CHAPTER III

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter deals with aspects of methodology used to guide the present study. Some points to discuss are the explanation of the research design, site and participants, data collection technique, and data analysis.

2.1 Research Design

This research focused on revealing the EFL university students' learning strategies, the way the strategies were employed in accomplishing writing tasks and the students' consideration in selecting the strategies. In accordance with this research' interests, the research applied descriptive qualitative research method to depict the students' strategies in writing. The design best suits this study because the goals of qualitative descriptive studies is to achieve a comprehensive summary of events in the everyday terms of those events (Sandelowski, 2003). Furthermore, Elliot (1999) as cited in Elliot and Timulak (2005) stated that it gives emphasis on understanding phenomena or events in their own right rather than from some outside perspectives. Likewise, as Best and Khan (1989) stated, descriptive studies describe objects as what they are through recording, analyzing, and interpreting conditions that exist.

3.2. Site and Participants

A class of second-year university students in one public university in Bandung was selected as participants of this study. The class consists of 33 students; 26 female students and 7 male students. The site and participants were selected for at least two reasons. Firstly, the institution is located near to the researcher, so it is easily accessed. Secondly, since the second-year students have undertaken the Writing 1 and Writing 2 courses beforehand, they were expected to have particular strategies in writing in English.

3.3. Data Collection

The research aimed to investigate the writing strategies of EFL university students and since the strategies were defined as behaviors and processes which were initiated by students intentionally (Oxford, 2011), a direct observation by the researcher is not feasible. This is due to the fact that the agency to decide whether there present the intentional element when applying the strategies does not belong to the researcher. It is the learners' themselves who can decide whether their actions and processes are deliberate or not (Mohite, 2014). Therefore, the data in this research had to be obtained directly from the respondents. Two of the data collection techniques which support access to this type of data are questionnaires and interviews (Mohite, 2014). Thus, this research employed questionnaires and interviews as techniques to collect the information about the respondents' writing strategies. Each of these data collection techniques serves certain purposes as follows.

3.3.1 Questionnaire

Two questionnaires were used to collect data in this study. The first one is a closed-ended questionnaire adopted from Peñuelas (2012). The second one is open-ended questionnaire adopted from Mohite (2014) and Honeck (2013).

A forty seven items Strategy Inventory of Language Learning (SILL) questionnaire created by Peñuelas (2012) was selected for this study. It was a Likert-type measure test made based on Oxford's Strategy Learning Inventory (1990). The purpose of the questionnaire was to find out the general profile of the students' use of writing strategies. The items were further adopted to fit the context where this research was conducted without eliminating the sense of the original instrument (see appendix A).

The modified SILL consists of 34 closed-ended items and additional ten open-ended questions. The closed-ended questions consist of statements covering memory strategies, cognitive-metacognitive strategies, compensation strategies, affective strategies and social strategies. The questionnaire asked respondents to

say on a 5-point scale how frequently they used the strategies that were indicated. For example, in response to the statement "I write a diary to write how I feel about my writing", the respondents chose one of the following options: *1. never or almost never use this strategy, 2.Usually never use this strategy, 3. Sometime use this strategy, 4. Usually use this strategy, or 5. Always use this strategy.* The overall response of the questionnaire was then categorized based on Oxford's intensity (frequency of use) categories and then divided according to the stages of writing; pre-writing strategies, whilst-writing strategies and post-writing strategies.

Furthermore, the ten open-ended questions were adopted from Honeck (2013). The questions attempted to elicit information of the students' general views and personal experiences of writing. This was useful to understand their literacy and formal educational backgrounds as well as their perceptions toward writing and toward themselves as writers.

Table 3.1
Open-ended Questions
(Adapted from Honeck, 2013)

Open-Ended Questions
1. What do you think makes a good essay?
2. Describe your experience of learning English language at school/college and home?
3. Describe your experience of learning about how to write in English?
4. How do you feel about writing in English?
5. How do you feel about writing in your language?
6. Do you often write in English?
7. What are your strengths as a writer?
8. What are your weaknesses?
9. What do you think is the most difficult problem with writing in English?
10. How has your writing changed since entering university?

