

## **CHAPTER III**

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

This chapter describes detailed research methodology engaged in the study. The chapter, generally, recalls the problem the current study is trying to be involved with as well as speaks of thorough justification on research methodology in the study.

#### **3.1 Research Questions**

This part presents questions for which the current study sought to investigate. The questions are, as follows:

1. What challenges do pre-service teachers experience during the field practicum?
2. What might contribute to the challenges experienced during field practicum?
3. How do pre-service teachers overcome the challenges experienced during field practicum?

#### **3.2 Research Design**

The study's aims to identify the aforementioned phenomena had led the study to adopt an exploratory design. Exploratory design was preferred due to its nature which is to research "the target problem or phenomenon because it has been not studied in detail before (Dörnyei, 2007, p. 308). In addition, the intention for designing exploratory study was for the reason that little has been done to investigate and understand the central issue raised in the current study (Fraenkel, Wallen & Hyun, 2012, p. 459).

Furthermore, the current study preferred qualitative methodology for the big picture of the research. This is owing to the fact that qualitative research is suitable to “investigate the quality of relationships, activities, situations, or materials” (Fraenkel, Wallen & Hyun, 2012, p. 426). It is also due to its nature of openness to work with subjective data (Dörnyei, 2007, p. 38). In addition, qualitative research was favored as the current study meets the characteristics of qualitative studies, i.e., using natural settings, investigating perspectives of participants’ experiences, taking into account the subjective integrated in the data, using inductive data analysis, being reflexive (Hatch, 2002, p. 7-10). It is also important to note that bearing in mind the objective of the study which is to obtain in-depth insight on the phenomena, and therefore not to make a generalization of the results that the study was guided by qualitative method (Creswell, 2012, p. 206; Fraenkel, Wallen & Hyun, 2012, p. 436-37).

Considering the scope of the study which was to investigate the phenomena from pre-service teachers’ perspectives (see Chapter 1, Section 1.5), the study was therefore devised to make use of phenomenological approach. The approach can help researchers to identify research subjects’ perspectives and their meaning (Lester 1999, p. 1, Guest, MacQueen, & Namey, 2011, p. 13; see also Merriam, 1998, Patton, 2002, in Gan, 2013, p. 97). In addition, it helps researchers to “gain some insight into the world of his or her participants and to describe their perceptions and reactions” (Fraenkel, Wallen & Hyun, 2012, p. 432).

### **3.3 Data Collection**

There are two sections elaborated in this part. The first section addresses sampling techniques employed and brief description of participants in the study. The second section revolves around technique used to collect the data.

### 3.3.1 Sample.

The research attempted to delve teaching experience of pre-service EFL teachers. In relation to the study's objectives, the research employed purposive sampling as the method for selecting participants. That is to say, the purposive sampling was endorsed as it can best address the issues investigated, which is the participants were selected owing to the fact that they experienced difficulties when conducting field practicum (Fraenkel, Wallen & Hyun, 2012, p. 100; Crewsell, 2012, p. 206). Specifically, the study preferred typical sample as sampling technique, meaning that the selected participants were eligible for the study because they can represent the subject being researched (Fraenkel, Wallen & Hyun, 2012, p. 436; Creswell, 2012, p. 208). In addition to sampling descriptions above, the selection of participants in this study was also affected by the nature of qualitative research that is to investigate a particular phenomenon (pre-service teachers' challenges) in a particular setting e.g. field practicum (Dörnyei, 2007, p. 126; Fraenkel, Wallen & Hyun, 2012, p. 437).

It has been indicated above that the sampling strategy used in the current study was purposive sampling. This was carried out by selecting participant candidates. The eligible candidates refer to pre-service teachers of a Bachelor of Education degree program who have done field practicum. Of 100 eligible candidates, six participants were selected as initial sample size in accordance with Dörnyei's suggestion that six participants may be enough as initial samples for an interview study (Dörnyei, 2007, p. 127; see Section 3.3.2 for elaboration on interview study). Therefore, six participants were chosen to contribute in the study. The selection of six participants was based on the fact that all six participants encountered problems in field practicum and all participants wanted to voluntarily take part in the study.

