

CHAPTER III

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

To follow the guideline of writing a thesis written by Emilia (2009) and also the suggestion from two proponents of action research, Alwasilah (2011: 119) and Koshy (2005: 128), this chapter presents the report of what the researcher did in conducting the study. This includes the research design, the research site and participants, the criteria of success, the time and procedure, the data collection and the data analysis.

3.1. Research Design

Because the purpose of this study is to seek local understanding and improve the researcher own teaching practice, the Action Research design is believed to yield optimal results. This is in line with the suggestion of Nunan and Bailey (2009: 250) that action research aims at improving the researcher's own practices.

Carr and Kemmis (in Nunan and Bailey, 2009: 226-227) define Action Research as:

A form of self-reflective enquiry undertaken by participants in order to improve the rationality and justice on their own practices, their understanding of those practices and the situations in which the practices are carried out.

Some characteristics of this study, which match the principles of action research are dealing with the immediate problem, having the intention to improve teaching, establishing self-critical teacher, starts small, and taken directly *in situ*. These characteristics match the principles of action research which are proposed by its proponents such as Hult & Lennung (1980), McKernan (1991), Kemmis and McTaggart (1992), Zuber-Skerit (1996b), Winter (1996), Stenhouse (1975), Biggs (2003), and Nunan and Bailey (2009).

The more detailed rationales are as follows:

First, this study deals with the immediate problem. Currently, the need to implement the authentic assessment is regarded to be the hardest problem faced

by most teachers, including the researcher of this study. Kemmis and MC Taggart (1992: 21-22) state that

Action research is not research done on other people. Action research is research done by particular people on their own work.

The second feature of action research that matches the characteristic of this study deals with the purpose of the study. According to Kemmis and MC Taggart (1992) action research helps the researchers improve what they do. Action research deals with individual or group with a common purpose of improving practice. It has been stated in the first chapter that this study also has the purpose of improving the practice of administering the authentic assessment.

The third feature of action research that suits this study is the nature of emergence. In this study, the researcher intends to introduce some innovative ideas on how to integrate the authentic assessment in the teaching-learning process. This is in line with the role of action research proposed by Koshy (2005: xii).

This study was conducted at the time when most of teachers, including the researcher himself, were in the problematic situation. Most of the teachers did not have a clear set of steps on how to implement the authentic assessment in their daily teaching practices. The book of training material on the implementation of the 2013 curriculum (Kemendikbud, 2013) does provide the forms of the authentic assessment, but it does not provide the guidance for teachers on how to administer it.

The findings of this study can be regarded as new theories which will equip the teacher with the knowledge of how to implement the authentic assessment so that the teachers will function more intelligently and skillfully (Burns, 1994: 294). This production of practical knowledge which is useful to teacher in everyday context is the nature of action research which is outlined by Reason and Bradbury (2002: 2) and Wallace (1998: 4). This will also lead to the improvement (change)

of the current practices. Improvement or change is the key word of action research (Koshy, 2005: 9).

The fourth reason for choosing the action research as the design of this study is because this study was conducted directly *in situ* which starts small. This coincides with the suggestion of Bell (1999), and Cohen and Manion (1994: 192) who state that action research deals with concrete problems located in an immediate situation.

As a whole the action research design was chosen in this study with the purpose of finding some techniques of administering the authentic assessment so that the two research questions can be answered wholly or at least a part of it.

The most commonly known method of action research is the one proposed by Kemmis and McTaggart (2000: 595) which consists of planning, acting, observing, and reflecting (see also Lewin, 1946; 1948).

Kemmis and McTaggart (2000: 595) propose that in the action research the process of planning – acting – observing – reflecting is cyclical. Sagor (2005) uses different terms: clarifying vision and targets, articulating an appropriate theory, implementing activities and collecting data, and reflecting on the data and planning informed action.

Koshy (2005: 31) gives more detailed stages of conducting action research which goes: (1) identifying the topic and setting the context, (2) reviewing and analyzing the literature, (3) focusing on the topic, question or hypothesis, (4) planning activities, (5) gathering data, (6) analyzing data, (7) acting/implementing, (8) reflecting on outcomes, and (9) reporting.

