

CHAPTER III

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter discusses the methodology used in collecting data for this survey study. In the first part of this chapter, details of the subjects are illustrated. Secondly, how and why participants are to be chosen will be described. Apart from the data collection procedure, process of how the questionnaires will be distributed is also included. Finally, data analysis tool is presented along with how the data obtained from the questionnaire are analyzed.

3.1 Research Design

The present study was intended to investigate the vocabulary learning strategies (VLS) frequently used by good Indonesian EFL undergraduate students, based on their existing high Grade-point average (GPA) used to categorize good language learners. Due to this fact, the researcher adopted Ex-post facto research design, which is usually used to try to understand hidden meaning of possible antecedents of events that have happened and which cannot be controlled, engineered or manipulated by the investigator (Cooper and Schindler 2001, cited in Cohen, Manion and Morrison; 2007). Ex post facto research is particularly suitable in social, educational and – to a lesser extent – psychological contexts where the independent variable or variables lie outside the researcher's control. With the use of this design, the researcher can report only what has happened or what is happening, by trying to hold factors constant by careful attention to the sampling. Therefore, ex-post facto design was considered appropriate for this study, for it did not conduct empirical experiment.

Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2007: 265-268) pointed out several advantages of this research approach as follows.

- Ex post facto research meets an important need of the researcher where the more rigorous experimental approach is not possible. In the case of the alleged relationship between

smoking and lung cancer, for instance, this cannot be tested experimentally (at least as far as human beings are concerned).

- The method yields useful information concerning the nature of phenomena – what goes with what and under what conditions. In this way, ex post facto research is a valuable exploratory tool.
- Improvements in statistical techniques and general methodology have made ex post facto designs more defensible.
- In some ways and in certain situations the method is more useful than the experimental method, especially where the setting up of the latter would introduce a note of artificiality into research proceedings.
- Ex post facto research is particularly appropriate when simple cause-and-effect relationships are being explored.
- The method can give a sense of direction and provide a fruitful source of hypotheses that can subsequently be tested by the more rigorous experimental method.

In accordance with the aims of the research which intends to find out the frequently used vocabulary learning strategies (VLS) by high achieving Indonesian undergraduate students, qualitative approach was employed in this study. According to Cresswell (1998:181-182), “qualitative method is defined as an inquiry process of understanding a social or human problem by developing a complex and holistic pictures formed with words and by reporting detailed views of informants from the natural settings.” Similarly, qualitative approach can also allow researcher to deeply understand the social phenomena through the use of various data collection methods (Silverman, 2005).

This study also has characteristics of a case study because of the limited number of participants who were involved in. A case study allows the research to be carried out in small scale and of researcher’s interest without any attempt to make generalization or to build theories (Stake, 2000 as cited in Silverman, 2005:127).

To achieve the aim of this study, questionnaire was mainly used to gather information. Questionnaire is often the preferable tool, and important information can be received in a short time. Thus, it is in line with limited time allocation and objective of the researcher and can be used in both quantitative and qualitative studies (Schreiber and Asner-Self, 2011:85). Furthermore, in second language research, the use of questionnaires is one of the most often employed tools in data collection, as one can gather a huge amount of information in less than an hour,

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and the personal investment is not costly, compared with expense on interview (Dörnyei 2003:09). Questionnaire is famous for its anonymity of respondents and valuable information if constructed well.

This design thus used, along with close items, open-ended questionnaire items in anticipation that participants could provide more detailed and free responses, without distraction of quantitative items.

3.2 Research Site

The present research was carried out in the English department at one state university in Bandung, West Jawa province. High accessibility to the research participants was the reason why the place was chosen for the study. Since the researcher has known some undergraduate program lecturers, he could gain access to site and was permitted to three classes in English education program and English literature.