Meanwhile, the second questionnaire was an open-ended questionnaire consisted of nineteen open-ended questions, some of which provided by choices of answer. The questions attempted to elicit information about respondents' use of strategies in accomplishing writing task and factors influencing their choice of strategies. An open-ended type of questionnaire was chosen in order to give respondents chances to express their strategies use in their own words and to gain

as many strategies as possible without giving any indication or hint of strategies existed (for the instruments used see appendix A).

A limitation of questionnaires is their lack of interactivity (Cohen et al., 2009; Richards et al., 2012 in Natalia, 2008). To make up for this, a follow-up interview was conducted to deal with any answers which required further information. The other problem is a potential for ambiguity in understanding the questions, which may lead to respondents' confusion. Therefore, a careful selection for wordings was taken. Moreover, the researcher remained present and available during the administration of the questionnaire in order to make sure that the respondents obtained the same understanding about the questions.

A pilot work is conducted to check the ambiguity, confusion and poorly prepared items, (Wiersma, 1995 in Natalia, 2008). The final drafts of the two questionnaire had been tried out with five university students (from different class than the research sample). They were asked to fill in the questionnaire and check whether they understand the statements and questions in both questionnaires. Informal interviews were also conducted to gather the pilot respondents' personal experiences and strategies used in writing. The results showed that the questionnaires items represented most of the pilot respondents' strategies and the wordings were understandable.

Moreover, the researcher also asked for feedback on the questionnaire design to two lecturers. The lectures have approximately seven years of experience in teaching EFL at university. The feedbacks given came in the forms of meaning conveyed and the grammar. In terms of meanings conveyed, statement of *"I try to put my meanings as quickly as possible so as not to forget ideas I want to express"* was reformulated into *"I put my ideas on paper as quickly as possible so as not to forget them even if I experience spelling or grammatical problems"* According to the lecturer, the statement needs to be reformulated because the previous wordings did not represent the process writing and may lead to different meaning for the respondents. Meanwhile, feedback related to grammatical aspect in the formulation of the questions was given in question of

"What types of writing strategies you have learned about so far?" The previous sentence was not in an appropriate interrogative form and was revised into *"What types of writing strategies have you learned about so far?"* Detail for the reformulations of the questionnaire items is presented in table 3.2 and 3.3.

Table 3.2
The reformulation of sentences in the closed-ended questionnaire items

Item no.	Original sentences	Revised sentences
5	I try out different ideas either orally or in writing to find out what I want to express in my writing	I brainstorms ideas either orally or in writing to find out what I want to express in my writing.
6	I reread my text when I find a mismatch between my written text and the ideas I want to express	I reread my text to check for mistakes and mismatch between my written text and the ideas I want to express.
7	I try to put my meaning on paper as quickly as possible so as not to forget my ideas even if I experience spelling or grammatical problems	I put my ideas on paper as quickly as possible so as not to forget them even if I experience spelling or grammatical problems.
17	I write in Bahasa Indonesia first, then translate it into English.	I write in Indonesian Language first, then translate it into English.
18	I plan how to write my text in advance or while writing either mentally or in written forms.	I plan my writing in advance or while writing either mentally or in written forms.
29	I write a diary to write how I feel about my writing	I write a diary or journal to write how I feel about my writing

Table 3.3
The reformulation of sentences in the open-ended questionnaire items

Item no.	Original sentences	Revised sentences
3	What types of writing strategies you have learned about so far?	What types of writing strategies have you learned about so far?
10	What activities in the classroom help you in writing? Why?	What activities in the classroom have helped you in writing? Why?
13	What are the problems related to the following aspects do you usually face when writing in English? What do you do to overcome them?	What problems related to the following aspects do you usually face when writing in English? What do you do to overcome them?
14	What do you do to improve your writing skill in the following aspects?	What do you usually do to improve your writing skill in the following aspects?

The first questionnaire was administered in the beginning of the course. It aims to see respondents' prior knowledge and strategies in writing. The second

one was administered three weeks after; upon a completion of a task on explanation text. It aims to see respondents' strategies after experiencing learning academic writing and to identify their strategies in accomplishing the writing tasks. The first questionnaire was administered in English and was distributed, filled out and handed back on October 3rd, 2016 and the second questionnaire was administered in English and was distributed, filled out and handed back on November 25th, 2016.

