

## **CHAPTER III**

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

This chapter covers the research methodology that was employed to gather the data from participants, including research design, research site and participants, data collection techniques, research procedures, data analysis and concluding remarks.

#### **3.1 Research Design**

The purposes of this study are to examine the EFL teachers' conceptions, practices and challenges in teaching vocabulary. Based on the aims, this study employed a qualitative method since it investigates how people perceive certain events, construct their environment, interpret the significance of the experiences (Creswell, 2012) and emphasizes the exploration of situations from the perspective of insiders (Lapan et al., 2012). It is also in line with Merriam (2009) and Taylor et al. (2016) that qualitative design deals with phenomenon and develop a comprehensive understanding of a particular topic and individuals from their own points of view, in this research context, to understand the EFL teachers' conceptions of vocabulary teaching, their practice and challenges in teaching vocabulary.

In addition, in order to comprehend a complicated event within its context and to provide a detailed and accurate description of the case, this study employed a case study design and methodology (Lapan et al., 2012; Marczyk et al., 2005). In this study, the focus is to gain an in-depth understanding of the teachers' conceptions, practices and challenges regarding vocabulary teaching. Typically, the data collected are stories, experiences, events, and activities (Hamied, 2017; Hatch, 2002). They are obtained through in-depth interviews with participants, observation, and personal writings and records of participants (Marczyk et al., 2005). Thus, this research used semi-structured interviews, document analysis and classroom observations to explore the teachers' viewpoints, experiences and gain information from teachers' activities in class.

It is also in line with Lapan et al. (2012) that a qualitative design in the form of case studies employed to describe the perspectives and behaviors of participants

through in-depths interviews and observations. This kind of study has the characteristic of investigating a phenomenon within its context using a wide range of data sources to ensure that the phenomenon is studied through a variety of realms, allowing for multiple aspects of the phenomenon to be revealed and comprehended (Baxter & Jack, 2008).

In the context of this study, the variety of data sources are interviews, document analysis, and classroom observations. In addition to fact-checking the information from teachers' statements, the researcher also observed the events and activities between teachers and students in the classroom to collect the insight to what the teacher had done in the classroom through the observations, which is coherent with Saldana's (2011) and Silverman's (2013) definition of case studies as small-cases that are studied in detail.

Moreover, this study employed purposive sampling in which the participants were selected intentionally based on the capability of providing their understanding of the research problems and the research topic (Creswell, 2012). This research design includes several steps: 1) the researcher pre-observed the school that conducted face-to-face classrooms to be the research site, 2) the researcher asked permission from the school to conduct the research, 3) the researcher gave consent forms to the teachers as the participants, 4) the researcher then conducted the interviews, 4) the researcher analyzed teachers' lesson plans, and 5) the researcher then conducted classroom observations.

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

To discover, acquire, and gain a better understanding, it is necessary to choose a sample from which the most can be learned (Merriam, 2009). Thus, this study's participants were selected using purposive sampling. It is applied so that the researcher can select participants who are considered capable of providing their understanding of the research problems and the research topic (Creswell, 2012). The study focuses on the conceptions, practices, and challenges of vocabulary teaching in secondary education, limiting the participants to English teachers at Junior High School. The reasons for selecting secondary education as the research

site are as follows: 1) according to the notion of language development (Sternberg, 1987), teenagers (ages 12–15 years) gradually grow their vocabulary from previous learning in primary school and from casual verbal interactions with adults and peers, listening to dialogues or stories, and reading, 2) young learners, particularly those aged eleven to fifteen, tend to lose focus and get quickly bored in class (Harmer, 2007) thus, the teacher must incorporate certain strategies to maintain the students' focus throughout the lesson, in this case, regarding vocabulary teaching.

This study was conducted at a private junior high school in Bandung, West Java. The institution was chosen due to some considerations. First, the school is a leading and reputable school under the supervision of a reputable educational institution that has received excellent BAN-PT accreditation. Second, since its establishment in 2003, the school has gradually modified its curriculum to align with its current needs. Third, the school boasts partially active English classrooms and engages in various English-related activities beyond the classroom.

This study involved three English teachers. They are Mr. Keith, Mrs. Lucy, and Mr. Andy (all pseudonyms). The participants are teachers whose teaching experience is above ten years as highlighted in Stergiopoulou's (2012) study that one of the factors that influence teachers' practices is teaching experiences. The teachers were interviewed, examined, and observed using interviews, document analysis, and classroom observations.

Moreover, to ensure the research's ethics, the participants' consent and willingness were obtained and embedded through the consent form provided at the beginning of data collection. Participants were informed about the research aims and methodology, and their authorizations were procured. Participants were assured that their data would remain confidential and that any information gathered from them would cause no harm or do not have any consequences.

### **3.3 Data Collection Techniques**

As previously stated, this study employed a qualitative case study in which the data were taken from several interlinked resources, including interviews,

document analysis and classroom observations in order to validate the results (triangulation).