However, Koshy (2005: 5) also gives a hint that an action researcher should adopt or adapt the models which suit the researcher's purpose. In so thinking, from many models proposed by the proponents such as that of O'Leary (2004: 141), Macintyre (2000: 1), Elliot (1991: 71), the researcher of this study chose the

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procedure suggested by Cohen et al. (2007: 306-8), the model is known as the eight-stage process of action research. This model suited the purpose of this study. The stages are discussed in the following paragraphs.

The first stage involves identification, evaluation, and formulation of the problem perceived as critical in an everyday teaching situation.

The second stage consists of preliminary discussion and negotiations among the interested parties – teachers, researchers, advisers, sponsors, possibly – which may culminate in a draft proposal. This may include a statement of the question to be answered.

According to Cohen et al. (2007: 306-8) it is very important that the objectives, purposes, and assumptions are made perfectly clear to all concerned. So during this stage, the researcher of this study held a discussion with the advisor, the head-teacher, and three colleagues (English teachers in the research site) involved in this study.

During this stage the researcher made clear to all concerned about the objectives, purposes, assumption, and most importantly the research questions. The result of this stage has been stated in chapter I (sub-section 1.2.).

The third stage involves a review of the research literature. This stage has the intention to find out what can be learned from comparable studies, their objectives, procedures and problems encountered.

The fourth stage, according to Cohen et al. (2007) involves a modification of the initial statement of the problem in the first stage. It may now emerge in the form of testable hypotheses, or a set of guiding objectives. In this stage the assumptions underlying the project are made explicit (e.g. in order to effect curriculum changes, the attitudes, values, skills and objectives of the teachers involved must be changed).

It was at this stage the objective of this study made clear, i.e. to improve the skill of the researcher in integrating the authentic assessment into his daily teaching.

The fifth stage is the selection of research procedure – sampling, administration, choice of materials, methods of teaching and learning, allocation of resources and tasks, deployment of staff and so on.

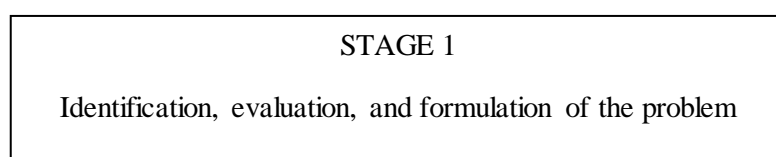
The sixth stage is deciding the evaluation procedures. This evaluation procedure will be continuously used. In this study this stage is presented under the subsection of the criteria of success (see subsection 3.3. of this chapter)

The seventh stage is the implementation of the project. According to Cohen et al. (2007) this stage can be over varying periods of time. This stage includes the conditions and methods of data collection (e.g. fortnightly meetings, the keeping of records, interim reports, final reports, the submission of self-evaluation and group evaluation reports, etc.), the monitoring of tasks and the transmission of feedback to the research team, and the classification and analysis of data.

It was during this stage the employment of the cyclical action research took place in this study.

The eighth (final) stage involves the interpretation of the data; inference to be drawn; and overall evaluation of the project. Discussion on the findings should be done in the light of previously agreed evaluative criteria. Errors, mistakes and problems are considered. The general summing up is made in which the outcomes of the project are viewed, recommendations made, and arrangements for dissemination of results decided.

The eight-step action research design employed in this study is shown in the following figure:



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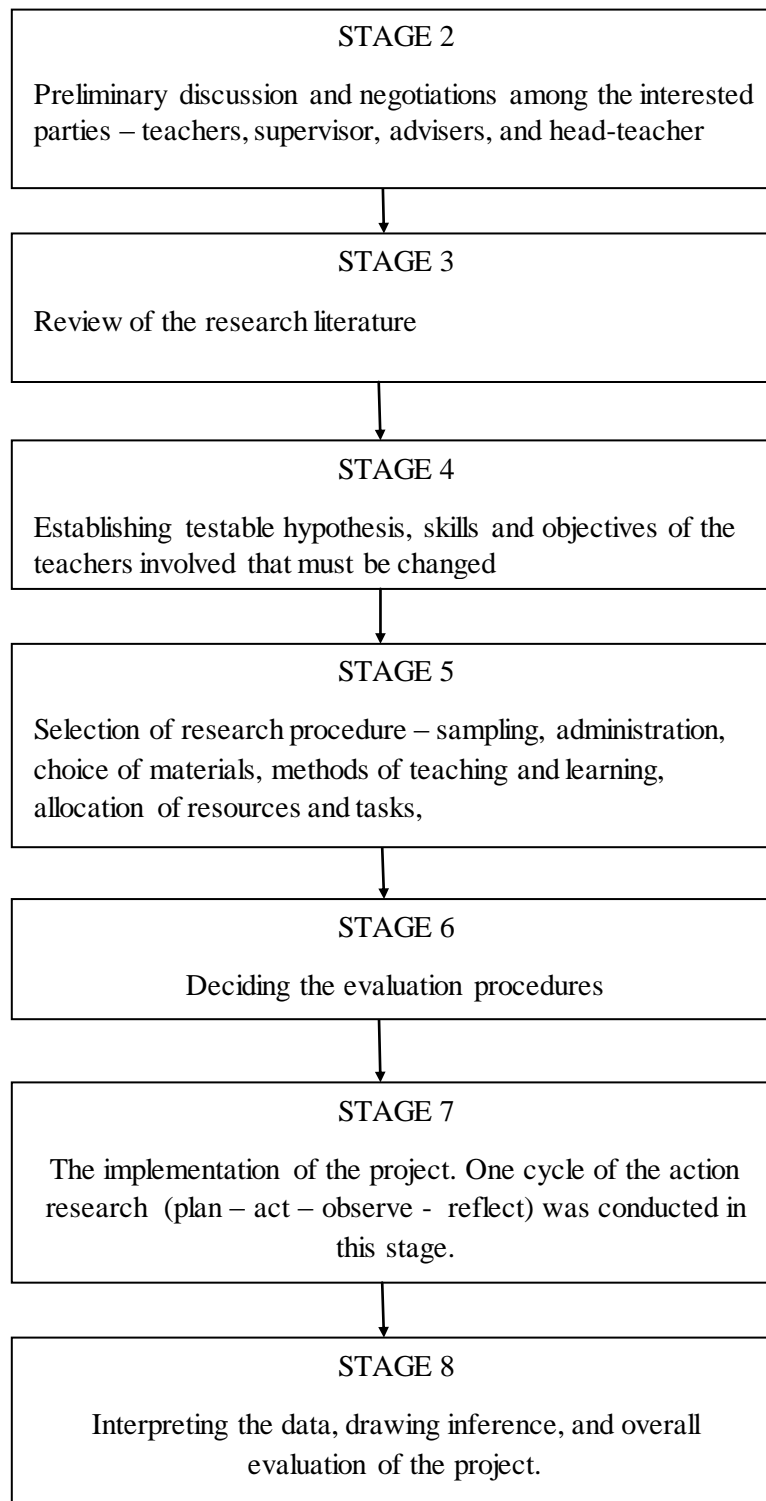


Figure 3.1. The Seven Stage Action Research of this study

3.2. Research Schedule

Based on the eight-stage model of action research above, this study was conducted with the schedule as shown in table 3.1.

Table 3.1. The Schedule of the Study

NO	STAGE	DATA COLLECTION METHODS	RESPONDENTS	TIME
1	Identification, evaluation, and formulation of the problem	Interviews and questionnaires	Some selected English teachers	July and August, 2013
2	Preliminary discussion and negotiations among the interested parties – teachers, supervisor, advisers, and head-teacher	Interviews	Headmaster in the research site	July and August, 2013
3	Review of the research literature	Review	Relevant document (2013 curriculum and authentic assessment)	July and August, 2013
4	Establishing testable hypothesis, skills and objectives of the teachers involved that must be changed	Discussion	Expert teacher	July and August, 2013
5	Selection of research procedure – sampling, administration, choice of materials, methods of teaching and learning, allocation of resources and tasks	Discussion	Expert teacher	July and August, 2013
6	Deciding the evaluation procedures	Review	Literature on educational research methods	July and August, 2013
7	The implementation of the project. One cycle of the action research was conducted at this stage.	Classroom observation and focus group interview	Students and the teacher researcher	September 23 until October 24, 2013.
8	Interpreting the data, drawing inference, and overall evaluation of the project.		The collaborators	July until November, 2013

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The implementation project (stage 7) of this study employed the main cycle of action research, i.e. planning – acting –observing – reflecting as proposed by Kemmis and McTaggart (cited in Koshy, 2005: 4). The cycle can be seen in the following figure