3.3 Subjects

The subjects involved in this study were 55 undergraduate students in their semester 2 of academic year 2013-2014 at the English department of Indonesian university of Education (UPI). The respondents, whose duration of English learning ranges from 5 to 10 years, were taking Reading and Speaking Skills courses for English Education program and English Literature program. Out of 55 participants, there were 41 female informants. All the research subjects attained their semester 1 GPA ≥ 3 , which accords with the purpose of the research investigating the most frequently used VLS by good EFL learners. As stated earlier, the research subjects in this study enrolled in macro language skills such as reading (English literature) and listening. In this sense, it seems that there is no relevance between research aims and research participants. Nonetheless, vocabulary plays important role in acquiring these skills, if observed closely. Pikulski and Templeton (2004) drew a diagram to illustrate the connection between vocabulary and the four macro skills – receptive vocabulary really

influences listening and reading skills. It means that if language learners possess great deal of vocabulary knowledge, they will find it easy to learn or acquire other language skills. In addition, Nation (1999) argued that good language learners are medium or high strategies users: they tend to adopt a variety of learning strategies in order to facilitate their learning process and to retain their memory. Accordingly, it is worth researching the vocabulary learning strategies of these targeted respondents, as they have necessary qualifications to help the researcher achieve the goal of this study.

3.4 Research Instrument

The study adopted ex-post facto design in order to investigate the frequently used VLS of good Indonesian undergraduate students. As the name investigation suggests, the method used in this research was qualitative which aimed to describe the information obtained. In line with research method, the instrument used in this research was a 27-item questionnaire based on Schmitt's (1997) Taxonomy. It was designed specifically for the purpose of this study.

There are more or less 56 strategies from 6 categories in Schmitt's Taxonomy. Nonetheless, only 27 strategies were adopted in the questionnaire due to some limitation and appropriateness. For instance, in the Determination category, there are 3 strategies about using a dictionary that may confuse the respondents; thus, they were grouped into 1 question.

Another cut-off strategy in this category was "Analyze supra-segmental features" which was deemed unsuitable for the respondents' learning level.

3.4.1 Preparation

In preparation for designing the questionnaire for this study, the researcher studied the content of learning strategies, vocabulary learning strategies, and how to construct a questionnaire from many sources: textbooks, journals, other research studies and by consulting the Academic Advisor. The questionnaire for this study was based on Schmitt's taxonomy for vocabulary learning strategies, as

it is one of the most comprehensive lists of strategies available and it matched with the researcher's purpose of the study.

However, modifications were made in order to suit the subjects' background knowledge, competence level, and learning environment.

3.4.2 Questionnaire Construction

The questionnaire employed in this research was constructed by the researcher with some adaptations from Schmitt's (1997) questionnaire presented in his taxonomy of vocabulary learning strategies. The information from the preparation step was used in the process of designing the questionnaire. A pilot study was conducted with 10 students who resembled the actual research subjects. Items that were problematic were removed. Questionnaires in English language and in Bahasa Indonesia were constructed and revised under the guidance of the supervisors.

3.4.3 Details of Questionnaire

The vocabulary learning strategy questionnaire consisted of TWO parts as follows:

Part I: The respondents' personal information

The first part is designed to collect information concerning the students' general background information. Data in this section includes the respondents' details about their age, gender, major, and duration of studying English language the respondents have had as well as their average grade in English. The questions in this part are in the form of check list items.

Part II: The questionnaire about students' use of vocabulary learning strategies.

The 27-item questionnaires asked about the frequency of the use of vocabulary learning strategies implemented by students. The following scales are used to indicate the frequency of the usage of each strategy:

1 = never use it

2 = seldom use it

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- 3 = sometimes use it
- 4 = often use it
- 5 = always use it

3.5 Procedures of Data Collection

The first step was a review of literature about language learning strategies to overview and familiarize. The questionnaires in English language were used to collect data. They consisted of 27 items classified by six types of strategies, which were adapted from the vocabulary learning strategy classification based on Schmitt's Taxonomy (1997): Determination, Social (Discovery), Social (Consolidation), Memory, and Cognitive in order to make them suitable for the subjects of the study.

