

CHAPTER III

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Chapter two has discussed and elaborated the literature review of the study concerning the nature of writing, writing process, the importance of comprehending students' writing process in teaching writing, descriptive writing and systemic functional grammar. Hence, this chapter comprises the methodology applied in the research covering the research purposes and questions, research design, site and participants, data collection methods, data analysis methods, and establishment of trustworthiness.

3.1. Research Purposes and Questions

As mentioned in Chapter one, this study aims to, firstly, identify writing process that student undergone in their second/foreign language writing, specifically their descriptive writing. Secondly, this study aims to identify the quality of students' descriptive writing in the end of their writing process. Therefore, to meet these two purposes, two research questions are proposed:

- 3.1.1 What activities do students do in the process (pre writing, writing/drafting & post writing stage) of making a descriptive text?
- 3.1.2 Do the texts (final drafts) fulfill the required schematic structure, organization, purpose and linguistic features?

3.2. Research Design

This study is qualitative in nature since it tries to obtain an in-depth data and to understand a particular phenomenon (Cohen & Manion, 1994; Travers, 2001; Holliday, 2003). Furthermore, this study is considered a qualitative study because it investigates the issues of students' writing processes in EFL context and observes and analyzes intensively on a "single unit" or "bounded system" (Nunan & Bailey, 2009) such as an individual program, event, group, activity, or ongoing

process and developing “full understanding of that case as possible” (Punch, 1998, see also Samanhudi, 2010) in a “bounded text” (Miles and Huberman, 1994). In addition, Holliday (2003) states that “ a case study design is employed to gain an in-depth understanding of the situation and meaning for those involved” (p.19). In this study, the interest is “more in the process than outcomes”, that is the process which is gone through by students in producing a descriptive text.

Regarding the previous explanation, this study is also regarded as a case study because it performs the following characteristics. Firstly, this study deals with a single or small-case that is studied in detail (Freebody, 2003; Silverman, 2005). Secondly, this study attempts to describe, interpret and evaluate some phenomena by arranging them into categories or types based on functions (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998). Lastly, this study uses multiple sources of evidence or multiple data collections (Hughes, 2003; Nunan & Bailey, 2009) which include classroom observation, questionnaires, semi-structured interview and students’ writing analysis in order to gain a deep understanding on students’ writing process in descriptive writing.

3.3. Research Setting and Participants

This study was conducted at one state university in Bandung. There are several reasons in selecting this university as the research site. Firstly, the researcher is currently studying and working in this university, consequently there are, relatively, no difficulties in accessing the university and managing the time in conducting the research. Secondly, according to QS World University Ranking (2011), this university is included among the top five universities in Indonesia, regarding to its graduate employability, teaching quality, infrastructure, internationalization, and engagement. Therefore, students, or participants of the study, in this university have been considered to have sufficient knowledge and capability in academic context, more specifically, in academic writing.

In terms of the level of education, the participants of this study were undergraduate students, majoring English Education. Furthermore, to simplify the

number of participants in this study, considering time, place, funds, energy, and effort (Nunan, 1993), the researcher used purposive sampling. Therefore, there were 14 participants selected for this study who, then, were classified and divided into four high-achiever students (English national exam score of >90), seven middle-achiever students (English national exam score of 89-70) and three low-achiever students (English national exam score of <69) who were currently studying in their first year.

3.4. Data Collection Techniques

This study applied four data collection techniques, which were classroom observation, questionnaire, semi-structured interview and analysis of students descriptive texts. Each of the technique will be further described in details.

3.4.1 Observation

The observation was conducted in one writing class consist of 14 undergraduate students who were classified and divided into four high-achiever students (English national exam score of >90), seven middle-achiever students (English national exam score of 70-89) and three low-achiever students (English national exam score of <69) who were currently studying in their first year. Broadly, the activities were undergone over a period of twelve weeks or twelve meetings. Regarding this, non-participant classroom observation was performed during the process of producing an descriptive writing. In this non-participant observation, the researcher did not participate in the activity and not directly involve in the situation and only act as an observer (Allwright, 1988; Fraenkel & Wallen, 1993).

During the observation, important events occurred in the classroom were noted down. In this manner, field notes were used to record what writing activities did the participants of the study do in "the interactional setting" (Allwright, 1988) or in each writing stages.

3.4.2 Questionnaire

An open-ended format questionnaire is generally used to gain basic information from participants of a study and it consists of several questions based on the objectives of the study. It also enables participants to elaborate their answers (Van Lier, 1989). Hence, this study uses an open-ended format questionnaire which is adapted from similar studies (i.e Ravelli & Ellis, 2004; Tompkin, 2008; Hyland 2009 and many others) in order to identify participants' knowledge regarding writing activities that are performed during the process of making a descriptive text.

These questions are mainly divided into three main stages, i.e pre-writing, writing/drafting and post writing, which were given to 14 undergraduate students majoring in English Education (see appendix). This questionnaire is used to gain preliminary data regarding activities that students perform in their writing process. The questionnaire also has a purpose in stimulating the participants to think about English and Indonesian writing in order for them to elaborate more about activities that they do in the writing process.

