CHAPTER III

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The previous chapter has elaborated the theories relevant to this study: Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) including Basic Principles of SFL, Metafunction, Theme System including Boundary of Theme, Theme in Different Clause Types and Longer Unit Theme, Thematic Progression and Problems Resulting from the Misuse of Theme and Rheme in Writing. This chapter focuses on the methodological aspects of this study. It covers four main aspects: Research design, elaborates the method employed in this study includes its principles and characteristics. The research site and participants emphasize on the place where the study takes place and the participants involved. The data collection section presents the data types and data collections technique. The data analysis elaborates the procedure of analyzing the data.

3.1. Research Design

In an attempt to answer the research question, this study employed a descriptive-qualitative method. This method had been taken into account since it provided the holistic description of complex phenomena (Fraenkel, et al, 2012). Since this study is intended to analyze, describe, categorize and interpret the data to find the Theme and thematic progressions of the text and the problem encountered in students' academic writing, descriptive-qualitative method is considered as the ideal method. According to Fraenkel, et al (2012) qualitative research is research study that investigates the quality of relationship, activities, situations, or materials.

Furthermore, since this study used text analysis, so that it can be considered as case study approach, which is another method of qualitative case study (Travers, 2001). A case study is an in-depth exploration of a bounded system (Creswell, 2012). The text analyzed in this study was commentary writing written by English Education study program students at English Education Department of state university located in north Bandung.

3.2. Research Site

3.2.1. Settings

The study was conducted at English Education study program of a state university located in north Bandung. The institution was chosen for two reasons. Firstly, the situation and context of the study were familiar to the researcher since the researcher was one of students in that department. However, this familiarity gives the researcher easy access to conduct the study. Secondly, this study is about thematic system. It means that the participants are required to have had learned about thematic system which is one of the topics in SFL and the subject is taught in English Education Department.

3.2.2. Participants

The participants of this study were 24 students of English Education Department who had learned Systemic Functional Grammar. The participants were chosen because they had learned about thematic progression. Moreover, it is hoped that the students could develop in-depth understanding related to the topic, and also could apply what they have learned in their writing.

3.3. Data Collection

Referring to Creswell (2012), a case study uses multiple techniques to collect the data. However, the statement supports what Fraenkel et al (2012)

mention that qualitative data must be detailed, thick description and inquiry in depth. So that the data collection techniques used in this study were collecting students' commentary writing and interview.

3.3.1. Collecting Students' Writing

The first data collection was collecting students' writing. Twenty four texts of students' commentary writing were collected to be analyzed using Theme and Theme progression analysis of SFL to find out its textual organization and the problems resulting from the misuse of Theme and Rheme encountered in students' writing.

3.3.2. Interview

The second data collection was interview. This technique was chosen for two reasons. The first reason is to find out students' awareness in applying Theme and Rheme and thematic system while writing the commentary writing. The second, interview was conducted to know whether or not the students have difficulties in the process of writing. Type of interview used for this study was one-on-one interview. According to Creswell (2012) in one-on-one interview, investigators conduct an interview with an individual in the sample and record the responses. The same source also noted this technique is useful for asking sensitive questions and enabling interviewees to ask questions or provide comments that go beyond the initial questions. This technique was chosen because it was considered appropriate since the interviewer could gain the necessary information related to the study.

As what had been mentioned before, the questions asked in the interview were related to students' awareness of applying thematic system while writing the

commentary writing. Besides that, the researcher also asked the problems that the students' found in the process of writing.

3.4. Data Analysis

The data analysis in this study will be divided into four steps: identification of Theme choice, identification of Thematic progression, identification of the problems and transcribing interview data.

3.4.1. Identification of Theme Choice

The commentary writing texts collected from the students were broken down into numbered clauses. Besides that, the texts were also classified according to the stages of commentary writing: introduction, body/content and conclusion. After that, the researcher identified the Theme choice based on Halliday (1994), Halliday and Matthiessen (2004) and Eggins (2004) in terms of textual, interpersonal and topical theme. Furthermore, in terms of topical Theme, the researcher analyzed whether it was marked and unmarked. The marked Theme subcategorized into three types: circumstantial adjunct, subordinating clause and attributive clause. While unmarked Theme are grammatical sentence subjects in declarative clauses, and can be realized as simple and complex nominal group.

3.4.2. Identification of Theme Progression Pattern

After identifying the clauses in terms of thematic choice, the researcher identified the thematic progression pattern of students' text. The identification of thematic progression is aimed at finding out how the students develop the ideas (Fries, 1995; Eggins 2004; as cited in Emilia, 2014).

Moreover, the same source mentioned that thematic progression can be classified into three patterns: the reiteration pattern, the zig-zag pattern and the multiple Theme pattern. Danes (1974; as cited in Rakhman, 2012) categorized

thematic progression into four patterns: *Constant Thematic Progression* (CTP), *Simple Linear thematic Progression* (SLP), *Derived Theme Progression* (DTP) and *Split Rheme Progression* (SRP). However, the three first pattern concept of thematic progression proposed by Danes (1974) is the same as what Fries (1995) and Eggins (2004) mentioned, those are reiteration pattern or CTP, zig-zag pattern or SLP and multiple Theme pattern or DTP. In analyzing the thematic progression, the researcher paid attention to the occurrence of each pattern in the text and finally calculated which pattern mostly occurs in the text.

3.4.3. Identification of the Problems

While the researcher identified the thematic progression in students' writing, the researcher also identified the problems occurred there. According to Arunsirot (2013), the problems in students' writing is caused by the failure to control the flow of information from Theme to Rheme causing difficulties for the readers to follow the progression of ideas or arguments in the text. So that it can be concluded that the problems are encountered in students' writing when the text no longer cohesive and coherent and also when the readers are having difficulties in understanding the progression of the ideas in the text.

3.4.4. Transcribing and Condensing Interview Data

The interview recording were transcribed, categorized and interpreted to find out students' awareness of using Theme choice and thematic progression. Besides that, the researcher was also curious on whether the students having difficulties in applying Theme choice and theme progression on their text. Finally, the researcher identified whether the difficulties affect the quality of their writing or not.

3.5. Concluding Remark

This chapter has presented the methodological aspects applied in this study covering the research design, research site and participants, data collection and data analysis.