Figure 3.2. The cycle of Action Research (Taken from Koshy, 2005)

The implementation of the project lasted for seven time meetings starting from September 23 until October 24, 2013. The following table (Table 3.2.) is the schedule for the implementation of the project of this study:

Table 3.2. The Schedule of the Implementation Project

No	The Stage of the implementation project		Date	
1	Initial observation		23	Sept. 2013
2	Cycle one	Plan	26	
		Socializing the grading system	30	
		1 st action	3	
		Reflection	3	Oct. 2013
3	Cycle two	Plan	3	
		Action and Observation	7	
		Reflection	7	
4	Cycle two	Plan	7	
		Action and Observation	10	
		Reflection	10	
5	Socializing the midterm test		14	
6	Speaking test (midterm test 1)		17	
7	Speaking test (midterm test 2)		21	
8	Written test		24	

3.3. Research Site and Participants

3.3.1. Research site

Referring to the purpose of the study which deals with the 2013 curriculum, the research site must be a school where the new curriculum has been implemented. The school where the researcher of this study teaches was selected as the research site because it had been assigned as the pilot school project on the implementation of the 2013 curriculum.

The selection of the research site was also in line with one of the characteristic of action research which is conducted *in situ*. As stated by Cohen and Manion (1994: 192) who describe action research as

on-the-spot procedure designed to deal with a concrete problem located in an immediate situation. This means that ideally, the step-by-step process is constantly monitored over varying periods of time and by a variety of mechanisms (questionnaires, diaries, interviews and case studies). (Cohen and Manion, 1994: 192).

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This school is a junior high school in Bandung Barat Regency. Previously this school was one of the RSBI (Piloting International Standard School).

3.3.2. Research Subjects

There were two subjects of observation in this study. The first was the students who received the treatment of the project implementation and the second was the researcher himself.

The researcher of this study was given an opportunity to implement the project in a class of grade seven. The number of students in this class was forty. These forty students were the first subject of the study. They were the subject of observations which were conducted by the researcher, the expert teacher, and the critical friends during the implementation of the project.

The second subject of this study was the researcher himself. He was also the subject of observations which were done by the expert teacher and the critical friends.

All the actions of the researcher are subject to scrutiny, criticism and analysis. This is in line with the suggestion of Biggs (2003: 7) who states that the target of action learning is the teaching of individual teacher herself or himself. In the same vein Carr and Kemmis (1986: 162), Cohen and Manion (1994: 192) state that action research is a form of self-reflective inquiry. The scrutiny focuses on the action of assessment.

This is also in line with the purpose of the study and the characteristic of action research which is to improve the professionalism of the researcher himself, in this study, the researcher positioned himself as the participant observer (Flick, 1998: 137; Cooper and Schindler, 2001: 375).

3.3.3. Research Participants

In this study there were some important participants who acted as the collaborators. Two of them played the most important role without whom this study could not be conducted. They were the expert teacher and the critical friends.

The existence of the expert teacher in this study is crucial as she acted as the collaborator whose function was to give guidance and to decide whether the researcher had implemented the authentic assessment accordingly or not.

One of the English teachers in the research site voluntarily took the role as expert teacher. She has got the training program of the implementation of the 2013 curriculum in June 2013. She is the chairperson of the MGMP (teacher professional development network) in the school and the chairperson of the MGMP in Bandung Barat Regency. She has attended many workshops, seminars, and teacher training programs as well as other Continuing Professional Development (CPD) programs.

The second and the third participant in this study were two colleagues of the researcher. They served as the critical friends. The existence of the critical friends is in line with the suggestion from Burns (2009) and Koshy (2005: 40). Their comments and point of views played an important role in the verification of the conclusions drawn from the data.

3.4. The Criteria of Success

Deciding the evaluation procedures (Cohen et al., 2007: 307) is the sixth stage of this action research. In this subsection the researcher uses the term criteria of success. This stage is important because it can lead to the termination of the intervention program.

Following the statement of Emilia (2013, in one of her lectures) that action research can be terminated when the success have been achieved. Thus, it is very important here to state the criteria of success.

The success of this study is based on two criteria. The first is the change experienced by the researcher. The researcher had to gain proof that he had implemented the authentic assessment by integrating it into his day to day teaching practices. This is gained from the judgment of the expert teacher.

