

Chapter III

Research Method

Chapter 2 explains the constructivist, social constructivist and vocabulary learning theories to guide the data analysis of this study. This chapter explains the methodological aspects of the study. There are four sections in this chapter. The first section describes the research design of exploratory qualitative research. The second section is the research problem. The third section provides detailed information of the methods used in collecting the data. The final section is dedicated to ethical issues of the research.

Methodology

3.1 Research Design

This chapter begins by describing the methodology and discussing the research design and the researcher's partialities. Subsequently, setting, participant, instruments, data collection and analysis and summary of methodology are presented. The qualitative method, is adopted to allow the researcher to understand the phenomenon in vocabulary learning through the implementation of Writer's Workshop.

The qualitative research paradigm with a focus on exploratory case study is adopted because of limited research available conducted on this topic, especially within the Indonesian kindergarten context. Furthermore, exploratory research studies "formulate a problem for more precise investigation...from an operational point of view" (Kothari, 2004:37)

Yin (2003) defines exploratory case study as a research "...to explore those situations in which the intervention being evaluated has no clear, single set of outcomes" (cited in Baxter and Jack, 2008). It is to gain ideas and insights about a topic in which not much has been written about the topic (Creswell,

2002). Thus, the researcher pursues the participants to build an understanding based on their ideas.

Respectively, the writer's workshop took place in ten sessions of process writing and one session of publishing. Each session was divided into two meetings of 30-45 minutes per meetings. The first session was pre-writing, drawing and writing. The second session was conferencing, revising and author's chair when the books were completed. Of the eleven students participated in this study, eight of the students' data were chosen to be analyzed.

3.2 Research Problem

There were three problems encountered during the study. First, this study was conducted in the middle of the semester in which 11 sessions from 18 April to 11 June 2013 were held. 10 sessions were concentrated on writer's workshop mini lessons and the eleventh session was for publishing in the author's chair. Since the study was carried out in the middle of the semester, it was difficult to have a regular scheduling session for the students to participate. Second, there was not enough space in the class to conduct writer's workshop. The K-2 class had to move to the stage during the writing until the publishing session of the writer's workshop. Third, the researcher had difficulty collecting audio data because the students became self conscious and spoke softly that some comments were were not recorded. These problems were presented challenges for the researcher and teachers during the study.

3.3 Methods in Data Collection

3.3.1 Research Setting and Participants

3.3.1a Researcher

The researcher was the principal and teacher at a pre-school in Cipete, South Jakarta. The researcher had ten years pre-school teaching experience and was interested with developing children's vocabulary learning through fun and enjoyable activities. Articles about early language intervention programs for second language learners to become as proficient as native speakers (Leseaux & Julieta A.Arbali, 2014

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Bautz, 2003; Driscoll & Nagel, 2008) prompted the researcher to search for activities to be implemented in K2 class.

After substantial research, writer's workshop was chosen to be the focus of this explorative case study. The concept of writer's workshop in which everyone has a story to tell was appealing and thus, the activity was implemented in K2 class.

The researcher assumed the roles of activity developer, observer and teacher. The researcher discussed with class teachers the positive and negative aspects of implementing an extra activity for the students in an already running kindergarten-2 program.

The implementation of writer's workshop was based on the researcher's and class teachers' agreement on the most efficient way of implementing and teaching K2 students. This was pivotal because there were only 11 students in K2 and their abilities in drawing, reading and writing are at different levels.

Being the researcher and also assisting in the activity was a challenge. The researcher observed, record and documented class activities as well as held conference with students during writer's workshop. The researcher's position in the school was first seen as intimidating by the K2 students. As the activity continued, the students became more opened and willing to share their stories. The students' willingness to participate allowed the researcher to collect data continuously with minimal disturbance.

3.3.1b Teacher participants

There were a class teacher and an assistant teacher in K-2 class. The class teacher had over 12 years experience working in kindergarten. She worked as an assistant Montessori teacher in an international pre-school prior to working at Cipete. She was a K1 teacher for eight years before becoming a K-2 teacher. When this study was conducted, it was her first time teaching K-2 class. Her dedication to early childhood education was reflected in her discipline, organization, creativity and simplicity in teaching her class. In addition, she had a

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strong teamwork policy with her students and colleagues and promotes respect in all aspects of her teachings.

The assistant teacher was previously a K-1 assistant teacher for three years prior to becoming a K-2 assistant teacher. She is shy and quite. Her calm nature balances the more energetic class teacher. She has strong work ethics and enjoys working with children.

