CHAPTER 3
RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter describes the research strategy that is used to study the realizations of thematic structures in research papers and oral presentations. It provides an account of the specific research design, research site and participants, data collection and data analysis.

3.1   Research design

As described earlier in Chapter 1, this research attempts to investigate the thematic choices and realizations of topical Theme in students' research papers and oral presentations. Relevant to this inquiry, qualitative research is adopted since it provides descriptive data concerning what people wrote and said as well as how they behaved (Anderson, 1987: 384, in Hatch, 2002: 6). Furthermore, there are several characteristics of qualitative found in this research (Hatch, 2002: 6-11); Alwasilah, 2000: 36; Best & Kahn, 1993: 185). Firstly, the natural setting of the current research is that the research was conducted in a classroom whereby the students were doing oral presentations of the research papers. Secondly, it is the researcher himself as the main data gathering instrument; the researcher directly collected the main data of the research including students' document of research papers and videotaped oral presentations. Thirdly, the data are analyzed inductively. The researcher collected the data from the research setting, and then began to consider patterns that emerge from the data.

This research is designed as case study. Case study, according to Creswell (2007, cited in Liamputtong, 2009: 76), is:

> a qualitative approach in which the investigator explores a bounded system (a case), or multiple bounded systems (cases) over time, through detailed, in-depth data collection involving multiple sources of

information (e.g., observations, interviews, audiovisual material, and documents and reports), and reports of a case description and case-based themes.

Based on the definition above, several points can be drawn that characterize this research as case study. Firstly, the "case" identified for the research involves a course as well as students attending it. Secondly, this "case" is a bounded system, that is, bounded by time (two weeks of data collection) and a place (situated at a single campus). Thirdly, the data collection involves multiple sources of information, i.e. students' documentations and audiovisual materials, to generate a complete picture of the realizations of thematic structures in students' research papers and oral presentations (see Richards, 2003; Hood, 2009).

Focusing on how the Theme-Rheme is structured in students' research papers and oral presentations, case study is a useful method for this purpose of research. It is designed as a viable strategy for researchers which anchored their inquiry in providing answers for 'how, 'why' or 'what', or in a condition that limits researchers to handle the complexity of events as a whole (Burns, 1994: 313)

3.2 Research site and participants

The research was conducted at English Department of Postgraduate School in one of state universities in Bandung. It involved a course of Teaching English for Young Learners (TEYL) of academic year 2012. This selection was due to a consideration that proficient English command was highly demanding for the students at this level in order to engage in academic culture and to develop professional confidence. In addition, one of the course-related tasks required students to write a research-based paper as a partial fulfillment of course completion. Research-based papers represented students' expertise regarding the theoretical bases and current issues related to the subject matter. As it turned out,

they were followed up by students' oral presentations with respect to the papers that the students had written.

In this research three students of postgraduate program in English were selected purposively as research participants (see Alwasilah, 2000: 56; Liamputtong, 2011: 11; Dornyei, 2007). This selection of purposive sampling is based on a consideration that the participants were considered to have characteristics and information that were relevant to the research focus under discussion (Ritchie and Lewis, 2003). The characteristics and information discussed here deal with the textual structures the students used in research papers and oral presentations. They were assumed to bear information regarding the contrastive aspects in terms of their thematic structure developed in these two types of text.

3.3   Data collection

The data of students' research papers and oral presentations were collected using two methods, i.e. documentation of students' research papers and video-taped oral presentations. Since this research were undertaken involving a course, the data collections were conducted in coordination with the lecturers. The research papers were collected as scheduled in the syllabus. To collect the data of students' oral presentations, the researcher attended each meeting when the students presented their papers, and video-taped them by means of a video-taping device. This was done after all students had submitted their research papers.

3.4   Data analysis

The data collected including students' document of research papers and videotaped oral presentations were analyzed by using Halliday's SFL particularly the grammar of Theme (Halliday, 1994; Halliday and Matthiessen, 2004; Eggins,

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2004). The analyses in this research were performed in sequences. Firstly, the data of videotaped oral presentations were transcribed. Next step was divide all texts of students' research papers and transcribed oral presentations into clauses since thematic analysis operates at the level of clause. After that, each clause in both types of texts was analyzed to determine the boundary between Theme and Rheme. The principle of deciding where Theme begins and stops is by considering that the element(s) that comes first at the beginning of the clause including the first topical element would be considered as Theme. The Theme was analyzed with respect to the types of Theme, i.e. topical, interpersonal, and textual. The topical Theme includes selections of marked or unmarked Theme; interpersonal Themes consist of selections of (unfused) Finite, Mood Adjunct, Vocative Adjunct, Polarity Adjunct, and Comment Adjunct as interpersonal Theme; and, textual Themes involve selections of Conjunctions, Continuity Adjunct and Conjunctive Adjunct. All occurrences of each type of Theme were quantified and provided in percentage (%).

Having completed the analysis of types of Theme, the analysis proceeded with the realizations of topical Theme in students' research papers and oral presentations. This included various elements potentially selected to be topical Theme, for example, nominal group, nominalization, dependent clause, prepositional phrase, etc. All occurrences of each element used to be the topical in students' research papers and oral presentations were quantified and presented in percentage (%). All findings related to types of Theme and selections of topical Theme in students' research papers and oral presentations were discussed by taking into account relevant theories and previous research.

3.5 Conclusion

This chapter has elaborated the research methodology that the current research will employ including research design, research site and participants, data collection, and data analysis. Chapter 4 will present the findings and discussion

that will provide answer to the research questions formulated in Chapter 1, i.e. types of Theme and realizations of topical Theme in students' research papers and oral presentations.