

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHOD

This chapter presents the methodology of the research, which covers the explanation of the research purpose and questions, research design, site and participants, data collection and data analysis techniques. Each of them is explained below.

3.1 Research Purpose and Research Questions

As previously explained, the present study is aimed, firstly, at investigating the representation of gender in university students' Narrative texts in different levels of achievement. Secondly, it is aimed at confirming the representations to the students' belief and understanding of the gender role and relationship within society. Therefore, the following research questions are formulated:

1. How do students of different levels of achievement represent gender in their Narrative texts?
2. Does the representation reflect the students' belief and understanding on gender role and relationship within society?

3.2 Research Design

The present study is a Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) study. The study is commenced with a detailed textual analysis (Paltridge, 2000) and continued with the description and interpretation of the analysis by relating it to the socio-political context in which the text occurs in order to examine its ideology as

something which is taken for granted or which is informed and chosen (Pennycook, 2001; Fairclough, 2003, 2010; Fairclough and Wodak 2010). More specifically, the study can also be called as a “Feminist CDA” study following Lazar (2005) since the present CDA study concerns with promoting equal right and opportunity for both men and women in all public spheres.

Furthermore, a semi-structured interview and a transdisciplinarity exploration of the interpretation of the text analysis serve as the attempts to increase the validity of the study through a triangulation of data sources, methods, and theoretical schemes (Speedy, 1993; Creswell, 2008) reflecting the fulfillment of “dialogical relationship with other social theories and methods” as one of the natures of CDA study (Wodak and Meyer, 2001: 121).

3.3 Site and Participants

The present study was conducted in an English Education Department of a state university in Bandung, Indonesia involving twelve participants. The detail of the site and participants are explained below.

3.3.1 Research Site

This study was conducted in an English Education Department of a state university in Bandung, West Java, Indonesia. This institution is chosen for two considerations. Firstly, the researcher has an access to the department which is hoped could increase the feasibility of the research. Secondly, as one of the biggest institutions which provides education for prospective teachers, this institution is trusted to equip its students with critical thinking capacity (Elder and Paul, 2004 in Gustine, 2007). It is hoped that the results of the present study could serve as a basis to design a program to promote university students’ CLA, particularly in the topic of gender equality.

3.3.2 Research Participants

The participants of the present study are twelve students in the third semester consisting of six male and six female students which are further categorized in the groups of High, Mid, and Low achiever students. The third semester students are chosen because of two reasons. Firstly, the university students in third semester are classified as adolescence (in around 12-19 years old according to Erikson in Mooney, 2000). Pointed out by Eckert (2003: 381) adolescence is the “life-stage at which a tremendous amount of identity work is being done” including the self-identity of what it means of being a “man” or a “woman”. Secondly, the third semester students are chosen in order to be able to categorize their learning performance as high, middle, and low achievers based on the mean of Grade Point Average (GPA) in semester 1 and 2, the writing course’s score in semester 1 and 2, and also based on the confirmation given by their writing lecturers in the two semesters.

High achiever students are students whose average GPA of semester 1 and 2 are more than 3.55, whose writing scores in semester 1 and 2 are all A’s, and are confirmed by their writing lecturers as high achievers. Meanwhile, middle achiever students have average GPA of semester 1 and 2 in between 3.55 and not less than 3.05, their writing scores are between one A and one B, or are both Bs in both semesters, but are no C, they are also confirmed by their writing lecturers as middle achievers. Lastly, low achiever students are students whose GPA are less than 3.05, get no A in their writing scores in semester 1 and 2, and are confirmed by their writing lecturers as low achievers.

In brief, there are all twelve participants consisting of six male and six female students. The male and female students are divided into three categories of high, middle, and low achiever students. Therefore, there are two students in each of the six groups of male-high achiever, female-high achiever, male-middle achiever, female-middle achiever, male-low achiever, and female-low achiever students. For validity, the identities of the participants are kept confidential. The participants are identified as MH #1 (male-high achiever student number 1), MH #2 (male-high achiever student number 2), FH #1 (female-high achiever student number 1), FH #2 (female-high achiever student number 2), MM #1 (male-middle achiever student number 1), MM #2 (male-middle achiever student number 2), FM #1 (female-middle achiever student number 1), FM #2 (female-middle achiever student number 2), ML #1 (male-low achiever student number 1), ML #2 (male-low achiever student number 2), FL #1 (female-low achiever student number 1), and FL #2 (female-low achiever student number 2). These identifications are used throughout the study including in naming the data collections of the present study; the students' Narrative texts and the interview data which are explained in the following section.

3.4 Data Collection Techniques

In order to answer the research questions of the present study, two collections of data are gathered: students' Narrative texts and data from interviews. Both of them are explained below.

