CHAPTER III
RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The chapter serves as descriptions of the method of the study comprising the research design, setting, participants, data collection techniques, and analysis techniques.

3.1 Research Design

The design chosen for the study was a descriptive-qualitative method; to investigate the phenomenological aspects of qualitative research (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2009). The study was carried out to gain rich descriptive answers to respond to a *how* question (Connole, Smith & Wiseman, 1993; Liamputtong, 2009; Yin, 2003) or a *what* question (Yin, 2003) concerning a single specific case within the real-life context (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000, as cited in Liamputtong, 2009; Silverman, 2005; Yin, 2003); which means to draw a picture of what happened and what the situation was like. In the study, the researcher set out to investigate how students' engagement in Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) improved their Communicative Competence (CC). It was also to figure out what CC component(s) improved as a result of the engagement.

Conducted in a senior high school as the study site, a case study approach was employed. It gives a unitary character to the data being studied by interrelating variety of facts to *a single case* (Stake, 1985). Merriam (1988) pointed out a case study is "an intensive, holistic description and analysis of a single entity, phenomenon, or social unit" (p. 16). Or, it was particularly within a bounded context of senior high school and not confirmation of the hypothesis. In line with this, Malik and Fuad (2014) stated that generalization is not a priority. In other words, in the study, it was more of a discovery of new relationships which existed when some senior high school students engaged, adopting a learning and teaching instruction−TBLT.

There are multiple sources of data reflecting the nature of a case study: "an exploration of a bounded system, using in-depth data collection involving multiple sources of information rich in context" (Creswell, 1998, p. 61). Goetz and LeCompte (1984), as cited in Merriam (1988), emphasized that surely inductive research begins with collection of data—empirical observations or measurements of some kind—and builds theoretical categories and propositions from the relationships discovered among data. The types of data collected in the study were in the forms of classroom interactions in L2 (conversations and group discussions) as well as reports (oral and written reports) (n of Ss=9, n of activities=3), field notes, audio/ video, records, teaching documents and interview transcripts. In this regard, to enhance the validity and reliability of the study, triangulation was conducted (Creswell, 2008, 2012). Gay et al. (2009) defined triangulation as "the process of using multiple methods, data collection strategies, and data sources to obtain a more complete picture of what is being studied and to cross-check information" (p.119). See the figure below.

Figure 3.1
Three Triangulated Measurements of Students' Engagement
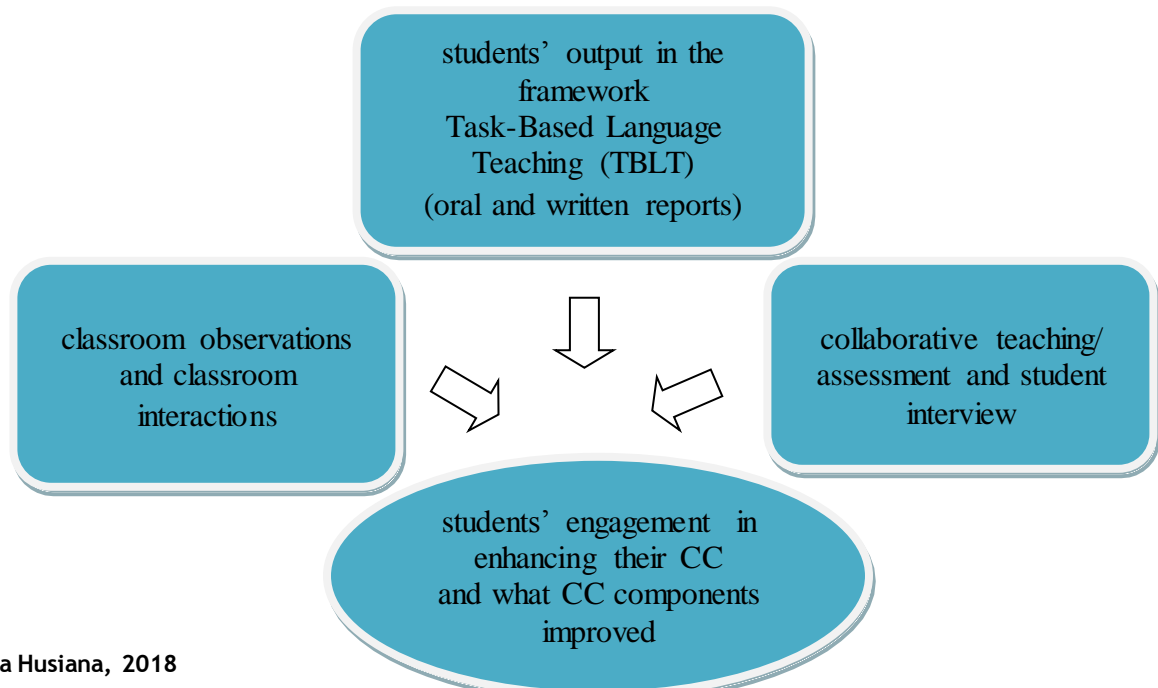
3.2 Setting

