

CHAPTER III

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter discusses the research methodology applied in this study. It includes research design as well as the research site and respondents. Besides that, it also elaborates the data collections of this study which are collecting students' descriptive texts and interviews. Furthermore, the data analysis on the students' texts and the interviews is also described, and establishing validity is explained in this chapter.

3.1 Research Design

This research has two research questions which are: 1) what the most dominant error type is made by students in writing descriptive texts, 2) what the sources of errors are based on the students' point of view. In order to answer those research questions, this research employed case study as the research design for several considerations.

Firstly, the main purpose of this case study is to understand a case or cases in full and in depth (Malik & Hamied, 2014, p.261). It is suitable for this research, because this research attempted to investigate some cases which are 1) the most dominant error type in students' descriptive texts, and 2) the sources of errors based on the students' point of view in a public junior high school in Bandung.

Secondly, the focus of the case study lies typically on an individual, small groups, or individuals within a group and document that group's or individuals' experience in a specific setting (Lodico, Spaulding, & Voegtle, 2010, p. 35). This is in line with this research where the focus is only the cases existed in a small group of students in a public junior school in Bandung.

Thirdly, the case study is useful for a study addresses descriptive questions or explanatory questions (Malik & Hamied, 2014, p. 261). This is suitable for this research for the questions of this research are in form of descriptive questions.

3.2 Site and Respondents

The study was conducted in a public junior high school in Bandung, West Java. The school was chosen for several reasons; 1) The school was chosen for its ease of access from the aspect of distance and bureaucracy. 2) The study was conducted in junior high school because, in this degree, descriptive text is one of the texts that must be mastered by students both in written and spoken. 3) Mostly students in Junior High school are still at the novice level of their English. So, it is possible that they make errors.

The respondents involved in this study were one class of eight-grade students. There were thirty-one students participated in this study to answer the research questions.

The students were chosen as respondents because they have studied the descriptive text in the previous semester with their teacher. In addition, students were the beginners in their learning English, or they were still at the novice level. In this level, students tend to make many errors in their writing. Thus, the eighth-grade students were suitable as the respondents for this study.

3.3 Data Collection

The data in this research were collected by administering two instruments. These included the instruments adjusted based on research need in order to answer the research questions. The instruments which are: 1) documenting students' text, and 2) interviews. The details of each instrument is described as follows.

3.3.1 Documenting Students' Texts

In this data collection, the data were collected through documenting descriptive texts written by thirty-one students. To document the students' descriptive texts, the participants were asked to do two writing tasks. The writing tasks were administered at two different times with four days interval. In the first writing task, the students were asked to write descriptive texts under the topic '*my pet*'. Meanwhile, in the second writing task, the students were asked to write

descriptive texts under the topic '*my physical appearance*'. The students produced thirty-one descriptive texts under the topic '*my pet*' and thirty-one descriptive texts under the topic '*my physical appearance*' totally. The detailed procedure in documenting students' descriptive texts through the writing tasks are as follows.

For documenting the students' texts through the first writing task, each student was asked to write a descriptive text in one meeting and was given a chance to make a revision of the writing in another meeting.

In the first meeting, the steps to document the students' text are as follows. First of all, the researcher gave a short explanation about the descriptive text (I.e. definition, language features, and generic structures) to give a brief introduction to the students. Besides that, the suggested stages of writing (i.e. planning, drafting, revising, and editing) were also informed to them. It took time approximately 20 minutes. For an information, students have already learned descriptive text in the previous semester with their teacher. After that, the students were asked to write a descriptive text with a general topic "*My Pet*" and it must consist at least one paragraph. They were given 60 minutes to write the text in the class and allowed to open dictionary if they need it to find the meaning of the words they did not know.

After the students' descriptive texts were collected in the first meeting, the researcher identified and marked the incorrect forms in the students' texts (which were categorized into the errors classification presented by Ellis (1997) and Corder (1981), i.e. *addition*, *omission*, *misordering*, and *misselection*. The incorrect forms which were not under this classification were not marked). In the next meeting, the students were asked to correct the incorrect forms they made in their descriptive texts. They were also interviewed about their writing. The aims of this correction and interviews were to determine whether the incorrect forms that the students made in their descriptive text were mistakes or errors. The errors were analyzed in this study, while the mistakes were excluded.

