CHAPTER 3
METHODOLOGY

This chapter elaborates the way or the procedure of carrying out the study. The chapter will also give a brief elaboration about the procedure of analyzing and interpreting the data into meaningful findings. The chapter will also give a brief explanation of Functional Grammar as the tool used to analyze the data from students' text collection.

3.1 Research Design

This study is qualitative in nature as it tries to provide a systematic description or information of a situation or condition of a phenomenon as factual and accurate as possible without manipulating or interfering with the phenomenon observed. As Silverman (2005: 6) suggests, "when we are concerned with exploring people's life histories or everyday behavior, a qualitative design should be used". This is relevant to the study which is also concerned with exploring people's everyday behavior concerning the implementation of approaches to teaching writing in classroom practices and how it is portrayed in students' written texts.

Case study was chosen as this study focuses on "one particular instance of educational experience or practice" (Freebody, 2003 in Emilia, 2005: 74) and it "seeks to understand and interpret the world in terms of its actors and consequently may be described as interpretative and subjective" (Cohen et al., 2007: 181). Besides, this study also provides a unique example of real people in real situations, penetrate situations that are not always susceptible to numerical analysis, and establish cause and effect in real situations (Cohen et al., 2007: 182).

3.2 Setting

The research was undertaken at a Junior High School in Kabupaten Bekasi from October to December 2013. The school has nine classes for each grade in which six of them are taught by the participant of this study, three classes of grade eight and

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three classes of grade nine. However, it was only the three classes of grade eight being observed in this study as there was different teaching program for grade nine during the research was being conducted.

This research site was chosen for several reasons. First of all, having been a teaching member in the school for about three years, it is hoped the research site can be accessed easily so the feasibility of the study can be increased too. Besides, the familiar situation in the research site is expected to lead to a more natural conduct of research, in the context that normally occurs. Thus, this aimed at avoiding the teacher's and the students' unnatural behavior performance, despite their awareness of the study.

The second reason is related to the school's status as an ex-RSBI school in that area. As an ex-RSBI school, the research site is still considered as a favorite school in that area. Having this expectation, the teachers teaching in this school, including the English teachers, are also expected to have better knowledge and proficiency, especially those relate to current practices in teaching English including approaches to teaching writing, compared to other state schools.

3.3 Participants

The participants of this study were one of the English teachers in the research site and students from three classes of grade eight taught by the teacher. The teacher was chosen as she was the only one who voluntarily participated in the study after being given information on the nature of the study and what was expected of her. However, this becomes one of the limitations of the study as first, there is no comparison of her teaching of writing with other English teachers in the school and second, the data from students' written texts in particular do not cover all students of grade 8 in the school.

3.4 Data Collection

This study employed three data collection techniques: observation, interview, and collection of students' written texts.

3.4.1 Observation

Observation was aimed at getting to know firsthand information about social processes in a naturally occurring context (see Silverman, 2005; Cresswell, 2008: 221). Thus, the observation in this study was carried out to get direct and actual information about the teacher's use of approaches to teaching writing.

The observation in this study was a non-participant observation. This kind of observation has vast opportunity to record information as it occurs in a research site though it has limited access to a research site and situations taking place there (Cresswell, 2008: 218). Besides, "unusual aspects will be able to be noticed during observations" (Cohen et al., 2007: 234).

The observations were conducted six times and, as already mentioned earlier, there were only three classes of grade 8 being observed due to the limitation of teaching learning activities in the research site. Most of the classroom sessions were video-taped in case some supportive features gone unnoticed by the observation. One of them was failed to be video-taped due to the misused of the device. These videotaped lessons were then labeled to make it easier to find them in the future when the data are analyzed (see Appendices 1.1 and 1.2 for the samples of the transcription data from the videotaped lessons).

In the observation, some notes were taken focusing on what are said and done by both the English teacher and the students (see Appendices 1.3 and 1.4). This taking note activity was used to identify the stages of teaching writing done by the teacher and characteristics of her teaching of writing in classroom practices.

3.4.2 Interview

Another source of data is interview with the participant, in this case the teacher. An interview has been defined as "an interaction between two people, with the interviewer and the subject acting in relation to each other and reciprocally influencing each other" (Kvale, 1996: 35, see also Emilia, 2005: 80). Based on the given definition, interview in this study became an important means of helping the

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teacher to bring to consciousness her implementation of approaches to teaching writing during the observation sessions and what considerations she made in assessing the students' work. Through this activity, the accuracy of the impressions gained through observations and text analyses can be checked – verified or refuted (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2000, in Emilia, 2005: 244). Besides, this interview was conducted to gain further and in-depth information about the teacher's implementation of approaches to teaching writing which could not be attained by observation.

Only one stage of interview was conducted. It was a semi structured one and was held about three days after the whole observation sessions finished. There were ten questions proposed, as can be seen respectively in Appendix 2.1, which were categorized into two main themes, i.e. teacher's general idea about the nature of writing and the approaches to teaching writing claimed to be implemented in classroom practices. The interview aimed at finding out more about the teacher's ways in teaching writing, why she did this and that during the observation sessions and also her knowledge of approaches to teaching writing, her consideration in implementing one or two or three of them, and how she assessed the students' work.

