu, 2019). This process involved refining the themes and categories analyzed in open coding by identifying related themes. Afterwards, related topics were combined along with the data passage representing the identified codes. I coded and grouped the transcriptions into three major themes: (1) How It All Began, which unveils the participant's religious journey, passion for English, and story of becoming an English teacher at the Islamic school (2)

Islam and ELT Practices: Being A Muslim English Teacher, which presents how Tiara's narratives on how her religious beliefs shape her understanding in English and her teaching practices, and (3) Ripples in The River, which reveals the conflicts sparked from the participant's religious beliefs and how she dealt with them.

#### **-Reconstructing narratives or a storyline**

In this narrative reconstruction phase, I reconstructed the participant's stories by writing mini-stories according to the identified themes and categories that emerged during the inquiry. These themes were purposefully framed to portray the significant moments within the participant's narratives.

#### **-Interpreting the study findings**

After reporting the findings, the process of interpretation was conducted. This step includes advancing personal views, comparing the findings and the literature, and making limitations and suggestions for further research. In order to validate the accuracy of the findings, I did the member-checking process with the participant (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000) throughout the research process, from collecting the data to retelling narratives and representing the stories.

### **3.6. Concluding Remarks**

This chapter has discussed the methodology, including the research design, justification for the research site and participants, and elaboration of data collection techniques, as well as data analysis used to conduct this study. A narrative research design was employed to answer the research questions involving interviews, classroom observations, and document analysis. The participant was an English teacher in a private Islamic boarding school in West Java province, whose stories are presented in the next chapter.