The initial samples of six participants were then asked to participate in the study and the data were gathered from the participants. After gathering the data from all six participants, it was found out that the sample size of six participants

had reached saturation, meaning that the data gathered from six participants were sufficient to answer the research questions presented in Section 3.1 and therefore there was no need to add more participants (Dörnyei, 2007, p. 127).

Consequently, the participants in this study were six pre-service teachers majoring in English language teaching. They were enrolled in a Sarjana Pendidikan (Bachelor of Education) degree program, a four-year program, in an Indonesia education university. To finalize their studies, in the eighth semester, they needed to take a field practicum lasting about four months. All participants carried out the practicum in secondary schools: two conducted the practicum in middle school (SMP), four carried out the practicum in high school (SMA and SMK). The intention to choose pre-service teachers as participants was in line with the scope of the study that is to explore the challenges posed in field practicum using pre-service teachers' perspective.

After selecting the candidate participants, assent was asked to each participant to willingly take part in the current study (Seidman, 2006, p. 65).

### **3.3.2 Instrument.**

In-depth interviews were solely employed to obtain the data in the current study. The technique was used since it can find out one's thoughts and feeling about something (Fraenkel, Wallen & Hyun, 2012, p. 451). In addition, it concentrates to "elicit information in order to achieve a holistic understanding of the interviewee's point of view or situation; it can also be used to explore interesting areas for further investigation" (Berry, 1999, <http://www.leeds.ac.uk/educol/documents/000001172.htm>).

The in-depth interviews were conducted in the form of semi-structured one-on-one interview. The semi-structured interviews were conducted in a quite formal setting –in a place of participants' preference and comprised of a series of questions expedient for comparing and contrasting (Fraenkel, Wallen & Hyun,

2012, p. 451), which is in accordance with the data analysis of the current study. The interview with each participant was carried out on more than one occasion once the data had yet to reflect the accuracy or had yet to provide the expected information. Follow-up interviews were conducted by means of interviewing participants in person. The interviews were conducted for 40-80 minutes. The amount of time allocated for each interview was in relation with the fact that the current study aimed to scrutinize in-depth meaning of pre-service teachers' challenges in field practicum. This suggests extensive, lengthy interviews were a common feature of qualitative research as they help interviewers to gain in-depth data (Dörnyei, 2007, p. 134-36).

Inquiries on the interview were adapted from previous relevant studies in order to record accurate data (Stenson, 2004, p. 64). As the form of the interviews was semi-structured which enables the interviewer to “[provide] guidance and direction” while “[letting] the interviewee elaborate on certain issues (Dörnyei, 2007, p. 136), a rigid guideline needed to be composed. There were four open-ended questions provided in the guideline: how pre-service teachers perceive field practicum, what challenges they experience during field practicum, why they experience such challenges, and how they overcome the challenges. These four main questions would then lead the direction of the interviews and therefore would not limit the freedom of the interviewees to elaborate particular topics (Dörnyei, 2007, p. 136; Creswell, 2012, p. 218). That is, the exact number of questions for each semi-structured interview might vary in accordance with the “breadth of the respondents’ story” (Dörnyei, 2007, p. 136).

The type of the questions was open-ended, which is in accordance with the nature of qualitative research to find experiences of the participants (Creswell, 2012, p. 218). The questions on the interviews were based on the theoretical frameworks covered in Chapter 2, Section 2.3.1 to Section 2.3.3.

The interviews employed probing techniques such as contradicting i.e. giving different opinion to the participants’ information, faking puzzling i.e.

pretending to be puzzled, among others to gather accurate data (Berry, 1999, <http://www.leeds.ac.uk/educol/documents/000001172.htm>).

Each interview was audio-taped after the participants have granted approval to record the interview (Tuckman, 1972, as cited in Berry, 1999, <http://www.leeds.ac.uk/educol/documents/000001172.htm>). Five interviews were conducted in English whilst one interview was carried out in Indonesian (Bahasa Indonesia), which was based on the interviewee's request that she was somewhat insecure about her English proficiency that she might not express fully her comments on the phenomenon should the interview was conducted in English. All the English interviews were later transcribed verbatim while the interview using Indonesian was transcribed verbatim first and translated to English afterwards. During transcribing the interviews and later on analyzing the transcripts, the participants' names were referred to as Dwi, Aila, Edi, Dian, Ario and Satria in order to preserve anonymity (Orb, Eisenhauer & Wynaden, 2000, p. 95). Furthermore, the transcripts were handed to the participants, in person or through electronic mail, so that the transcripts reflected the accuracy of the data gathered (Stenson, 2004, p. 68).