Meanwhile, for documenting students' texts through the second writing task, each student was asked to write a descriptive text under the topic '*my physical appearance*' in one paragraph and correct their writing in 60 minutes. The

students were also interviewed about their writing to make sure whether the incorrect forms they made were mistakes or errors.

3.3.2. Interviews

The interviews have been chosen as one of the data collection techniques in this research. The interviews were used for cross-checking the data from the error analysis and supporting the data, as well as becoming the main data to answer the second question that is the source of errors based on the students' point of view. Moreover, the interviews could give some advantages to the researcher. It provides useful information which cannot be provided from analyzing the students' texts. It was because the interviews give the participants opportunities to describe detailed personal information, and the interviewer can ask specific questions to elicit the needed information (Creswell, 2014, p.239).

In this study, one-to-one interviews (one researcher to one participant) were conducted. This kind of interviews was chosen to be conducted for several reasons. Firstly, in the one-to-one interviews, the interviewer can let participants express their thought regarding the incorrect forms that each student made in their writing; whether each of them can correct it or not. The aim was to make sure whether the incorrect forms each student made in their writing were mistakes or errors. The interviews also intended to investigate the sources of errors based on the students' point of view. Secondly, in the one-to-one interviews, the interviewer can explore each student's responses regarding the causes of error based on the students' point of view in depth. Thirdly, the one-to-one interviews were chosen for keeping each student's confidentiality.

Meanwhile, in terms of the interview's structure, semi-structured interviews were applied in this study. This kind of interviews were applied in this study because after listing the questions that must be asked, it allowed the researcher to change the order of questions, omit the questions or add it, and vary the wording of the questions depending on what happens in the interview section (Lodico, Spaulding & Voegtle, 2010, p. 124). In its practice, the interviews were conducted to each student. The interviews' questions were all about the whole incorrect form(s) found in each student's text, the students' point of view about

writing descriptive texts, the difficulty that they faced when they wrote descriptive texts, and the strategy they used to overcome the difficulties.

The interviews were done in Indonesian language. It was because of several reasons as follows: firstly, it was done in Indonesian language to avoid students' misunderstanding. Secondly, it was done in Indonesian language to make the students confident with what they share. Lastly, it was done in Indonesian language to allow the students expressing their feelings and thoughts freely.

3.4 Data Analysis

After the data had been collected, the data were analyzed based on its categorization through several steps. The explanation of each step of the data analysis is as follows.

3.4.1 Data Analysis on Students' Texts

The students' texts were analyzed to find out the most dominant error type based on the general classification of errors presented by Corder (1981, p. 36-37) and Ellis (1997, p.18). The data analysis of the texts involved four steps. The steps are as follows.