The study was conducted in a private senior high school in Bandung, West Java— in a tenth grade classroom. Two reasons for the site were: the researcher's workplace and own students in Reading and Writing Class.

Regarding the school's language program, there were two teachers of English aimed at teaching assigned language skills—the Reading and Writing Class as well as the Listening and Speaking Class. In the Listening and Speaking Class (used to be addressed as the English Conversation Class or EC Class), the students were split-up based on an English placement test called *the John Test*, normally conducted before a new academic year. It is a test for oral proficiency in ESL. This test includes three parts: comprehension questions, connected discourse and asking questions; measuring fluency, structure, pronunciation, and vocabulary.

Based on the lesson objective of the Listening and Speaking class set up, the students have gained rich and rewarding experience of how to deal with lessons exploring conversational structure skills as one aspect of Discourse Competence (or CC4), one CC component, discussed later (see Chapter V for the conclusion of the study).

3.3 Participants

The main participants of the study were some students from the Listening and Speaking Class (the upper class only, n=9) of Science Program Year 10, aged between 15-16, comprised 5 girls and 4 boys. The nine students, purposively selected, were the researcher's students in the Reading and Writing Class. Moreover, both the researcher (as also a participant observer) and the local teacher, who taught them in the Listening and Speaking Class, took a part in the investigation. The nine students had been roughly categorized as relatively higher

achievers or speakers since junior high school (after taking the John Test). The local teacher, identified as Ms G, was a specialized English Speaking teacher. She was a Pilipino teacher having been teaching English in Indonesia for more than 6 years.

In the study, the students were divided into three groups, working in the same group within all the activities prepared. They were Group #1 (S1, S2 and S3), Group #2 (S4, S5 and S6) and Group #3 (S7, S8 and S9). For this, the groups were set up for the sake of English speaking mid test performance (embedded into an ongoing school program), that is, role play in panel discussion (in the study it referred to Activity 3 or Problem Solving Activity, Role Play). The grouping strategies applied here were the students' work habit, class behavior, specific speaking proficiency in L2, and gender.

As regards the researcher's role as the participant observer, the role was chosen to allow the researcher to build relationships with the students being observed and to create an identity that was an insider or one of them to maintain a natural classroom atmosphere during the study (Cohen et al., 2007).

Moreover, based on the researcher's observation in the Reading and Writing Class during semester one, the school year, the 2017/ 2018 Academic Year (served as the pilot study), the students from this class had showed engagement, reflected in classroom interactions.