3.3.2 Interview

In this research, interview was used for two reasons. Firstly, it aimed to verify respondents' use of strategies found on their answers to the previously given questionnaires. Secondly, to investigate the application of the strategies including the respondents consideration, the condition of occurrence and the combination of the strategies in accomplishing writing tasks. To gain better understanding on the strategies used, respondents were invited to an interview. During the interview, the respondents were not required to do a specific writing task, instead they were asked to consider how they typically accomplish the task.

In the present study, a semi-structured interview was used to collect the data. The interview questions were used as a guidance in which the researcher could branch off to explore in depth information. In semi-structured interview, a written list of questions as a guide is used, but the questions can be modified to get more information (Mackey and Gass, 2005). The questions used in this study attempted to investigate students' use of strategies in writing. The questions allowed students to describe the writing strategies and processes they go through to complete their writing task.

Due to the limited time available, the interviews were conducted in a group of five. There were in total three group interviews conducted in this study. Fifteen respondents were randomly selected and were divided into three groups. Each group was interviewed separately in succession days starting from 9th to 10th of December 2016. To avoid losing important information and the identity of

the respondents, the interviews were video-taped and the interviewees were coded with R1, R3, R5.

Conducting a group interview could bring some advantages. Firstly, the presence of other interviewees in the group enables interviewees to complete each other's explanation without influencing individual report. Another advantage of conducting this type of interview is that friendly and fun atmosphere could be created during the interview which in turn can make students more relax in sharing their experiences especially in writing. However, there are also weaknesses in a group interview; it requires a considerably long time to conduct (approximately 40 to 55 minutes) and lastly, the interviewer must work hard in order to maintain the interviewees' attention and enthusiasm.

3.4 Data Analysis

The analysis of the data is divided into two sections: analysis of the questionnaire result and analysis of the interview result. The results of the questionnaire and interview techniques were analyzed as follow.

3.4.1 Questionnaire

The data from the closed-ended and open-ended questions in the questionnaire were analyzed differently. Respondents' response for the closed-ended questions (strategies scale) were analyzed using descriptive statistic. Descriptive statistic is the most suitable type of data analysis in providing insight on students' writing strategies since it helps to summarize the overall trends or tendencies in a data, provide an understanding of how varied the scores might be, and provide insight into where one score stands in comparison with others (Creswell, 2012).

Responses for each strategy item were then categorized based on intensity categories proposed by Lengkanawati as cited in Natalia (2008). The categories, expanded from Oxford's intensity categories, consist of five intensity categories. Each range of score represents one intensity category (see Table 3.2 for details of the categories).

Table 3.4
Strategy Intensity Categories
(Adopted from Lengkanawati in Natalia, 2008)

Score	Category	Intensity	% of use
4.5 – 5.0	Very high	Always or almost always used	81-100 % of the time
3.5 – 4.4	High	Usually used	61 - 80% of the time
2.5 – 3.4	Medium	Sometimes used	41 - 60% of the time
1.5 – 2.4	Low	Usually not used	21 - 40% of the time
1.0 – 1.4	Very low	Never or almost never used	0 - 20% of the time

Meanwhile, respondents' responses for the open-ended questions were analyzed and categorized into general information of the respondents and their strategies in accomplishing writing task. The general information includes respondents' prior knowledge and experience in learning English and learning writing in English (see appendix B), while their strategies in accomplishing writing tasks were divided into pre-writing strategies, whilst-writing strategies and post-writing strategies and they were then classified based on Oxford's (1990) taxonomy of language learning strategies.

The result of writing strategies questionnaire provides a picture of general information of the respondents' (educational background and prior experience in learning English) and the strategies they mainly use in accomplishing writing tasks.

3.4.2 Interview

After the data from the questionnaires were obtained, the respondents were invited to go through an interview session. The interview recordings were

transcribed manually. The transcriptions were then categorized and used to reinforce the findings regarding the questionnaire.

The data were analyzed in specific steps as follows:

- Transcribing the taped interview
- Dividing the strategies into pre, whilst and post writing strategies.
- Classifying the strategies based on Oxford's (1990) language learning strategies taxonomy.
- Examining the application of the strategies including the respondents' consideration, the condition of occurrence and the combination of the strategies.
- Interpreting   the   results.

The findings were reported in a form of narrative discussion. Narrative discussion is the most common form of reporting findings in qualitative study in which the researcher summarizes the findings from the data analysis in detail (Creswell,   2012.