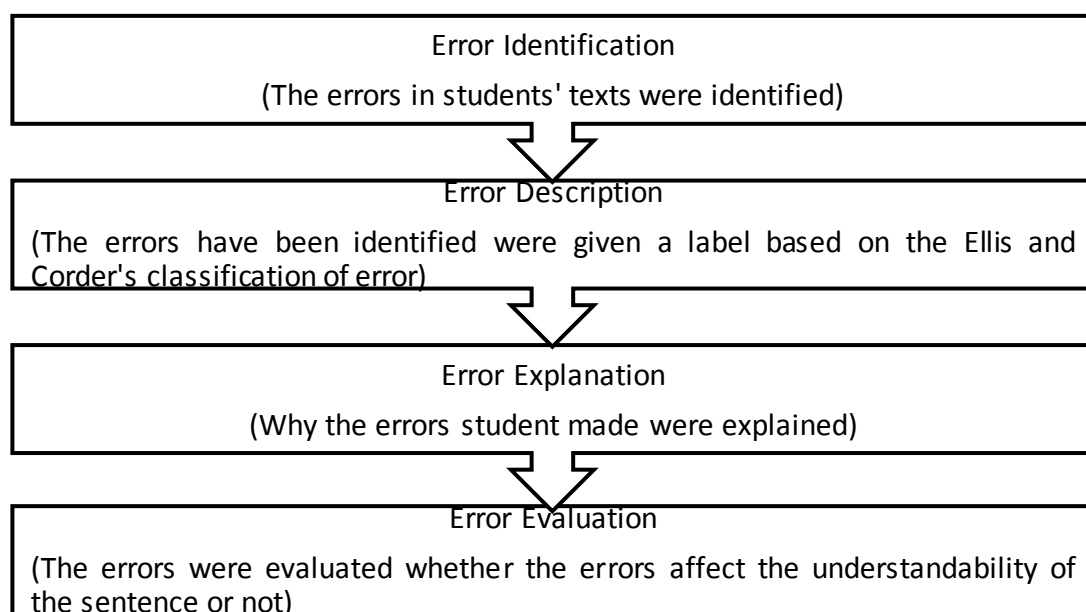


Figure 3.1. The steps of data analysis on students' texts

In the first step, the data collected from students' text were examined. The texts examined were the students' revised descriptive texts. The texts were then compared with the result of the students' interviews. The aims of this error identification was to identify whether errors occurred in the students' text or not as well as to determine which parts of the students' text were considered as errors.

The next step was *error description*. In this step, the errors that had been identified were given a label based on the errors type emanated from such a category included into Corder's and Ellis' general classification of error types, which are: *omission*, *addition*, *misinformation*, and *misordering*.

After that, the *error explanation* was conducted. In this step, the data from the students' texts were analyzed to determine the source of errors and why the errors were made.

The last step was *error evaluation*. In this step, the errors were evaluated whether the errors affect the understandability of the sentences that the students had produced or not. In this case, the errors were included into '*global errors*' which break the overall structure of a sentence and make it difficult to be understood, and '*local errors*' which affect only a single element in the sentence and does not affect the understandability of the sentences students produced.

3. 4.2 Data Analysis on Interviews

After the students' texts were analyzed, the audio-taped conversation between the interviewer and the interviewee were transcribed. After that, the next step was classifying the responses of the participants that were relevant to answer the research questions and then labeling them into themes. These themes were aimed to determine whether the incorrect forms the students made were mistakes or errors, as well as to answer the second research question which is the sources of errors from the students' point of view.

3.5 Establishing Validity

Validity refers to the truth and certainty of research findings. In addition, it also means the truth and veracity of a description, conclusion, explanation, interpretation, and all kind of reports (Alwasilah, 2002, p. 169). The validity of research findings depends on the way a conclusion is stated and communicated, and it also depends on the data collection and analysis (Cronbach, as cited in Alwasilah, 2002, p. 168). Therefore, three techniques were provided to deal with particular validity threats and thereby increase the credibility of the research conclusion. They were triangulation, quasi-statistics, and feedback.

The first technique of establishing validity in this research was triangulation. In gathering the data, this research employed two methods. The methods were the error analysis of the students' texts and interviews. The data collected from the error analysis and the interviews were triangulated. The researcher analyzed the errors found in the students' texts and then compared the findings with the results of the students' interviews. By conducting those two different methods, the researcher could reduce biases which can be caused by the subjectivity.

The second technique was quasi-statistics. Quasi-statistics refer to the use of a simple numerical result that can be readily derived from the data (Becker, as cited in Bickman & Rog, 1998, p. 94). In a qualitative research, a quantitative data can be used to support the qualitative report (Alwasilah, 2002, p. 179). In this research, the quasi-statistics were used to assess the number of error and each type of it after the data gathered from the two different methods were triangulated. It aimed to determine the most dominant error type that the students made in their writings.

In this research, the third technique to check the validity of the research was asking feedback. Feedback prevents the invalidity, bias and the researcher's assumption, and weakness of research logic of ongoing research (Alwasilah, 2002, p.176). Feedback can be asked from some individuals that already familiar with the topic of the research or not (Alwasilah, 2002, p.176). Therefore, in order to maintain the validity of the data collected, while doing the research, the researcher asked for feedback from some people such as, the supervisors, some

friends whose research has the same focus, and some friends whose research has different focus. By asking feedback from those people mentioned, hopefully the data gathered from the two instruments were triangulated correctly, and the invalidity, bias and the researcher's assumption, and weakness of research logic of the research can be prevented.