3.4 Data Collection

In the study, the data collection was conducted from 26 January to 2 March 2018; in the Listening and Speaking Class with one meeting in a week (of 2 periods in a row, 90 minutes in total). The three different tasks carried out were Activity 1 for Information Gap Activity/ Tourism, Activity 2 for Comparing and Decision Making Activity/ Tourism-Travel, and Activity 3 for Problem Solving Activity/ Common Issues: Diet, Korean Food and Diphtheria (Pica et al., 1993; Prabhu, 1987; Stern, 1992; Willis, 1996). The task complexity or difficulty (Skehan, 1996,

1998) and Candlin (1987) as well as the task variety made the rationale for selecting the types of TBLT activities used in the study. Then, the sets of task features of each activity were diffrently designed meeting those issues and the school program (see Table 3.1 for the task complexity or difficulty designed in each activity). In Activity 1, the students developed an itinerary: to decide what tourist places people would want to see in the country assigned and why they had to do those things. Next, in Activity 2, the students decided which travel guide (of the clips) was better, which could be recommended to friends. They had to come up with some logical reasons to decide which travel guide was more recommended. In Activity 3, the last activity, the students performed in a role play in a panel discussion: a professional host and experts. They needed to produce a solution to the problems related to certain topics (along with the reasons).

Table 3.1
Task Complexity of the Tasks or Activities Carried Out in the Study
(Brindley, 1987; Candlin, 1987; Pica et al., 1993; Robinson, 2001; Skehan, 1987)

Activity 1 (Type/ Theme Lesson: Information Gap Activity/ Tourism)
• has been given relevant knowledge (provided prior knowledge) • has a few steps • resource directing
Activity 2 (Type/ Theme Lesson: Comparing and Decision Making Activity/ Tourism-Travel)
• has been given relevant knowledge (provided prior knowledge) • resource directing • has less steps • reasoning is required in the presentation of opinions • the outcome is open • time (around 4 min expected)

Activity 3 (Type/ Theme Lesson: Problem Solving Activity, Role Play in a Panel Discussion/ Common Issues: Diet, Korean Food and Diphtheria)
- has not been given relevant knowledge (provided prior knowledge)
- has less steps
- unfamiliar topic
- not simply acting out, improvised
- reasoning demanded
- much knowledge required
- the outcome is open (genuinely to convince others or audience)
- process ability of language of the task
- time (around 10 min expected)

Table 3.2 on the next page presents the phases of the study, explaining the activities carried out in details

Table 3.2 Phases of the Study

Note: The Task Cycle (Pre Task phase) of Activity 3 at Week 2 on February 2 was made earlier for

No	Type of Activity/ Theme Lesson	Phase	Week	Activity	Remark	Data Collected
I	Information Gap Activity/Tourism	Pre Task and Task Cycle (Task and Planning)	1 (26 January)	Activity 1	Listening and Speaking Class (N=8) The researcher teacher	• Classroom Interaction
II	Information Gap Activity/Tourism Problem Solving Activity/ Common Issues: Diet, Korean Food and Diphtheria Comparing and Decision Making Activity/ Tourism-Travel Guide	Task Cycle (Report) and Language Focus (Analysis and Practice) Pre Task Pre Task	2 (2 February)	Activity 1 Activity 3 Activity 2	Listening and Speaking Class (N=9) The researcher teacher	• Classroom Interaction • Written report (the itinerary) Activity 1 • Class Interaction Activity 3
III	Comparing and Decision Making Activity/ Tourism-Travel Guide	Task Cycle (Task, Planning and Report) and Language Focus (Analysis)	3 (9 February)	Activity 2	Listening and Speaking Class (N=9) The researcher teacher and the local teacher	• Classroom Interaction • Written planning (Venn Diagram) • Oral report (Presentation) Activity 2
IV	Problem Solving Activity/ Common Issues: Diet, Korean Food and Diphtheria	Task Cycle (Task, Planning and Report) REHEARSAL	4 (23 February)	Activity 3	Listening and Speaking Class (N=9) The local teacher and the researcher teacher	• Written planning (Chart) Activity 3 (Rehearsal Day)
VI	Problem Solving Activity/ Common Issues: Diet, Korean Food and Diphtheria	Task Cycle (Task, Planning and Report) and Language Focus (Analysis and Practice)	5 (2 March)	Activity 3	Listening and Speaking Class (N=9) The local teacher and the researcher teacher	• Oral report (Presentation) Repeated Activity 3 (Actual Performance, also graded with a rating scale)

each group was required to make some content preparation in advance.