3.4.3 Semi-structured Interview

The semi-structured interview is aimed to gain a direct insight from the participants regarding their writing process, specifically in making descriptive writing. This type of interview consists of questions in which there are more flexibly worded and related to students' writing process and strategies (Kvale, 1996).

In this study, face-to-face or one-to-one interview is implemented to obtain in-depth information from participants (Creswell, 1994) and all the interviews are recorded and transcribed. In line with Creswell, Emilia (2005) states that interviewing a student individually is a way of acquiring very detailed information from students, in this manner, obtaining information regarding students' writing process. The guideline questions for the interview in this study

(see appendix) are largely focused toward process in writing that is gone through by students and also students' perception toward writing activities that are performed in the process.

3.4.4 Documentation and analysis of Students' Descriptive Texts

Documentation of students' descriptive texts was conducted in order to gain information of elements that were produced by students in their descriptive essays throughout their writing process. They were asked to make a descriptive essay based on interview result which was previously conducted before writing their essay. This task was assigned by their lecturer. The final drafts were analyzed using systemic functional grammar regarding its *schematic structure, organization, purpose and linguistic features*, as it has been previously discussed in chapter II of the study (see section 2.6, section 2.6.1, section 2.6.2)

3.5 Data Analysis Method

Data analysis is the process of systematically searching and arranging the interview, transcripts, field notes, and other materials that you accumulate to increase your own understanding of them and to enable you to present what you have discovered to others. Analysis involves working with data, organizing them, breaking them into manageable units, synthesizing them, searching for patterns, discovering what is important and what is learned, and deciding what you will tell others.

Data analysis in this study was conducted over the course of the study. Hence, on going data analysis and interpretation was done based on classroom observation, questionnaires, semi-structured interview and analysis of students' descriptive essays. Each step of analysis from the three sources of data is given in the following section.

3.5.1 Analysis of Observation Data

Data from the observation were analyzed in order to support the findings found in the interview and questionnaire. It was intended to identify students' activities conducted during the process of making an descriptive writing. Thus, information found during the observation were analyzed and interpreted in order to provide answers of the research questions.

3.5.2 Analysis of Questionnaires and Semi-Structured Interview

In keeping with qualitative research methods, analytic induction was used to analyze the transcribed interview data and the result of questionnaires. Analytic induction gives a more chance for a deeper identification of phenomena (Nunan & Bailey, 2009).

The analysis and interpretation of data were carried out in two stages. The first stage dealt with the analysis and interpretations of the participants' questionnaire, while the second stage dealt with the analysis of interviews. Each part consisted of coding and categorization in order to identify students' writing process. Coding and recoding were required for the categorization writing process (pre-writing, writing/drafting, post writing) applied by EFL students (Van Lier, 1989). It is hard to do categorization without preliminary coding and every coding will be done as soon as the data has been gathered. The faster coding is conducted, the easier categorization to be conducted (Bailey, 2007). Coding, however, is "efficient data-labeling and data-retrieval device. They empower and speed up analysis" (Miles and Huberman, 1994)

On the other hand, categorization is done in convergent and divergent way. First, the data gathered was classified based on categorization writing process, as previously mentioned in chapter II of the study. The classified data was then classified based on the differences. After the categorization has all been completed, the data would then be contrasted and compared in order to find the relation of activities in writing process.

3.5.3 Analysis of Students' Descriptive Essays

The students' descriptive essays were analyzed with regard to the logic or schematic structure, organization, purpose and linguistic features, as previously pointed out in Chapter Two of the study. Thus, The analysis of students' descriptive essays was conducted in two steps. Firstly, the essays were divided into three categories (high, middle and low achiever). Secondly, the essays were analyzed based on the logic or schematic structure, organization, and linguistic features of a descriptive text in regards with the conception of some experts mentioned in Chapter Two of the study (e.g Derewianka, 1990; Eggins, 1994; Gerrot and Wignell, 1998; Butt, et al, 2000; Emilia, 2010; 2014)

3.6. Validity

To ensure the validity of the study, triangulation was conducted. Triangulation refers to two concepts, namely plural and stability dimensions (Nunan & Bailey, 2009). Combination of various sources, methods, and techniques will enhance credibility and validity (Holliday, 2003).

In this study, open-ended format questionnaires, analysis of interview, documentation of students' descriptive essays and observation were used to ensure the credibility. Observation and Interview was done to identify the stages and activities used by students in their writing process and questionnaire was used to provide additional information regarding students writing process in descriptive writing in order to answer the research questions. In addition, documentation of students' descriptive essays was conducted to provide insights regarding elements of descriptive writing produced by students in their writing process.

3.7. Conclusion

This chapter has outlined the methodology of the study. It has discussed how this study was conducted. This includes the research questions, the selection of site

and participant, method of data collection and data analysis. The data presentation and discussion will now be delineated in Chapter Four.