

CHAPTER III

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Introduction

This chapter presents the methodology of the study to answer the two questions previously stated in chapter one. It covers research purposes, research questions, research design, sites, participants, access, data collection strategies, research procedures, and data analysis.

In conducting the study, research methodology is very essential as a guideline to get the answer to the problem proposed in the study. According to Nunan (1993: 3) research is a methodical investigation that consists of three elements, namely a question, a problem or a hypothesis, and analysis or interpretation of data. In addition, according to Fraenkel and Wallen (1990: 481) research is the formal and systematic application of scholarship, disciplined inquiry, and most often the scientific method to the study of problems. That makes the methodology of the study becomes one of the important parts in conducting a research.

3.1 Research Purposes and Research Questions

The purposes of the research are divided into two parts. Firstly, this research is aimed to explore the way students engage with the text using literature circles. Secondly, it is to find out the obstacles from teacher and

students' perspective in reading using literature circles. Therefore, two research questions are formulated to get the research purposes.

1. How do the students engage with the text using literature circles?
2. What are the obstacles in reading using literature circles?

3.2 Research Design

Qualitative study was chosen to guide the methodology of this study and case study was selected as the research design since this study was aimed to qualitatively investigate and analyze groups of students in one class in which they read using literature circles. This study explored the implementation of literature circles as conducted by the teacher, students' reading engagement in literature circles, and obstacles as perceived by the students in reading using literature circles. Therefore qualitative research is an ideal guiding framework as it is interested in meaning – how people make sense of their lives, experiences, and their structures of the world (Creswell, 1994: 145).

Case study provides a systematic way of looking at events, collecting data, analyzing information, and reporting the results and the result may gain a sharpened understanding of why the instance happened (Flyvbjerg, 2006). Case study is relevant for this study since this study looked the events when the students were reading using literature circles. This study is also relevant with the case study principal because it collects the data using different instruments to sharpen the researcher's understanding towards students' reading engagement in literature circles.

Merriam (1988: 16) states that a case study is an intensive, holistic description and analysis of a single instance, phenomenon, or social unit. It is in line with this study, since this study focuses on one group of student in one class who did the literature circles activity. The main phenomenon which observed in this study was students' reading engagement. The students were a social unit because the researcher observed their social interaction with other members in the group during literature circles implementation.

Silverman (2005) mentioned the characteristics of a case study. First, "each case has boundaries that must be identified at an early stage of the research". At the first chapter of this study, researcher has clearly defined the boundaries of this research. The boundaries can also be seen from the three research questions that are previously mentioned. Second, "each case will be a case of something in which the researcher is interested". At the first chapter of this study, researcher has explained the gap between the fact that teenagers tend to have less interest in reading and the importance of reading for students' academic and personal development. That led the researcher's interest in conducting this study to investigate those issues. The last characteristic of a case study is "preserve the wholeness and integrity of the case". In order to preserve the wholeness and integrity of the case, research problems must be established geared to specific features of the case.

Based on the case study characteristics, this study learnt and analyzed group of students in literature circles activity. They shared same text and discussed same paragraph in the same meeting but they presented the task from different roles. Investigating groups of students who will be doing activity is best employed by case study as it focuses on a program, event, or activity involving individuals (Creswell, 2008: 476).

The process of literature circles which were done by the students adapted the key of literature circles proposed by Daniels (2002), Dawson and

FitzGerald (1999), Morris and Perlenfein (2003), and Moen (2004). However, the literature circles had some modification based on the students and classroom's condition. It also based on the curriculum used by the school. Daniels (2002) stated that to apply literature circles in high school is challenging since there is few secondary curricula which support students' reading activities. But it does not mean that literature circles are impossible to apply in high school curriculum.

“There are two ways the teachers have to do: (1) Fight for class time for independent reading, so they can do true literature circles, and (2) adapt key literature circles procedures to the books that suit the curriculum, so that students can enjoy peer led discussions even when the literature is preselected.” (Daniels, 2002, p.159)

In order to suit the curriculum, the literature circles had been modified by the researcher. Instead of using book, students used text which was shorter and easier for the eighth grade students. However, it was easier for the teacher to provide text for the students rather than books. The texts used were narrative texts as in that semester students had to master narrative text. In the literature circles proposed by Daniels (2002), students have to lead their own discussion in the group. In this study, teacher helped students to lead the discussion to avoid confusion to the students. The modification was done in order to ease the process of literature circles.