The second criterion of success is viewed from the change experienced by the students in terms of improvement in their learning attitudes. Students' learning attitude improvement will be shown by the level of students' involvement in the learning processes. This is gained from the verification of all the collaborators (the expert teacher and the critical friends).

3.5. Data collection methods and techniques

The employment of the eight-stage action research (Cohen et al., 2007) in this study necessitates the researcher to collect data at two different times. The first was prior to the implementation program, referred to as the preliminary stage (stage 1 to 6), and the second was during the implementation program (stage 7). The data were collected through different methods and techniques at each stage.

3.5.1. Data collection methods at the preliminary stage

At the first stage, i.e. the stage of identification, evaluation, and formation of the problem, the data were collected through interviews and questionnaires with some English teachers as the respondents. These data were needed to identify the problem faced by most English teachers related to the implementation of the authentic assessment embodied in the 2013 curriculum.

At the second stage of the study, the data were gained from the interview with the headmaster in the research site and the supervisor at the level of regency of Kabupaten Bandung Barat.

At the third stage of this study, the data were gained from some reviews on the relevant literature, the document of the 2013 English curriculum and some literatures on authentic assessment. This stage is documented in chapter two of this paper.

At the fourth and fifth stages, the data were collected from some discussion with the expert teacher concerning the hypothesis of this study.

At the sixth stage, the data were gathered from reviewing the literature on the educational research methods. The result was the decision to employ the action research design.

3.5.2. Data collection methods of the implementation project

The seventh stage is the implementation program. During this stage the researcher teamed up with an expert teacher and two critical friends (see research participant) to collect various relevant data needed to address the two research questions. The data were gathered from observation and interview with the students. The data gathered at this stage is the focus of this study.

Table 3.3. Shows that the data collection method and techniques employed in the implementation of the project (stage 7) were the observational (observation and video recording) and non observational (interviews) methods (Burns, 2009). This has the purpose of gaining knowledge from insider (or emic) perspective.

The observational method consisted of the peer observations, other observations, and video recordings. The non observational (interviews) took the students as the respondents.

Table 3.3. Research Questions and Data Collecting Techniques

Research Questions	Data collecting techniques
1. What steps can a teacher take to administer the authentic assessment?	Peer observations Video Records
2. What impacts do the steps taken have on students' competencies?	Other observations Video Records Interviews

The overall activities of the data collection can be seen in table 1.

The following paragraphs unfold how/why the techniques were employed in the implementation program (7th stage).

3.5.2.1. Peer observations

Peer observation is observation of the teacher researcher by others who act as mentor and influencer (Burns, 2009). In this study the peer observations were conducted by one expert teacher (see the research participants) and two critical friends.

The expert teacher and the two critical friends were supposed to observe both the teacher researcher and the students during the teaching learning processes of the intervention programs in which the researcher tried to implement the authentic assessment as intended by the 2013 curriculum.

The employment of the peer observation in this study is in line with the suggestion from Cohen et al. (2007: 397) that the aim of observation is to catch the dynamic nature of events, to see intentionality, and to seek trends and patterns over time.

Hopkins (2002, see also Koshy, 2005) proposes the three-phase observation cycle as shown in figure 3.3. This observation cycle consists of three phases, the planning meeting, the classroom observation, and the feedback discussion.

In this study, during the *planning meeting* the researcher and the collaborators (the expert teacher and the two critical friends) reflected on a proposed lesson which led to a mutual decision to collect observational data on the aspect of authentic assessment being implemented by the teacher researcher.

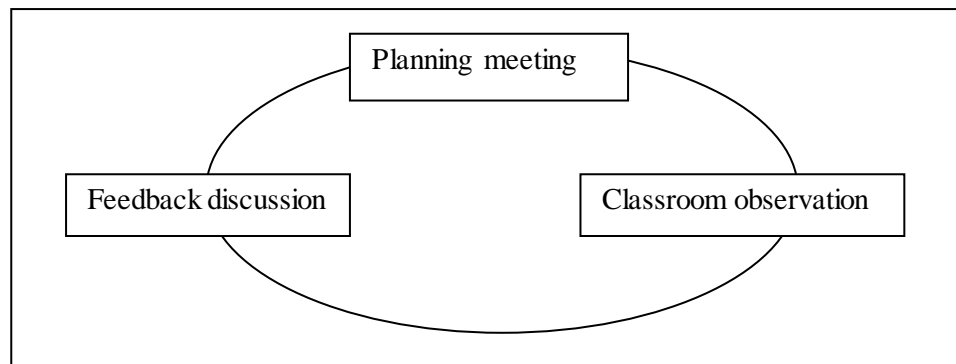


Figure 3.3. The Three-phase observation cycle. Adapted from Koshy (2005: 100)

