

CHAPTER III

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter focuses on the methodological aspects of this study, covering four main aspects: research design, site and participants, data collection, and data analysis. Research design elaborates the method employed in this study. Site and participants explains about the site where the research takes place and the participants involved in this study. The data collection section presents the data types and the data collection techniques. The data analysis elaborates the procedure of analyzing the data. Also, limitations of the study are inserted in this chapter as this research may not fulfill every expectation of the readers’.

3.1 Research Design

This study employs a descriptive-qualitative design, embracing the characteristics of a case study approach. This approach is used for it provides an intensive, holistic description and analysis of single entity (the bounded system, the case) (Merriam, 1988 in Duff, 2008). A descriptive-qualitative design is considered appropriate since the study was carried out in a natural setting (see Frankel & Wallen, 1990; McMillan, 1992; Adanza, 1995; Silverman, 2005; Alwasilah, 2008) and since the primary purpose of this study is to analyze, describe, and interpret data to recognize how the schematic structure and textual organization of university students’ exposition texts in as small scale/case (see Creswell, 2003; 2009; 2012; Sandelowski, 2000). The Theme and thematic progression analysis is chosen because it is one of many “linguistics approach that have been well developed in the area of education” (Freebody, 2003 as cited in Emilia, 2005: 75).

3.2 Site and Participants

As aforementioned in the background of the study, this study is part of a bigger study conducted by Emilia, et al. (2014) in which the data of that study are taken to be analyzed in this study in terms of the Theme and thematic progression.

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Emilia, et al. (2014) conducted their study in one of the state universities in Bandung. The data of that study are taken to be analyzed in this study for at least two reasons. Firstly, the situations and contexts are familiar to the researcher is of the students in the university in which this is expected to give more feasibility to the researcher to do the research. Secondly, the participants in this study are expected to be English teachers after finishing their tertiary level study in this department. Thus, they should have alertness in their own writing before teaching their students in the future.

The participants of the study are a class of students taking writing course in the fourth semester. They were chosen purposively in order to develop an in-depth understanding related to the topic. The students' texts are categorized into three representing all levels of achievements: low achiever texts, middle achiever texts, and high achiever texts. The classifications were derived from the scores they got for their analytical exposition texts given by their lecturer.

3.3 Data Collection

A total of nine texts were chosen specifically to be analyzed using Theme and Thematic progression analysis of SFL to find out their textual organization and the most occurrence Theme and thematic pattern of those texts. The texts are from three levels of achievement: low, middle, and high achiever. All those texts are students' final drafts of analytical exposition texts, taken from the study by Emilia, et al. (2014).

3.4 Data Analysis

The nine chosen students' analytical exposition texts were then read and later segmented into clauses and identified in terms of Theme selections, as the basis of identifying thematic progression pattern. The data analysis in this consists of five steps: reading the text, identifying the Theme choice, identifying the thematic progression patterns, deciding the thematic progression trends, and revealing the

implications of Theme and thematic progression on the nature of analytical exposition texts written by the students.

3.4.1 Reading the texts

Before analyzing the texts, the very first thing to do was to read the text critically. This step aims at examining features running throughout the texts, and also examining what the texts do to convey the meaning: how patterns of content and language shape the portrayal of the topic and how relationships between those patterns convey underlying meaning.

3.4.2 Identifying the Theme Choice

This step aims at investigating how the students organized the ideas textually in their texts. Each of the students' analytical exposition texts was broken down into clauses which are actually "slightly larger than the clause, but smaller than the sentence" consisting of "an independent clause together with all hypotactically related clauses and words that are dependent on that independent clause" (see Fries, 1995b: 49). The advantage of analyzing the clauses this way is that "it allows analysts to take into account whether a dependent adverbial clause has been placed in initial position in the Theme or later in the Rheme (Herriman, 2011: 3). This would be missed if the analysis was carried out merely in the level of single clause. Then the Theme choices was identified based on the works of Halliday (1994), Halliday & Matthiessen (2004), and Eggins (2004) in terms of textual, interpersonal, and topical Theme. Topical Theme will further be analyzed whether it is marked or unmarked. This step is undertaken as an effort to answer the first research question dealing with the Themes and thematic progressions realized in students' analytical exposition texts.

3.4.3 Identifying the Thematic Progression Pattern

The identification of thematic progression pattern aims at revealing how the students maintain the logical relation of the texts (see Knapp & Watkins, 2005; Schleppegrell, 2004; 2006). The analysis was based on the works of Fries (1995a; 1995b), Eggins (1994; 2004), and Bloor & Bloor (2004) in terms of the three thematic progression patterns: the Theme Reiteration pattern, the Zig-Zag pattern, and the Multiple Theme pattern. The undertaking of this step is still as an effort to answer the first research question regarding the Themes and thematic progression patterns realized in students' analytical exposition texts.

3.4.4 Deciding the Theme and Thematic Progression Trends

In this step, all the Theme and thematic progressions that occur in the analyzed texts were summed up to find out and to generalize the Theme and thematic progression trends that mostly occur in students' analytical exposition texts. The interpretation of the result of this step is necessary to see whether the Theme and thematic progression trends suits the Theme and thematic progression generally used in common analytical exposition texts. This result of this step is to provide further explanation on the first research question regarding the Themes and thematic progression patterns in students' analytical exposition texts.

3.4.5 Revealing the Implications of the Theme and Thematic Progression to the Nature of Analytical Exposition Texts

In this step, the researcher tries to find out the implications of the Theme and thematic progression patterns in supporting the nature of analytical exposition texts written by the students. The researcher tries to identify the contribution that each of Theme choices and thematic progression patterns gives in order to make a good analytical exposition text. This step is as a search for the answer of the second research question about to what extent the realization of Theme and thematic progression support the nature of analytical exposition texts.

3.5 Limitations of the Study

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This study has its own limitations concerning some aspects. Firstly, the analysis of the texts in this study takes only the perspective of Theme and thematic progression pattern. In fact, the criteria of a good text is not merely determined by the textual metafunction, but also the experiential metafunction (Transitivity analysis) and also the interpersonal metafunction (Mood and Modality analysis), which are not discussed in detailed in this study. Secondly, this is a case study which cannot be generalizable. If other researchers are to conduct the same study with different participants' background, or different level of education of the participants, the results may be different as well. Finally, this study is very subjective as it relies on the writer's own limited capacity.

3.6 Concluding Remark

This chapter presents the methodological aspects which have been applied in this study covering the research design, site and participants, data collection, data analysis, and limitations of the study.