

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter explains the methodological aspects applied in this research. It includes research design, research site and participant, data collection and data analysis. Research design elaborates the method employed in this research, including its principles and characteristics. The research site and participants emphasize the place where the research takes place and the participant involved. The data collection presents the data types and data collection techniques. The data analysis elaborates the procedure for analyzing the data.

3.1. Research Design

This study employed a descriptive qualitative design embracing the characteristic of a case study approach. A case study, according to Yin, cited in Malik & Hamied (2014), is “an empirical inquiry about a contemporary phenomenon or a case set within the real -world context- especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident” (p. 259). Similarly, it is defined as “a method of studying social phenomena through the thorough analysis of an individual case” (Theordorson & Theordorson, Ibid, p. 259). A case can comprise an instance of an individual, a role, a small group, an organization, a program, and community (Malik & Hamied, 2014, p. 259; Fraenkel et al., 2011, p. 434).

In the present study, since the main purpose was to understand a case in depth, this approach was chosen, as it provides an intensive description and analysis of a single case (Fraenkel, et al., 2011; Griffiee, 2012). Also, this approach was considered relevant as the present study addressed a descriptive question about ‘what the nature of collocational errors made by Indonesian EFL learners in their writing is’ and ‘what the learning strategies applied by the learners in their collocation are’.

Moreover, an error analysis was applied to identify the collocational errors made by the students in their writing. This approach was chosen as it has been

proven to make a big contribution to the study of SLA (Saville-Troike, 2006, p. 40). It provides a broad range of possible explanations for researchers to use to account for errors (Gass & Selinker, 2008, p. 103). As for classifying the collocations produced by the students, this study used framework Benson et al. (2010). Oxford Collocation Dictionary for Students of English (2002), BBI Dictionary of English Word Combinations (Benson et al., 2010) and online Longman Collocation Dictionary and Thesaurus) were referred to in order to determine the accuracy of collocations and to provide suggestions for correction. However, it is important to note that error analysis was used as a methodology for dealing with data, rather than a theory of acquisition (Cook, in Hasbun, 2007). Therefore, this study also conducted an interview as another data collection method. A focus group interview was conducted to identify possible factors responsible for the occurrence of the learners' errors which seem to be influenced by the learning strategies the students rely on.

3.2. Research Site

3.2.1. Setting

This research was conducted at a public Senior High School in Bandung. The place was chosen because the school authorities allowed the researcher to conduct this study in their school. Besides, the researcher has been familiar with the situation and the condition of the school. The familiarity with the situation and the condition gave more feasibility to conduct the research.

3.2.2. Participants

The participants of this research were twelfth grade students of a senior high school in Bandung. 35 twelfth grade students at this school were involved. As for the interview session, six of these students with most collocations (including correct and incorrect use) in their writing were chosen. The participants' native language is Bahasa Indonesia and they have learned English as a foreign language (EFL) for at least eight years.

3.3. Data Collection

This research used two techniques to collect the data: documentation of students' essays and interview.

3.3.1. Documentation of students' essays

Documentation of students' essays was chosen as a technique to collect data for documents can be a valuable source of information in helping researchers to understand central phenomena in qualitative studies (Creswell, 2012, p. 223). Also, they provide the advantage of being in the language and words of participants, who have usually given thoughtful attention to them (Ibid). Therefore, authentic data from the students' language can be obtained in order to answer the first research question, which is to find out the nature of collocational errors the students made in their writing.

In the present study, the participants were asked to write essays in class within 80 minutes. The essays were argumentative essays written under two different topics, (see Appendix A), and were collected on two different occasions. Before completing the task, the participants were informed that the essays would never be assessed based on grammatical accuracy, therefore, the student could be more relaxed enough to naturally produce linguistic data that represent their collocation competence (Phoocharoensil, 2011). A total of 60 texts were selected from the students' essays to analyze and identify the collocational errors. Then, Oxford Collocation Dictionary for Students of English (2002), BBI Dictionary of English Word Combinations (Benson et al., 2010) and online Longman Collocation Dictionary and Thesaurus) were referred to in order to determine the accuracy of collocations and to provide suggestions for correction.