During the *classroom observation* phase of this study, the collaborators observed the actions of the teacher researcher and collected objective data on the effect of the action taken by the teacher researcher towards the improvement of students' attitudes, knowledge, and speaking skill (appendix 6).

The results of the observations were then discussed in the phase of feedback discussion. In this study, the expert teacher, who functioned as the mentor and the influencer (Burns, 2009, in Heigham and Croker, 2009) commented on two aspects. First she would judge whether the researcher of this study had implemented the authentic assessment or not (appendix 8). And secondly, she would give advice concerning what steps to be taken by the teacher researcher to implement the authentic assessment as intended by the 2013 curriculum.

While the critical friends, were to give comments regarding the data of the improvement of the competencies of the students and give confirmation and to crosscheck the validity of the data found by the expert teacher and the teacher researcher. The data from the peer observation were needed to answer the research questions.

The results of the peer observations were kept in the form of field notes (appendix 6 and 8). And when the expert teacher declared that the researcher had implemented the authentic assessment, the intervention program was terminated.

This principle coincides with the suggestions from Koshy (2005) that:

Observation is a natural process – observing people and incidents all the time and based on the observation, judgments are made (p. 98).

The field notes of the observation of students' attitude were then used as the basis to answer the second research question. The nature of this observation was the open-ended observation in which no preconceived plans or checklist used.

3.5.2.2. Other observations

Other observation is the observation by the researcher of others in the classroom setting (learners, team teachers, pre-service practicum teachers, classroom aides, bilingual assistants, parents) (Burns, 2009).

In this study, the researcher conducted observations of the learners, especially their attitudes during the teaching learning processes. The instrument used was the field notes taken during the teaching learning processes. The nature of this observation was open-ended observation. The researcher positioned himself as the participant observer.

Based on these observations the researcher collected the data to answer the second research question.

3.5.2.3. Interviews

Interviews were conducted in this study with some students as the respondents to seek data to answer the second research question (see table 3.2.). The two critical friends acted as the interviewers. This had the aim of gaining as objective data as possible.

The interviewees were selected based on their attitudes during the teaching learning processes. The open-ended (Burns, 2009) interviews suited the purpose.

These interviews were conducted at the end of every meeting (class). The purposes of these interviews were to find out the reasons of the students' shown attitudes during the learning process that day and to gain information on how the students perceived the actions taken by the teacher researcher during the class.

3.5.2.4. Video records

In this study it is imperative to video record the processes of the intervention program. First, it can eliminate the difficulty of collecting the data while the researcher was teaching. This is in line with the statement of Burns (2009) that being the action researcher collecting data while teaching is difficult.

Secondly, the data from the video can be used to crosscheck the validity of the data gathered from the three techniques above (peer observation, other observation, and interview).

3.6. Data analysis

There were two groups of data collection in this study. First, the data from the preliminary stage and secondly the data from the project implementation.

3.6.1. Data from the preliminary stage

All the data were analyzed following the thematic ways (Sternberg, 1988, cited in Pedomani Penulisan Karya Ilmiah UPI, 2013: 32).

The data collected at the stage of the preliminary stage were only used to recognize the problem mostly faced by the teacher regarding the 2013 curriculum and the necessity to implement the authentic assessment.

3.6.2. Data from the Implementation Project

More space of analysis in this study dedicated to the analysis of the data collected during the stage of the implementation of the project, which is the seventh stage of action research design proposed by Cohen et al. (2007). This is because the two research questions presented in this study could be answered by analyzing the data from the implementation of the project.

As commonly happens in the qualitative research (Alwasilah, 2002), the inductive analytical approach, was applied in this study to analyze the data. The inductive reasoning begins with data and ends up with a theory (Nunan and Bailey, 2009: 421).