3.4.1 Classroom Observation and Classroom Interaction

Classroom observations were employed to obtain *the major data source* for the two research questions of the study, i.e. how students' engagement in Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) improved their Communicative Competence (CC) and what CC component improved as a result of the engagement.

In addition to classroom observation, in the study, with respect to TBLT, the role of engagement as a crucial condition for language learning (Dörnyei & Kormos, 2000) was also investigated by primarily studying the classroom interactions in L2, encompassing (teachers-students) talks and group discussions. For this, it has been well documented by Adams (2007), Storch (2002), and Swain and Lapkin (1998) that the benefit can be taken greatly from the conversational interactions in classroom in the context of both non-native speaker/ non-native speaker (NNS/ NNS). With this regard, Cornel (1990) defined classroom engagement as an active state of responding to a class through focused behavior, emotion, and cognition. Language development is promoted when L2 learners interact with one another or with native speakers through conversation (Lightbown & Spada, 2002). Therefore, CC (with all components), as a part of language development, could then be promoted through *classroom interactions*.

Regarding the entire lesson planning, the local teacher and the researcher planned both the features and the activities collaboratively. See Appendix 7a, 7b and 7c. The name order for both the local teacher and researcher, written in each lesson plan, determines the dominant role as a class teacher-in-charge in each activity carried out. For this, the researcher was performing as a participant observer as well as field note-in-charge of all the lessons in all activities.

Activity 3 was also necessarily and apparently repeated—same task with same content, Ellis (2009)—by the groups as they were found not successfully completing the task as required. They were also found using L1 (*Bahasa*

Indonesia and *Sundanese*) mostly during all phases, especially at the Report phase. It was also carried out again to commit the quality or the requirement of the school program performance. Therefore, only classroom interactions with the maximum of L2 were analyzed: only Activity 1 and Activity 2.

3.4.2 Oral and Written Report

In the study, both oral and written report (as the groups' performances) also became the important parts of the investigation, as presented in Table 3.2, discussed earlier. As shown in Table 3.2, in TBLT, written report (as in Activity 1) and oral reports (as in both Activity 2 and 3) were considered the completion of the tasks or called 'the outcome of the task' (Willis, 1996).

The term *report* used in the study refers to the term *reports* or 'goals set for a task' (Edwards & Willis, 2005), as a part of the TBLT cycle: Pre-Task, Task Cycle (Task, Planning and Report) and Language Focus. For Activity 1, an itinerary was produced as a result of an information gap activity (information about travel plan—written report). In Activity 2, it was a presentation of two travel guides compared, deciding which was better for a recommendation to a friend. Next, in Activity 3, a group panel discussion was performed (a group of three students taking a role as a host and two professional experts).

3.4.3 Interview

Apart from observing the classes and seeing the class interactions, interviews were also employed. For this, Gay et al. (2009) stated that the four data collection techniques are observing, interviewing (including the use of focus groups and email), administering questionnaires, and examining records. They also stated that "try to establish rapport with participants, and get a feel for the setting" (p.392). They emphasized that "prolong participation at the study site to overcome distortions produced by the presence of researchers and to provide yourself with the opportunity to test biases and perceptions" (p.392). In line with

this, Fraenkel and Wallen (2009) stated that "interviewing (i.e., the careful asking of relevant questions) is an important way for a researcher to check the accuracy of—to verify or refute—the impressions he or she has gained through observation" (p.446). In the study, semi structured interview and informal interview were the interview types conducted. It employed one strand of interview, namely post-observation (Coughlan Duff, 1994). These post-observation interviews were carried out after each activity. Each participant was interviewed individually in a quiet place (mixing L1 and L2). Then, it was continued to a group interview after the activity (focus group interview). The first part of the interview gathered general information about the student participants: their engagement or general involvement in their English classes (the Listening and Speaking class along with the Reading and Writing class) and how they felt interacting in each TBLT phase. They were prompted with open-ended questions (what made them engage in doing the activities, how the engagement improved their CC and which CC improved). The questions asked in each interview varied, as they depended on special or interesting observations in the videotaped oral performances or written product, but two questions were firstly and frequently asked as prompts. These questions were, 'How did you feel towards the task and your performance?' Follow-up questions, such as, 'Why did you think so?' and 'What did you think of the tasks?' were added to desire more information.