### 3.3.1. Interviews

The researcher conducted semi-structured interviews to collect primary information and to comprehend the research problems from a broad to a particular perspective. Through interviews, researchers can explore participants' background, reported behavior, opinions and attitudes regarding various elements (McKay, 2006). In this study case, the elements are the teachers' conceptions, practices of vocabulary teaching and the challenges encountered in teaching vocabulary. Semi-structured interviews consist of closed and open-ended questions, frequently followed by why or how questions (Adams, 2015). It is preferable because it is informal, interactive, and ideal for obtaining richer, more valuable data from participants without the limitations of typical verbatim questions. This instrument is used to answer the first, second and third research questions. The interview questions were developed based on several framework: 1) teachers' conception by Johnson (1994) and Stergiopoulou (2012), 2) vocabulary knowledge by Nation (1990) and Schmitt (1995), 3) vocabulary teaching (Ellis, 1994; Nation, 1990, 2001, 2020; Schmitt, 2000; Sedita, 2005) 4) vocabulary teaching strategies by (Oxford & Crookall, 1990) and 5) challenges in teaching vocabulary by (Amiryousefi & Dastjerdi, 2010). Moreover, the interviews structure is adapted from Lu (2017), Mardali & Siyyari (2019) and Terfa (2017).

The interviews were conducted three times, one time for each participant, for approximately 2.5 hours. The participants were given various questions regarding their conceptions (perspectives and knowledge) of vocabulary teaching, their practices, and challenges in teaching vocabulary. The interviews were conducted in Indonesian to minimize any potential communication misunderstandings. It would be easier to drill deeper into participants' thoughts by using their first language. Furthermore, interviews were conducted in person and recorded using a voice recorder app in cellphone. Then, the verbal data were transcribed and analyzed.

### 3.3.2. Document Analysis

The researcher examined teachers' lesson plans and related documents to determine how they incorporate their perception and knowledge of proper vocabulary teaching practices and strategies into their teaching plans. Document analysis determined how the teachers incorporate vocabulary through various activities and tasks developed and presented in the lesson plan. This instrument was employed to answer the first and second research questions. The documents analysis form was adapted from Bouirane's (2017) observation form with some adjustments based on the theories of vocabulary teaching (Ellis, 1994; Nation, 1990, 2001, 2020; Schmitt, 2000; Sedita, 2005) and theories of vocabulary teaching strategies by Oxford and Crookall (1990). The participants were asked to hand in their lesson plans and teaching materials so that the researcher could examine whether the lesson plans reflect teachers' understanding and perceptions regarding vocabulary teaching and practices.

### 3.3.3. Classroom Observations

Classroom observations were conducted to validate the interview results and support the data acquired during the interviews and document analysis. Observation in the classroom is also defined as a means of evaluating and recording specific information regarding classroom activities (Halim et al., 2018). This study's observation focuses on teachers' actual implementation of vocabulary instruction in the classroom. The observation forms were also adapted from Bouirane's (2017) and Doing What Work (n.d.) observation forms with some adjustments. The classroom observation also aims to find any challenges in teaching vocabulary. For each participant, these classroom observations were conducted three times, or nine times in total, through face-to-face classrooms. Regarding data collection, the researcher positioned herself as an outsider or observer and is responsible for

completing the observation forms based on the framework of vocabulary teaching and practices mentioned above.

### **3.4. Research Procedures**

The procedures of this study consisted of several steps.

1. Arranging the research instruments.
2. Validating the instruments with supervisor judgment.
3. Asking for permission from the school.
4. Scheduling observations and interviews with teachers.
5. Conduct three classroom observations for each teacher.
6. Conduct semi-structured interviews with all participants.
7. Generating interview transcripts.
8. Coding and analyzing interview transcripts.
9. Obtaining documents from participants.
10. Analyzing the documents.
11. Confirm the results of the document analysis and classroom observations with findings from interview transcripts.
12. Interpreting the findings and relating them to the theories.
13. Writing the research report.

### **3.5. Data Analysis**

This research's data were deliberately collected to provide narrative descriptions of the teacher's conceptions, practices, and challenges in teaching vocabulary. During the data analysis, the collected data were examined and categorized using the vocabulary teaching frameworks. Furthermore, the data were analyzed by adapting the three phases of coding proposed by Strauss and Corbin (1998): open, axial, and selective coding. Open coding is conducted at the start of data analysis, it labels any piece of information that may be important to the study. Axial coding is the technique of connecting categories and characteristics to

strengthen the category scheme. Finally, a core category, claims, or hypotheses were developed in the selective coding phase.

First, all the data derived from the interviews, document analysis, and classroom observations were broken down and labeled into several categories based on the phenomena concerned in this study: teachers' conceptions, teachers' practices, and challenges in teaching vocabulary. For example, in classroom observation, all the "events" that happened in class were examined and coded to determine which one belonged to the challenges in teaching vocabulary. Next, the categorized data were detailed and connected to view the connection between each category and to see how each component that was labeled as teachers' conceptions influenced the data labeled as teachers' practices of vocabulary teaching. Then, the core categories that had established interrelationships were selected for interpretation and discussion.

### **3.6. Triangulation**

To build trust in reporting findings and assure the study's validity and reliability, the data were triangulated with other sources. Triangulation is the study of how various data sources regarding the same issue can complement each other to comprehend the study topic (Lapan et al., 2012). In this study, interview data was compared to document analysis and classroom observation data to see if participants' claims are also embedded in real-world actions that are represented in their lesson plans and classroom activities.

Each of the instruments has its own function, as follows: a) the interviews were used to answer the first, second, and third research questions; b) the document analysis was used to answer the first and second research questions; and c) the classroom observations were used to answer the second and third research questions.

### **3.7. Concluding Remarks**

This chapter presents the research methodology that is employed in this study. It provided necessary information regarding the research, which includes the research design that was used to guide the research process, the research site and the participants involved, which included information regarding the participants of the study and the reason why the researcher chose them, the data collection technique, which describes how to prepare instruments and collect data, data analysis and triangulation, which describes how the collected data were analyzed and examined.