3.3.1c Student participants

There were eleven student in K-2 of middle to upper class socio-economic background families. The students were between the age of 5 to 6 years old. Eight of the students enrolled at the school since Toddler, between the age of 1,5 to 2 years old. Two of the students enrolled at the school since Pre-K, 3 years old and one student in K-2. Ten of the students were Indonesian, one student was of Indonesian-European origin. One of the student spoke Dutch to her mother. Another student spoke German to her parents and grandparents at home. All of the students communicated in English at school. Most students spoke English to their parents, and all watched Disney Channels.

All of the students were familiar with phonetics and were able to read CVC (consonant-vowel-consonant) words. Two of the students showed strong reading abilities and started to read story books independently. A student was chosen as the focus participant (Student 1) in the study because he showed a continuum writing and vocabulary learning development. However, data from other students were also utilized to provide in depth understanding of the phenomenon.

3.3.1d Setting

The setting was a Kindergarten-2 classroom in a Pre-school in South Jakarta. The school was located in two houses in an upper-income neighborhood in the Cipete area. The school catered to middle and upper class income families.

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The students consisted of Indonesian and inter-racial students from the age of 1,5 to 6 year olds.

There was a 1 to 6 ratio of teacher to students from Playgroup to Kindergarten-2 levels. There was a 1 to 3 ratio of teacher to students in the Toddler (1,5 to 2,5 year olds) level. There was no testing upon entry to the school. The school was not equipped to teach special needs children and would accept only students with language difficulty as an education extension for their therapy.

Although there was no expatriate teacher, the school teaches exclusively in English starting from Kindergarten-1 (TKA). In Kindergarten-2 the students were introduced to read in Bahasa Indonesia as well as continuing their fluency in English.

Due to limited time available for the research and a small classroom, the Writer's Workshop activity took place in the school's stage. A low, circular and a low, rectangular tables were placed on the stage as well as carpeted footsteps were used for students to write their stories. Students sat in accordance with teacher's instruction to avoid personalities confrontation.

3.3.2 Research Instruments

The research instrument was based on qualitative research approaches relevant to constructivist philosophical assumptions by employing observation, transcriptions, "open-ended questions, emerging approaches, text or image data"(Creswell, 2003:19). These various instruments were utilized to answer the phenomenon of the impact of writer's workshop when it was implemented in a kindergarten setting on children's vocabulary learning.

3.3.2a Observation and Field Notes

The study depended heavily on observation, written and oral texts. Since the researcher was also the teacher, it was a challenge to write detailed notes, thus depending mostly on photos, videos, writing booklets and transcripts to support in categorizing important themes supporting the phenomenon.

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The researcher utilized unstructured observation during the pre-writing mini-lessons, by observing the class teacher's pre-writing and brainstorming ideas session. Second, shadow studies by tracking the participants were conducted to share their experiences. Third, analysis of "insight -stimulating" examples were used to discover ideas and insights 27 where little experiences have taken place (Kothari, 2004:37)

3.3.2b Written Texts

Written texts were analyzed by according to emergent writing theories as stated in section 2.4 (Piedra, 2012) and separating between invented spelling based on phonological awareness (Read cited in Gleason, 2005) and correct orthographies (Askew,1999). In addition, students' texts were further analyzed to discover patterns in formulaic expressions (Acara, 2012; Schmitt,2011) and vocabulary usage based on given word lists.

3.3.2c Photos and Video Recordings

Photos and video recordings were taken during various writing process of writer's workshop activities. The photos and videos provided invaluable information about understanding children's conversation, children-teachers conversation and children's sitting arrangements that have substantial effects on children's writing.

3.3.2d Transcripts

Data collected from videos, conferences and interviews were transcribed to be analyzed further. These transcripts were very valuable in analyzing the differences between written and oral texts of children's stories.

Summary:

This sub-section explained in detailed the method in which the data were collected, the background of the researcher and teachers, who were the participants, location of the setting and the instruments used in collecting the data.

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It also discussed the obstacles encountered in conducting the data collection during the writer's workshop activity.

3.4 Issues of Ethics and Consent

Due to the nature of the 28 research involving a kindergarten class, parents were notified to give consent for their children to participate in the research. All of the parents gave permission for their child to participate in the research. Although it was the intention of the researcher to keep the data anonymous, it was an impossible task because the children wrote their names in their stories. To keep the authenticity of the data, their names were allowed to be used by their parents.

3.5 Conclusion:

This section has discussed in detail the research design, research problem, methods in data collection, implementing writer's workshop, data collection and analysis, written and oral texts and issues of ethics and consent. The chapter was divided into sections to provide clear information and analysis of the data collected. The next chapter will explore the implementation of writer's workshop.