3.4.1 Students' Narrative Texts

Narrative text reflects the writers' perception of the world; the way we make sense and give meaning to the world and everything in it (Chaffee, 2002).

Therefore, a critical analysis to the university students' Narrative texts is believed to give valuable information of how they comprehend gender role and relationship within the society. Critical approach to Narrative, in fact, has been proposed for example by Gimenez (2010) to examine the social processes serving as the contextual basis of the occurrence of the Narrative. Furthermore, the present study is even more crucial because it made use the Narrative texts written by university students who are in the age of adolescence. This period of time is suggested by Eckert (2003) as the time where the process of self identity development especially in understanding and internalizing the gender roles in the society take place.

In the site of the present study, Narrative text writing is taught in the first semester in the subject Writing for General Communication. In the department's curriculum, writing course is given in the first, second and third semesters under the labels: Writing for General Communication, Writing in Professional Context, and Writing for Academic Purposes, respectively. An example of a syllabus of the aforementioned Writing courses taken place in the site of present study is presented in appendix 1. Based on the syllabi, Descriptive, Recount, Narrative, Procedure, Report, and Explanatory Texts are discussed in the first semester; in the Writing for General Communication course. In the second semester; in the Writing in Professional Context course, three types of argumentative text are discussed i.e. the Exposition, Discussion, and Response to Literary Works. Lastly in Writing for Academic Purposes, Position Essay is discussed.

Furthermore, the twelve chosen and classified students are asked to write a Narrative text in about two weeks with two criteria. Firstly, the Narrative tells about life involving male and female characters. It is needed in order to make sure that the Narratives will depict the role and relationship of males and females wish to be investigated in the present study. Secondly, the Narrative is about 300-500 words long. A pilot study is carried out prior to the determination of the length of

the text. The pilot study is done by observing first semester students' Narrative texts. It is found that higher achiever students (students who get A in the course) wrote about 500 words; meanwhile, the low achiever students (students who get C or below in the course) wrote about 300 words. Therefore, the students involved in the present study are asked to write 300-500 words Narrative text also in order to limit the data of the present study. Examples of first semester students' Narrative texts used as the pilot study data are presented in appendix 2. The text is then analyzed by using the transitivity analysis of SFL. The process of transitivity analysis method is explicated in section 3.5.1.

3.4.2 Interview

A one on one interview is conducted in the present study. As a “conversation that has a structure and purpose” (Kvale, 1996), the interview is aimed at confirming the representation of gender in the Narrative texts with the students' belief and understanding of the gender role and relationship within the society. The data from the interview also serve as a triangulation effort to present a more accurate and credible data (Creswell, 2008). This type of interview is chosen to maintain the confidentiality of the students' personal data.

Furthermore, the interview is a semi-structured interview in which a list of questions is prepared but it is possible to address some other questions during the interview (Berg, 2007). To maintain the validity of the questions that the questions addressed during the interview seek to really answer the question of the study (Nunan, 1992), the questions are designed based on the theory of gender mentioned in the earlier chapter. List of questions addressed in the interview is presented in appendix 5. This type of interview is chosen because it is important to have guidance and guarantee that the interview is done similarly to each of the students but still allowing some other questions to be addressed especially related to the individual students' Narrative texts. The analysis and reliability aspect of the interview data are explained in section 3.5.2.

3.5 Data Analysis

The collections of data are subsequently analyzed. The analysis process of the students' Narrative texts is explained in section 3.5.1. Section 3.5.2 explains the analysis process of the interview data.

3.5.1 The Students' Narrative Texts

The Narrative texts produced by the twelve students involved in the present study are analyzed using the transitivity system of SFL. As explained in the previous chapter, in transitivity analysis, clauses are identified in terms of their process, participant, and circumstance elements (Halliday 1994; Gerot and Wignell, 1995; Butt et al., 2000; Bloor and Bloor, 2004; Halliday and Matthiessen, 2004; Eggins, 2004). In order to examine the representation of gender in the students' Narrative text, only "gendered-clauses" i.e. the clauses which talk about people; animate characters, (Sunderland, Cowley, Rahim, Leontzakou, & Shattuck 2001) are analyzed. Later on, the terms "gendered-process", "gendered-participant", and "gendered-circumstance" refer to the process, role of participant, and circumstance embedded to a certain gender.

There are four labels of gender used in the text analysis following the work of Damayanti (2006) i.e. male (M), female (F), both (B), and neutral (N). Processes, participants, and circumstances are followed with the label "M" (singular form) or "Ms" (plural form) if they are "owned" (portraying) the action of (a) male character(s) in the students' text. Similarly, "F" (singular form) or "Fs" (plural form) refers to the action of (a) female character(s). "B" refers to the action of "both male and female characters" which cannot be distinguished as only representing "male(s)" or "female(s)". Lastly, "N" refers to the action of neutral agent(s) which cannot be traced as being "male(s)", "female(s)", or "both".