3.3 Sites, Participants, and Access

Participants of this study were students from one Junior High School in Bandung. According to Creswell (2008: 457) qualitative research collects data from a small number of individuals or sites, therefore this study only used one

class and focused only two groups in that class. The reason for choosing two focus groups was to have deeper understanding toward the participants. Both focus groups consisted of six students who had same text preference. Researcher needed information from the English teacher from the school in grouping the students. The students who were chosen to be the member of the focus groups were those who could actively and cooperatively working in group.

The participants were eighth grader students. They were twelve and thirteen years old. The reason for choosing students in that age was to meet the objective of this study, which was to investigate the reading engagement of teenagers. Moreover, those students learnt different kinds of text in their English class and mostly their activities in class were based on the text. Accordingly, the researcher decided to choose them as the participant.

There are some considerations for choosing this school as a host institution of this study. First, grade eight students in that school are familiar with English text. They have learnt several genres, such as narrative and recount text. They have ability to read the text well and have good ability to understand the instruction. Second, the English teacher who became a non-participant observer in this study welcomed the researcher to conduct this study since this study relates to the learning activities which have been done so far in that class. Third, the researcher has been familiar with the situation and condition in the school. Familiarity with the site and participant is important because the researcher played the role as the teacher-researcher. It means the researcher conducted the teaching using literature circles since the researcher has experience in joining literature circles in another school. Closeness with the site and participant is important to make the process easier whether in conducting the literature circles in the class or making connection with the teachers and students at the school.

The reason of choosing the site and participants above are categorized as purposeful sampling method. Purposeful sampling is a strategy in which particular settings, people, or events are selected deliberately in order to provide important information that cannot be gotten from other choices (Creswell, 2008:214).

3.4 Research Procedures

The following procedures of the research were described as follows:

1. Finding out some theories, concepts and previous research related to literature circles and students reading engagement

The theory of literature circles was used in order to guide the teaching program of literature circles implementation. The implementation of literature circles adapted the concept of literature circles from various experts. The main literature circles theory was from Dawson and FitzGerald (1999), Daniels (2002), Morris and Perlenfein (2003), and Moen (2004). However, the researcher made some modification in terms of literature circles implementation based on the students' needs and skills

In addition to the literature circles theory, the researcher also used the theory of reading engagement to assess students' reading engagement in literature circles from Guthrie and Wigfield (2000). They proposed five reading engagement perspectives which were used by the researcher in order to analyze the way students engaged in their reading using

literature circles. The engagement perspectives include motivation, strategy use, conceptual knowledge, social interactions, and reading outcomes.

2. Selecting participant.

This research chose one class in a junior high school in Bandung. From students in that class, the researcher chose two groups as the focus groups students. The focus groups were formed to get deeper data concerning students' reading engagement in the literature circles. This is in line with Creswell (2008: 457) that qualitative research enables the researcher to collect the data from a small number of participants.

There were two focus groups of students in the class in which the researcher collected the data regarding their reading engagement in literature circles. They were grouped based on their text selection as Daniels (2002: 20) suggests.

3. Preparing the text

The researcher prepared different texts to give to the students as they chose one of them to read during the literature circle. There were two rounds of literature circles. In each round, teacher provided three different texts for students to choose. Therefore, for this study, the researcher provided six texts. The texts were downloaded from www.storystar.com. After downloading the text, the researcher printed and copied them as many as the students' number. The copies were used for the students in selecting the text they want to read during the literature circles implementation as Daniels (2002) suggests.

4. Doing a pre-observation

Pre observation was conducted in order to analyze the students' behavior, learning attitude, and learning style preferences. This is in line with Creswell (2008) that pre-observation or early field visit was helpful for the researcher to decide the best method in collecting the data for answering the research questions. The pre-observation was only done one time. In the pre-observation, the researcher did not only observe the students but also familiarized with the classroom condition and the English teacher from the school.

5. Meeting and having discussion with English teacher from the school

The English teacher from the school did the observation also as a non-participant observer in the study. In this meeting, the researcher asked the teacher's opinion about the student regarding their reading skill and the information about which students who can work well in this research. In this meeting also, the researcher and the non-participant observer prepared the literature circles schedule as Daniels (2002) mentioned that literature circles must be regularly scheduled. The schedule helped the researcher and the non-participant observer to learn the procedures, and the teaching program of literature circles.

6. Observing the classroom activities

The classroom observations were done in nine meetings. In the observation, the researcher wrote field notes and joined the literature circles. The field notes that the researcher recorded was in the form of descriptive field notes as the researcher recorded the events, activities, roles, and participation that the students did during the literature circles teaching program (Creswell, 2008:225).