In-depth interviews were solely employed as the study was geared to follow the tradition of phenomenological research in which most, if not many, phenomenological researchers lean toward to the exclusive use of interview (Marshall and Rossman, 2006, p. 104; Englander, 2012, p. 14; Fraenkel, Wallen & Hyun, 2012, p. 432). That is, qualitative interview is customarily used as sole technique in a phenomenological research. Furthermore, interviews provide the current study with subjective lived experience, which is the heart of phenomenological researches (Lester, 1999, p.1; van Manen, 2007, p. 12; Englander, 2012, p. 15), and the basis of the current study. This refers back to the discussion of scope of the research in Chapter 1, Section 1.4: the current study scrutinized the phenomena of pre-service teachers' challenges in field practicum from subjective perspectives of pre-service teachers participating in the study. This suggests the researcher was "interested in the subjectivity of other persons

and thus it seems logical that [phenomenological researchers] would want to get a description of such subjectivity (Englander, 2009, p. 15; see also Lester, 1999, p.1). In addition, as indicated by Marshall and Rossman (2006), interview in phenomenology research “rests on the assumption that there is a structure and essence to shared experiences that can be narrated” (Marshall and Rossman, 2006, p. 104).

As employing interview was the sole technique in gathering the data and may be subjected to bias, interviews were conducted with numerous participants. This suggests individuals’ experiences are contrasted and compared to verify and to build “a rich picture of the attitudes, needs, or behavior of those under scrutiny” (Shenton, 2004, p. 66).

Although, the present study was endorsed to follow the tradition of phenomenological research, it might be better that data were collected using various techniques such as participant observation, reflection journals, etc. (Lester, 1999, p. 2). This suggests that employing such a method can support the validity of the already-gathered data and thus reduce the possible bias projected in the current study (Creswell, 2012, p. 259-60; p. 536; Fraenkel, Wallen & Hyun, 2012, p. 458). The recommendation presented here is also outlined in Chapter 5, Section 5.3.

The instrument for gathering the data, which was in-depth interview, was interrelated with data analysis of the study, meaning that data collection instrument and data analysis were “[a] part of a single, unified process” (Englander, 2012, p. 15). That is, both data collection and data analysis were carried out by means of using the same approach, phenomenological approach.

### **3.4 Data Analysis**

The current research was guided by phenomenological approach. The approach was selected based upon a justification that it is “a project of sober

reflection on the lived experience of human existence—sober, in the sense that reflecting on experience must be thoughtful, and as much as possible, free from theoretical, prejudicial and suppositional intoxications” (van Manen, 2007, p. 12). It is also that the emphasis of phenomenological approach that led the study preferred to use the approach, which is to highlight perspectives of subjects and the meanings the perspectives construing (Lester 1999, p. 1, Guest, MacQueen, & Namey, 2011, p. 13; see also Merriam, 1998, Patton, 2002, in Gan, 2013, p. 97).

The data analysis in the present study was carried out by employing a thematic analysis. The method was employed due to its nature “which reports experiences, meanings and reality of participants” (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 9). As the name suggests, thematic analysis attempts to discover themes in the data. The theme refers to “something important about the data in relation to the research question, and represents some level of *patterned* response or meaning within the data set” (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 10).

After collecting the data through in-depth interviews and transcribing the interviews, all interview questions were then categorized (Emilia, 2005, p. 84; Creswell, 2012, p. 473); the category of interview questions can be found in Appendix B. This step was followed by developing a thematic analysis (Kvale, 1996; Merriam, 1998 in Emilia, 2005). This was carried out by generating themes from participants’ comments; the themes generated were based on the theory presented in Chapter 2, Section 2.3. Then, the themes were condensed (Emilia, 2005, p. 84), meaning that the participants’ comments were simplified. This can be found in Appendix B.

### 3.5 Concluding Remark

This chapter has described research methodology employed in the current study, begins with statement of problems, research design, data collection and ends with data analysis. The following chapter will provide ample description of the findings and the discussions of the data gathered.