An example of transitivity analysis in one of the students' Narrative texts, taken from sentence number 1 of FH #1's text, "(i) One perfect afternoon,

Amanda asked George [(ii) to accompany her to sit by the edge of a river near their school]”, is as follows:

1. (i)

One perfect afternoon,	Amanda	asked	George	to accompany her to sit by the edge of a river near their school
Circ. Location; Time (B)	Sayer (F)	Process: Verbal (F)	Receiver (M)	Reported

(ii)

to accompany	her	to sit	by the edge of a river near their school
Process: Material (M)	Goal (F)	Process: Material (B)	Circ. Location; Place (B)

The first clause to be analyzed is clause 1 (i) which covers all words in the sentence followed by the analysis of clause 1 (ii). In 1 (i), the main verbal group is “asked”; therefore, it is identified as a verbal process. The participants are “Amanda” and “George”. “Amanda” (a female) is the one who produces the utterance (Bloor and Bloor, 2004) projected by the verb “asked”; the Sayer. Meanwhile, “George” (a male) is the one to whom the utterance is directed (Eggins, 2004); the Receiver. Therefore, there is an “(F)” label following the identification of “Amanda” as Sayer and an (M) label following the identification of “George” as Receiver. Label “F” is also given to the process because the verbal action is “owned” (reflecting) the action of “Amanda”, the female Sayer. The indirect speech projected by the verbal process is identified as Reported (Bloor and Bloor, 2004) i.e. “to accompany her to sit by the edge of a river near their school”. Lastly, the clause is initially enhanced by an adverbial group representing the time setting of the action, “one perfect afternoon”; a circumstance of Location of Time labeled “B” because it is both shared by both the male and female characters.

In 1 (ii), the verbal elements are “to accompany” and “to sit”. Both are material processes because they represent “doing-type actions” (Bloor and Bloor, 2004) of an entity to another entity (Halliday and Matthiessen, 2004), that can be

probed by the questions, “what did x do (to y)?” or “what happened to y?” (Halliday, 1994; Eggins, 2004). The first verbal element, “to accompany” is labeled “M” because it implies “George” (the x entity), the male character as the Actor; performer of the action (Bloor and Bloor, 2004) to “her”; the Goal “at whom the process is directed, to whom the action is extended” of Eggins (2004: 216). Meanwhile the second verbal element, “to sit”, is labeled (B) because it is done by both male and female characters depicted in the clause; “George” and “Amanda”. At the end of the clause, an adverbial group representing the place setting of the action is attached; “by the edge of a river near their school” which is labeled “B” because it is shared by both the male and female characters.

An example of the students’ Narrative text and its transitivity analysis are presented in appendix 3. To maintain a high reliability of the analysis, a peer examination is conducted (Nunan, 1992). Six colleagues are asked to recheck the transitivity analysis of the students’ Narrative texts, each checked two students’ texts. One of the colleagues is a coordinator of Association of Systemic Functional Linguistics Indonesia (ASFLI). As one of the proofs of peer examination, a declaration of statement is kindly signed by him presented in appendix 4. The identification of the gendered-processes, gendered-participants, and gendered-circumstances are subsequently computed.

Three points of elaboration are used in the computation of the gendered-processes, gendered-participants, and gendered–circumstances. These approaches give outline to the interpretation of the computational data presented in chapter 4 of the present study. The first approach is to generally compute them from all twelve students’ Narrative texts. Secondly, the computation is conducted based on the students’ sex: male students’ and female students’ Narrative texts. Lastly, it is based on the students’ sex and levels of achievement: male and female-high achiever students’ Narrative texts, male and female-middle achiever students’ Narrative texts, and male and female-low achiever-students’ Narrative texts. They

are all utilized to provide comprehensive information of the representation of gender in the university students' Narrative texts which is confirmed by the analysis of interview data explained below.

3.5.2 Interview

The data from the interview are recorded to maintain the reliability of the data. Furthermore, to maintain the validity of the data putting it to “continual questioning and reevaluation” (Nunan, 1992: 62), the recording is transcribed and condensed. In the interview, the students' identity is kept confidential. Therefore, the transcription of the interview is in correspondence to the students' text. For example, transitivity analysis of FH #1 and transcription of FH #1 are both referring to the same student i.e. the female-high achiever student number 1. An example of interview transcript is presented in appendix 6.

In addition, ten central themes are derived from the condensation process of the interview data reflecting the students' belief and understanding of gender role and relationship within the society. Furthermore, the subsequent chapter present the findings derived in the present study.