3.3.2. Interview

The second technique of data collection is interview. An interview is a purposeful interaction where a researcher tries to obtain information from the participants (Malik & Hamied, 2014, p. 206). In this study, the interview was conducted to

explore the participants' perception of difficulty in collocation as well as to identify the major source of collocational errors the students made in their writing. Moreover, a focus group interview was applied in this study. This approach was used to collect shared understanding and views from specific people (Creswell, 2012 p. 218) about the major source of collocational errors the students made in their writing. In addition, a focus group interview was advantageous for the interviewees as well as for the interviewer. For the interviewees, it gave them more comfort and courage to answer the questions from the interviewer as some of them might be hesitant or reluctant to provide the information in any type of interview (Ibid). Also, it lets them share understanding and opinion related to the subject matter, and therefore avoided time-consuming compared to the one-on-one interview (Ibid). Thus, conducting a focus group interview was useful for both interviewees and interviewer.

Besides a focus group interview, semi-structured interview was conducted in this study. This type was chosen as it has a flexible and fluid structure compared to structure interview. Moreover, Bahasa Indonesia was used to ease the process of the interview, as the students found it more comfortable with Bahasa Indonesia than English. Furthermore, the use Bahasa Indonesia also helped the students understand the questions and express their opinion better.

3.4. Data Analysis

The data analysis in this research is divided into two sections: identification of the collocational errors from the students' essays and transcription of interview data. Each section is explained below.

3.4.1. Identification of collocational errors from the students' essays

To identify the nature of collocational errors made by the students, an error analysis was employed which involves several steps. First, the sample of learners' errors collected from the students' essays was identified to find out the nature of the collocational errors. Oxford Collocation Dictionary for Students of English (2002), BBI Dictionary of English Word Combinations (Benson et al., 2010) and

online Longman Collocation Dictionary and Thesaurus) were referred to in order to determine the accuracy of collocations and to provide suggestions for correction. Moreover, for certain collocations which were not found in those dictionaries, Google and some other online dictionaries were used as references. Then the errors were described into specific linguistic elements and categorized according to the classifications of collocations proposed by Benson et al. (2010), as shown in Table 3.1. After that, the errors found were quantified based on their categories. Finally, the findings were analyzed and interpreted by explaining the collocational errors in relation to the learning strategies the students applied (data collected from interviews) in order to find out some possible factors contributing to the occurrence of the collocational errors.

Table 3.1

Framework for Classifying Types of Collocational Errors

Category	Patterns	Examples
Grammatical collocation	Noun + preposition	<i>I've always had an interest in astronomy.</i>
	Verb + preposition	<i>The attention of the news media was firmly focused on the elections.</i>
	Adjective + preposition	<i>Marie Curie is famous for her contribution to science.</i>
	Preposition + noun	<i>In my opinion, golf is a dull sport.</i>
Lexical collocation	Adjective + noun	<i>Both teams made some wild guesses, none of which were right.</i>
	Verb + noun	<i>She tried to commit suicide by slashing her wrists.</i>

(table continues)

Category	Patterns	Examples
Lexical collocation	Noun + verb	<i>Hatred flared up inside her.</i>
	Adverb + adjective	<i>This principle is clear and absolutely fundamental.</i>
	Verb + adverb	<i>All the instruments were functioning normally.</i>
	Adverb + verb	<i>The disease is potentially fatal.</i>

(Adapted from Benson et al. 2010)

3.4.2. Transcription of interview data

To best represent the dynamic nature of the living conversation during the interview, a transcription was done (Malik & Hamied, 2014, p. 207). Transcription is the process of converting audio tape recordings or field notes into text data (Ibid, p. 220). In the present study, the interview recording was transcribed to best represent the information supplied by the participants and to ease the data analysis. Pseudonyms were used to ensure the participants' confidentiality in reporting the data (Ibid, p. 207). The data were then categorized according to the interview questions. After that, the data were categorized and interpreted to find out some possible factors contributing to collocational errors. Finally, the data was presented and explained in accordance with the previous data of the students' collocational errors.

3.5. Concluding Remark

This chapter has elaborated the methodological aspects of this study, including the research design, research site, data collection, and data analysis. The next chapter will present the findings and the discussion of the study.