3.5 Data Analysis

The major data collection including classroom observations and classroom interactions, reports, and interview with students were analyzed after the investigation. In the study, behavioral engagement was identified or measured through the number of words produced in pruned discourse and the amount of time invested in performance; cognitive engagement was identified or measured through the number of clauses which served to expand on the semantic content

(i.e. suggestions, propositions, elaborations, reasons, and opinions) and the number of moves connected with the negotiation of meaning (i.e. corrective feedback, modified output, co constructions, confirmation checks, clarification requests, and metalinguistic exchanges. Then, social engagement (by the number of backchannels) became the last engagement dimension investigated.

3.5.1 Classroom Observation and Classroom Interaction

The students' engagement dimensions and CCs (CC1, CC2, CC3 and CC4) were analyzed and assessed mainly using conversational analysis or discourse analytic measures (McCarthy, 1991; Paltridge, 2006). These data were used to answer both the research questions of the study posed in Chapter I.

The analysis was carried out in three stages. Firstly, the data from the classroom interactions both in Activity 1 and 2 (through the cycle of TBLT) were observed and the speech was transcribed verbatim (Appendix 5a, 5b, and 5c). In the transcription of spoken data, the researcher always attempted to record as faithfully as possible what was said and avoided 'tidying up' the language used (Brown & Yule, 2009). Secondly, the data were identified to find the activities and utterances indicating the engagement dimensions and CCs. Again, it should be emphasized here that the study focuses on linguistics aspects (plus vocalization) of each engagement dimension and CC component. Non-verbal communicative aspects, such as body language, touching, non-vocal noises, silence, etc were not parts of the investigation of the study. The engagement dimensions were coded, with BE for Behavioral Engagement, CE for Cognitive Engagement, and SE for Social Engagement. Furthermore, Grammatical or Linguistic Competence or CC1, Sociolinguistic Competence or CC2, Strategic Competence or CC3, and Discourse Competence or CC4 were the CC components analyzed. To obtain a comprehensive picture of the investigation, the discussions of the data from classroom observation (field notes) and classroom interactions (teachers-students) can be seen in Appendix 1

and 2. Thirdly, the data were interpreted, presented, and discussed in Chapter IV. In presenting and discussing the data, the students' names were represented by the symbol of Ss (for all students), S1, S2, S3 in Group 1, S4, S5, S6 in Group 2, S7, S8, and S9 in Group 3. Nonetheless, either the researcher or the local teacher was put as T. Further symbols representing meanings in class interactions were provided in the appendices of classroom interaction transcriptions.

3.5.2 Oral and Written Reports

The students' engagement dimensions and CCs (CC1, CC2, CC3 and CC4) in the forms of both spoken and written language were also analyzed using discourse analytic measures, as discussed earlier. Both the written texts and the oral/ spoken reports (performances) were analyzed following the same steps, that is, the analysis steps of classroom interactions. Moreover, an external rating of oral report (in Activity 3) was also applied using a rubric designed by the local teacher, to measure the group's performance and to ensure internal validity of the study (Cohen et al., 2007).

Again, it should be noted here that the term *report* refers to the TBLT phase or precisely the Report phase. See Appendix 4 for the analyses of the written report.

3.5.3 Interview

Interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed verbatim upon the approval of the students; notes were taken for the non-recorded interviews and checked at the end of the interviews by the participants. It was important as "the data and interpretations were given back to the people from whom they were derived and asking them if the results were plausible" (Meriam, 1988, p.169). After transcribing, the students' answers were best selected, identified, and analyzed using the interpretational analysis method. The data were, then, used to

triangulate   the   data   findings   from   classroom   observations,   classroom interactions, and reports.