Data analyses in this study were conducted during (on-going) the process of the study. Exactly every time after the teaching, learning processes, i.e., during the feedback discussion (see the three-phase observation cycle above).

The data analysis began while they were being gathered. As the characteristics of qualitative research, the analyses were tentative and provisional throughout the study and only become comprehensible once the data were completely collected (Travers, 2002).

In analyzing the data, the model proposed by Miles and Huberman (1994; see also Koshy, 2005: 113-114) was applied. This model presents three concurrent flows of activities. They are (1) data reduction, (2) data display, and (3) conclusion drawing and verification.

Data reduction is a form of analysis that sharpens, sorts, focuses, discards, and organizes data in such a way that ‘final conclusion’ can be drawn and verified (Koshy, 2005: 114). During the data reduction the data were selected, focused, simplified, abstracted and transformed into the written up field notes and transcriptions. The researcher was continually engaged in data reduction throughout the inquiry until the conclusions were presented.

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The next step in the data analysis is the display of the data in the form of tables. The purpose of this is to make organized information into immediately available, accessible, compact form so that the analyst can see what is happening.

The last step in the data analysis is conclusion drawing and verification. From the start, the researcher tries to decide what things mean and to note regularities, patterns and explanations (appendix 4). The researcher holds these conclusions lightly, maintaining skepticism until they were more explicit and grounded. Although final conclusions appeared only when the analysis was over, the researcher also drew conclusions as the project progresses.

3.6.2.1. Data from peer observations

The data from peer observation which were conducted by the expert teacher consists of two kinds, the first are data concerning the actions of the teacher researcher (appendix 9) and the second kind of data were the data concerning the students' learning attitudes (appendix 5). Both kinds of the data were collected from the field notes made during the processes of teaching by the expert teacher who acted as the non participant observer (Burns, 2009, in Heigham and Croker, 2009).

The data about the actions taken by the teacher researcher were analyzed and discussed by the researcher and the expert teacher right after every lesson. This was done with two purposes, first to decide which action taken by the researcher during the lesson reflect the authentic assessment, and secondly to plan the step to be taken in the following lesson to realize the implementation of the authentic assessment. This data analysis is the basis of answering the first research question.

The data about students' learning attitudes were also discussed by the researcher with the expert teacher to find out the impact of the actions taken by the researcher on students' learning attitudes. This data analysis is the basis of answering the second research question.

3.6.2.2. Data from other observations

These data were in the form of researcher's field notes (appendix 3). These data were used to cross check and complete the data collected by the expert teacher, which later were confirmed by the expert teacher's field note on students' attitudes that emerged as the impact of the actions taken by the teacher researcher.

3.6.2.3. Data from interviews

The data from the open-ended interviews with the students (appendix 4,5,6,12) were analyzed and discussed with the expert teacher to arrive at the correct interpretation of students' learning attitudes.

3.6.2.4. Data from video records.

The data from the video records were analyzed and discussed with the expert teacher to confirm and triangulate the data from the three data sources previously stated (peer observation, other observation, and interview).

3.7. Summary of Chapter III

This chapter has presented the steps of the study, which are divided into two broad divisions. They are the preliminary stage and the implementation project (Cohen et al, 2007). In the preliminary stage the researcher conducted six steps, they are: Identified and formulated the problem, held discussions with some English teachers, supervisor, and head-teacher, reviewed the related documents, established a hypothesis, selected research procedures, and decided the criteria of success.

The implementation of the project utilized the Three-phase observation cycle (Koshy, 2005) which consists of the planning meeting, the classroom observation, and the feedback discussion. This step was conducted for three cycles.

During the implementation of the project three participants were involved, they were one expert teacher and two critical friends (Koshy, 2005; Burns, 2009). The

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expert teacher was to judge in what ways the steps taken by the researcher reflect the characteristics of authentic assessment. And the critical friends were to observe the effects of the steps on the students' attitudes, knowledge and skill.

The data were collected from classroom observations and interviews with selected students. The data from the classroom observations were in the form of field notes made were taken by the collaborators while the data from interviews were recorded by the critical friends and then synchronized with the observational data to elevate the validity of the data. All data were discussed during the reflection stage (Burns, 2009) or during the feedback discussion (Koshy, 2005) which aimed at finding the answer to the two research questions.