The questionnaire was pilot tested with 10 similar samples on 30th June 2014 and the result of reliability was shown as follows.

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
.797	.795	27

The questionnaires were administered to all respondents within one class session. The 27-item questionnaires were introduced by the researcher. The respondents were also told that they should answer in terms of how well the explanations of each item describe them. The completed questionnaires were collected right after the respondents had completed them.

The data collection were carried out from 06th May to 08th May, 2014.

3.6 Data Analysis

Microsoft Excel 2013 and SPSS 16 for windows were used to analyze the data obtained from part II of the questionnaires. The descriptive statistics were employed to find frequencies, percentage, and means of responses in the questionnaires of the six strategy categories: the Determination, the Social (Discovery), the Social (Consolidation), the Memory, the Cognitive and the Metacognitive.

In addition, the following tables were used as a guidance in data finding arrangement so that interpretation can be clearer and more comprehensible.

a. Mean of all Vocabulary learning strategies (VLS) Use

Categories of Strategies	Mean (\bar{X})
Determination (DET)	
Social (Discovery)	
Social (Consolidation)	
Memory	
Cognitive	
Metacognitive	

b. **Determination** Strategy Frequency and Percentage in each item

Item	Degree of Frequency										Mean
	Always		Usually		Sometimes		Seldom		Never		
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	
1. I use a bilingual dictionary to help me translate English words into Indonesian language.											
2. I use pictures illustrated in the textbook to find word meanings.											
3. I learn meaning of words by identifying its part of speech.											
13. I prefer mono-lingual dictionary to study new words.											
27. I try to understand word meanings through contexts I am reading or listening.											

(N = 55)

c. **Social** (Discovery) Strategy Frequency and Percentage in each item

Item	Degree of Frequency										Mean	
	Always		Usually		Sometimes		Seldom		Never			
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%		
4. I ask the teacher to translate the words into bahasa Indonesia.												
5. I ask the teacher to put an unknown word into a sentence to help me understand the word meaning.												
6. I ask my classmate for meaning.												
7. I know some new words when working in group.												

(N = 55)

d. **Social** (Consolidation) Strategy Frequency and Percentage in each item

Item	Degree of Frequency										Mean	
	Always		Usually		Sometimes		Seldom		Never			
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%		
8. I practice English in group work activities.												
9. I ask native speakers for help.												
10. I learn words about the culture of English speaking countries.												

(N = 55)

e. **Memory** Strategy Frequency and Percentage in each item

Item	Degree of Frequency										Mean	
	Always		Usually		Sometimes		Seldom		Never			
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%		
11. I write new words in sentences, so I can remember it.												
12. I study a spelling of new words.												
14. I use physical actions												

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when learning words.											
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(N = 55)

f. **Cognitive Strategy Frequency and Percentage in each item**

Item	Degree of Frequency										Mean
	Always		Usually		Sometimes		Seldom		Never		
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	
15. I speak words out loud when studying.											
16. I repeatedly practice new words.											
17. I write new words on a flash card so I can remember it.											
18. I learn words by listening to vocabulary CDs.											
19. I record vocabulary from English soundtrack movies in my notebook.											
20. When I try to remember a word, I write or say it repeatedly.											

(N = 55)

g. **Metacognitive** Strategy Frequency and Percentage in each item

Item	Degree of Frequency										Mean
	Always		Usually		Sometimes		Seldom		Never		
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	
21. I make vocabulary cards and take them with me wherever I go.											
22. I listen to English songs and news.											
23. I memorize word from English magazines.											
24. I review my own English vocabulary cards for reviewing before the next lesson starts.											
25. I am not worried very much about the difficult words											

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found when reading or listening. I skip them.											
26. I use on-line exercise to test my vocabulary knowledge.											

(N = 55)

3.7 Concluding Remark

This chapter dealt mainly with research methodology which is one of the important parts of the thesis. It provided necessary information regarding the design of the study, research site and subjects, how to prepare instrument and to collect data, and the analysis of the information obtained.