Before the interview, the interviewee was informed about (i) what is going to be discussed; (ii) the release of pseudonyms in the research report; and (iii) the fact that the conversation will be video-taped to avoid the loss of data, and to ease the transcribing activity later. The interview was conducted in a quiet classroom, to allow the interviewee to concentrate on the questions asked and to enable the researcher to obtain clear recordings. The interview was conducted in *Bahasa Indonesia* to avoid the interviewee's difficulty in expressing ideas.

3.4.3   Collection of Students' Written Texts

The students' texts were collected one or two times during the observation sessions, depending on the teacher's approaches to teaching writing. These collections are beneficial "to evaluate students' writing skill" (Nirris & Ennis, 1989 in Emilia, 2005: 80). There were two kinds of texts written by the students in the

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three classes being observed, i.e. personal letter and recount text. All of them were collected and then classified into three categories regarding the students' skill level, namely lower, middle, and high achievers. However, in the interest of space and time, there were only 12 texts representing each kind of texts and each category of the students' skill level (see Appendix 3) analyzed by using Functional Grammar in this study which can be seen respectively in Appendices 4 and 5 and will be further discussed in section 3.5.

3.5 Data Analysis

Data analyses in this study were conducted during the observation and after the whole observation and interview finished. Ongoing data analyses and interpretations were based on data mainly from the observation notes. On the other hand, data which were analyzed after the research program were mainly students' written texts and interview data.

Data from observation were analyzed descriptively to describe the approaches to teaching writing implemented in classroom practices (see Section 4.1 for further discussion). It is in line with what Cresswell (1994) suggests that "data emerge from qualitative study are descriptive and should therefore be reported in words (primarily the participants' words)". The data transcribed from the field notes were read repeatedly. During the reading process, some notes were taken in the margins or highlight key passages. The next step was coding the data or identifying themes within the field notes that relate to the research questions, namely the stages of teaching writing done by the teacher, the classroom situation, and the assessment used by the teacher. This coding process was aimed at "fracturing the data and rearranging them into categories that facilitate the comparison of data within and between these categories" (Maxwell, 1996: 78). Then, the data were interpreted by attaching significance to the themes and patterns that had been observed. Last, the data were synthesized and summarized.

All interview data were analyzed in steps. The first one was to put the interview questions into categories (see Appendix 2.1). Then the teacher's comments were

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categorized into themes that had become the focus of the study to develop a thematic analysis (Kvale, 1996; Merriam, 1998 in Emilia, 2005: 86). After that the data were presented in a condensed body of information as can be seen respectively in Appendix 2.2. In the discussion of these data, as can be seen respectively in Section 4.2, the teacher's responses in the interview will also be related to her students' developments in writing skills.

To follow Emilia (2005: 85), the data from samples of students' written texts were analyzed by using functional grammar (see Section 4.3 for further discussion). The steps are as follow:

(i) The texts were analyzed in terms of schematic structure (text organization) and how well each element in the text performed its function.

(ii) Each element was analyzed in terms of linguistic features. Somehow, different from Emilia (2005: 85), the samples of students' written texts in this study were analyzed dealing with only two of the three meaning in functional grammar, i.e. the textual and ideational meaning. The interpersonal meaning was not used for several reasons. First, most – if not all – of the texts were telling about the students' activities. Therefore, most of the clauses were declarative or in other words the mood structures of those clauses were less varied. Second, the use of modality in the texts was less varied as well. This phenomenon indicated that the texts did not need to be further analyzed in terms of interpersonal meaning.

Functional Grammar, which focuses on the purposes and uses of language, has been developed by Halliday (1994). Functional Grammar derives from examination of spoken and written language and the contexts of their use. Functional Grammar investigates how language is used, and its effect. Functional Grammar's aims include:

• Revealing many of the choices language users have in interaction.

• Showing how meaning is made.

Functional Grammar can be used to explore language use. Besides, Functional Grammar can be used to examine linguistic elements and specific language events. In short, Functional Grammar examines a language as a meaning making system. It focuses on grammatical system as a means for people to interact with each other. In

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other words, it "sees grammar as shaped by, and as playing a significant role in shaping, in the way we get on with our lives" (Martin et al., 1997: 1).

In Functional Grammar, all languages have three major functions, namely textual, ideational, and interpersonal meta functions (see Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004; Eggins, 2004; Gerrot & Wignell, 1994; Emilia, 2005). Each function is realized in different system as follow:

(i)   The textual function is realized in the Theme system, it is what clause is about. It was discussed within the organization or schematic structure of the students' texts.

(ii) The ideational function is realized in the Transitivity system. It was discussed within how the text organized experience, the logical aspect, and the logical semantic relation to the clause which was realized in the conjunction system.

(iii) The interpersonal function is realized in the Mood system. It covers aspects of modality, including mood.

This chapter has widely discussed a detailed research procedure applied in the study, including the research design, the setting and participant, the data collection techniques, and the data analysis. A brief explanation of functional grammar as a tool for text analyses has also been provided. Therefore, the next chapter will elaborate the findings and the discussion of the data analyzed.

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