On the other hand the non-participant observer observed the focus group meeting without joining the literature circles. She used the engagement checklist to capture the students' reading engagement during the program. She also recorded a reflective field notes which contained the phenomena that emerged during the observation (Creswell, 2008:225).

7. Organizing questionnaire

The questionnaire was organized for the students from the first and second focus group. The questionnaire was administered to the students after they joined literature circles for several times. It was intended to gain data regarding students' experience in literature circles. It was also administered to see students' attitude towards reading in literature circles. The questionnaire was used as it enabled the researcher to see students' opinion towards reading and literature circles (Creswell, 2008: 394).

8. Interviewing the students from the first and second focus groups

The interview was done to ask students' opinion towards literature circles and to investigate their engagement towards reading using literature circles. Open-ended questions were asked to the students regarding their experience during literature circles (Creswell, 2008: 225). This interview was used the students' mother tongue which is Bahasa Indonesia to get richer data and to ease the students in answering the questions. This interview also conducted to gain more insight from their perspective related to the obstacles they found during the literature circles implementation.

9. Analyzing the obtained data from observation field notes, questionnaire, interview and students' journal

The data from classroom observation was gained through the teaching program of literature circles. In the observation process, the teacher analyzed students' reading engagement that was captured in each phase of the teaching program including initial phase, discussion phase, and concluding phase (Dawson and FitzGerald, 1999).

10. Interpreting and analyzing the findings

After the teaching program finished and the data has been gathered, the researcher interpreted and analyzed the data using relevant theories. The engagement that the students showed during literature circles was analyzed based on Guthrie and Wigfield (2000) theory, whereas the obstacles in reading using literature circles were analyzed using literature circles theory from Dawson and FitzGerald (1999), Daniels (2002), Morris and Perlenfein (2003), and Moen (2004).

11. Drawing conclusion, limitation and suggestion

This was the last procedure of this recent study. The researcher drew a conclusion and made a limitation of the study based on the obtained data. Moreover, the recommendation for further study was also proposed by the researcher.

3.5 Data Collection Strategies

Before the researcher collects the data, the researcher must know what is being assessed or what data is useful to meet the objectives of the study. This study was conducted to reach the aforementioned purposes. Based on the purposes, the data collection process in this study used several instruments.

They were classroom observation, questionnaire, interview, and document analysis. They were used to validate the research findings in order to get more accurate data (Creswell, 2008:266).

Classroom observation was conducted to assess the literature circles implementation and the students' reading engagement. It is in line with Daniels (2002; 134) who mentioned that observation is an ideal way to evaluate the literature circles. Classroom observation was conducted nine times in the same class. The researcher had nine field notes from nine observations. The observations were conducted not only by the researcher but also by the English teacher from the school while the researcher was conducting the teaching program. This means that during the observation, the researcher positioned herself as a teacher, and at the same time viewed students' behavior and took some important notes. Therefore, the researcher had a role as a participant observer as she involved in the activity at the research site (Creswell, 2008: 222). On the other hand, the English teacher from the school played a role as a nonparticipant observer since she did not involve in the literature circles. The English teacher from the school was a nonparticipant observer as she only visited the class to do observation without becoming involved in the literature circles (Creswell, 2008: 222). The data which is expected to get from observation is to answer the three research questions.

One of the activities in literature circles was literature circles meeting. In the meeting students discussed their role for that week and presented it to the group. The researcher expected the meetings to be natural in which the students have natural conversation about the book based on each role (Daniel, 2002:18). The group discussion in the literature circles meeting was observed. The session was not videotaped because of researcher's effort in maintaining the objectivity. Having two teachers in the class, to some extents have affected

students' behavior. Accordingly, to maintain the objectivity and avoid the students behaving unnaturally, the activities in the group were not recorded or videotaped. Since the focus of this study was students' engagement and engagement highly related behavior, the researcher used behavioral checklist in order to analyze their engagement during the literature circles (Creswell, 2008: 263). The checklist was made based on engagement checklist for literature circles roles. Accordingly, the students' engagement was analyzed based on the roles they chose.

Questionnaire was administered to the students after they finished the literature circles. Questionnaire was given to find out students' opinion about the book or text as well as to investigate students' reading habit after the literature circles. The researcher used open-ended questions as they were suitable to explore students' opinion and reason of their attitude towards reading in literature circles (Creswell, 2008: 228).

Interview was the other means to collect the data and to strengthen the validity of this research. Interview was an ideal strategy in collecting the data about students' experiences and their comments about the obstacles found in learning using literature circles.

Interviews are particularly useful for getting the story behind a participant's experiences. The interviewer can pursue in-depth information around the topic. Interviews may be useful as follow-up to certain respondents to questionnaires, e.g., to further investigate their responses. (McNamara, 1999).

The researcher only interviewed two groups of students who were the focus of the study. Even though the researcher interviewed students from the two focus groups, she asked the students one by one. It is in line with the theory of one-on-one interview as proposed by Creswell (2008: 226). One-on-

one interview is a comfort way for interviewing participants. The interview was organized after the literature circles activities finished. The interview was transcribed and analyzed to see students' opinion regarding the way they engaged with the text using literature circles.

The last data collection method was document analysis which included collecting students' journals. Journals supported the finding whether or not the students were engaged to the activity given. The journals consisted of students' work during the literature circles implementation. In addition, the students' journals were observed into their efforts in preparing and finishing the work for the literature circles. As it is emphasize by Norris and Ennis (1989) that the need to include the students' journals is one way to gather quality information in evaluating students' progress. However, data from the documents was needed to strengthen data gained by questionnaire and observation. It provides valuable information to be analyzed. By analyzing the document, researcher could understand central phenomena in qualitative studies (Creswell, 2008: 231).

3.6 Data Analysis

The process of data analysis is eclectic, as there is no right way method in analyzing the data (Tesch: 1990, cited in Creswell: 1994). It is called eclectic since the study uses different number of data to be analyzed and all data are supported each other to answer the research questions. The researcher in this study analyzed the data gained from observation, questionnaire, interview, and document analysis. First of all, the researcher observed the

meeting of literature circles. At each round of literature circles, the researcher only focused to one group that consists of six students who shared and read the same book. Even though all the students in the class joined literature circles, the focus of the inquiry was only one group that consisted of six students who had been selected as the focus group. The English teacher helped in grouping the students since she knows more about the students' ability. There were six texts used in the literature circles.

The group meeting then was observed by the researcher and also the teacher. Since the researcher and the teacher played different roles in the observation, the field notes from both of them were expected to be rich and give deep information from different point of view as Creswell (2008) suggests. Field notes from the observation were analyzed to answer the aforementioned research purposes. Field notes were used to investigate the experiences got by the students in reading using literature circles based on Dawson and FitzGerald (1999), Daniels (2002), Morris and Perlenfein (2003), and Moen (2004). The field notes were also analyzed to investigate students' reading engagement in literature circles based on Guthrie and Wigfield (2000) and to find out the obstacles as perceived by the students in reading using literature circles based on Daniels (2002).

Questionnaire was used to find out the students' attitude towards reading after having literature circles. It was also used to gain the information about the students' opinion on the obstacles of doing literature circles (Daniels, 2002). Questionnaire was administered to strengthen the data found by the researcher. The data from the questionnaire was expected to answer research question number two.

In addition, the interview was conducted to the students. Interview technique in qualitative research is aimed at collecting information from the participants that cannot be directly observed by the researcher (Creswell, 2008: 226). Interview was conducted to gain the students' opinion on the way they engaged with the text using literature circles. Interview was also

conducted to answer the third research problem which is to find out the obstacles as perceived by the students in reading using literature circles. The interview was in the form of focus group interview. The focus group which consisted of five students was interviewed together using open-ended questions to elaborate their experiences and the obstacles they found in reading using literature circles. The focus group interview was chosen since its advantage in collecting shared understanding from the group and having interaction among the interviewees will make them more relax in answering the questions (Creswell, 2008:226). The interview was recorded and transcribed before it was analyzed.

The last, the researcher collected the students' work and teachers' notes to strengthen data gained by the observation and interview. Those documents were expected to support the finding whether or not the students engaged to the activity. The students' works showed their task in finishing their role in the literature circles.

Based on the process of data analysis which analyzes various data gained by different data collection strategies, this research can be seen as a study that used triangulated data. Triangulation is the way to maintain the research validation (Evans and Gruba, 2008:91, Yin, 1984, 1993, 2003, cited in Emilia, 2008:197). Moreover, triangulation is used when the researcher wants to use "different methods or sources to corroborate each other" (Mason, 1996: 25, cited in Silverman, 2005:121). In this study, different techniques were used to maintain the validity of the study. The data gained by all techniques supported each other to answer the research questions.

3.7 Concluding Remark

This chapter has discussed the research design that consists of research site and research participants, data collection and data analysis. In collecting the data, the study used mixed methods such classroom observations, students'

journals, interviews and questionnaires. The data collected for this study were analyzed according to the research questions.