

CHAPTER III

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter discusses some important aspects related to research methodology. The first part begins with the research design and describes how the study was carried out. The second elaborates the participants involved and research setting in the study. The third is the data collection method included the data presentation. The fourth is about the validity and reliability of the study. And the last part elaborates the techniques used to analyze the data.

3.1. The Research Design

Since this study attempted to explore the activating of the students' content schema in teaching reading comprehension, it employed the qualitative research design with the characteristics of a case study. The study has the natural characteristics which mean that the researcher does not manipulate or interfere with the classroom activities being observed. Denzim and Lincoln (1994) define the qualitative research as multi methods in focus of the involvement of an interpretative, naturalistic approach to its subject matter. This means that qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or interpret the phenomena in terms of the meaning people bring to them.

A case study was chosen for several reasons. First, this study was carried out in a single case (Bogdan, 1988:54) that was the activating students' content schema in teaching reading comprehension. Second, this study employed multiple

data collections and analytical procedures, which constituted the important aspect of a case study (Yin, 1993:32). The use of multiple data collection was intended to allow for “in depth study” to enhance the construct validity of the study (Yin, 193: 39-40) and to gain more rounded and complete accounts on the description and picture of the activating students’ content schema in teaching reading comprehension at an SMP in Lembang, Bandung Barat. In this case study, the researcher used triangulation of the data collection methods which means the researcher used more than one method of data collection (Cohen and Manion, 1994; Silverman, 2005) involving classroom observation and interview with the teachers and students.

3.2. The Research Site

The study was conducted at an SMP in Lembang Bandung Barat Regency. There are several reasons for considering this school being research site of this study. The first, the school was located not far from the researcher where he was studying. This would make him easier to conduct the research in accordance with the feasibility of the site or data source for the study (Bogdan, 1988:54). The second, the school has been conducting good relationship with the institution where the researcher studied for a long time, so that he had no problem with the license conducting a research here. The third, one was related to the accessibility. The researcher had no problem in gaining the data and looking for the respondents of this study since he has ever conducted the research in the institution with the same respondents in the past. It means that he has good relationship with the English teachers so that he has easier access in gaining the data. Next the last

reason, the school was the most favorite one in the Bandung Barat Regency and it is also the only school which applied pioneering effort on the International Standard School in the region.

3.3. Participants

The participants of the study were two English teachers and five classes of eight grade students of an SMP in Lembang, Bandung Barat Regency. Each class consists of 40 to 45 students.

Teacher 1 (T1) was 48 years old. She graduated from IKIP Bandung and she has been teaching English for 26 years at the school. She was also a certified English teacher because she has passed in the teacher portfolio assessment in 2007. On the other hand, Teacher 2 (T2) was 43 years old. She graduated from IKIP Bandung too. She has been teaching at the same school for 19 years. But she has not called for teacher certification program.

The voluntary-based of choosing the participant was used in this study. It meant that the researcher used the English teachers who were ready to become participants in this study. The two English teachers were chosen for some reasons. The first, the researcher has looked for some English teachers to be respondents in his study, but it was not easy to find them. Many of English teachers with various reasons were not ready to be respondents in his research. The second, they were the teachers who always conducted the activating students' content schema in every teaching reading comprehension (the focus of the researcher's study and the independent variable). The third, they were the only teachers who were recommended by the headmaster to be the participants in the study.

3.4. The Data Collection Methods

As outlined above, this study employed a qualitative research, using multiple techniques of data collection methods. There were two main data collection methods used including classroom observation and interviews. The research was conducted for five weeks (from April 15, 2009 to May 15, 2009). The techniques will be elaborated below.

3.4.1. Classroom Observations

In a qualitative research, one of the primary data resources is observation (Silverman, 2005). If a researcher wants to find out classroom interaction, it is important for him or her to do classroom observation (Nunan, 1989:76). Thus several activities in what the teacher was doing including the strategies used and what the students were acting and responding, would be covered in the classroom activities of teaching reading comprehension.

Classroom observations were conducted for four meetings of each teacher with different classes and reading topic (See Appendices). The researcher's role in this observation acted as non-participant observer. He was present in the classroom but he didn't participate (Sugiono, 2005:66) in the teaching process.

During the observations, the researcher observed teaching and learning activities occurred in the classroom. He focused his observation on the strategies used by the teacher in activating students' content schema which occurred in pre reading activity and he also observed the students' activities in responding to the activities during the teacher was activating students' content schema in teaching reading comprehension.

Further, the researcher took notes of what was said and what was done by both the teacher and the students in the classroom interaction. This was done in order to investigate what strategies were potentially used by the teacher in activating students' content schema in teaching reading comprehension and what responses that appeared from students on the activities conducted by the teacher in activating students' content schema in teaching reading comprehension.

The classroom activities were also recorded by using MP4 audio-recorder and digital camera. This was done to give an opportunity to the observer to get a complete picture of the classroom activities.

The data from observations will be elaborated in the following data presentation.

3.4.1.1. The Strategies Used by the Teachers

3.4.1.1.1. Pre-questioning

There were a few similar strategies which were used by the teachers to activate the students' content schema in some sessions of observation. They were pre questioning strategy. T1 used this strategy in two sessions of observations. They were M1.T1. April 22, 2009 and M4.T1, May 7, 2009. The same strategies used by T2 in M1.T2. April 22, 2009 and M2.T2, May 06, 2009.

In M1.T1, April 22, 2009, T1 asked the students some questions which were related to the topic of the reading text (Going to the Doctor). The questions which were asked by the teachers such as; "If you are sick, where do you usually go?, Who usually help the doctor?, If you have stomachache, what do you usually drink?, what medicine do you usually drink?, if you have headache, what do you

usually drink?, what are stomachache and headache? What are *Oralit*, *Oskadon*, *Poldan Mig?*”.

The same strategy used by T1 in M4.T1.May 7, 2009. T1 asked the students some questions related to the topic of the text (Short Message). They are;”Do you like to inform friends?, Do you like to write letter?, etc.

The data obtained from observation to T2 in M1.T2.April 22, 2009 are as follow: T2 told the students her body condition, she said that she did not feel well. She had a sore throat. T2 then asked the students some questions which were related to the topic, such as;”who know sore throat?, who have ever been sore throat?, have you ever been sore throat?, what do you feel when you are sick?, who have been ill?, who have ever been to hospital or clinic?, have you ever been to hospital or clinic?”. In this session the topic was “Going to the Doctor”.

In M2.T2.May 6, 2009, T2 also presented some questions to students in pre reading activities. In this session the topic of the text was “Holiday”. The questions asked by the teacher were;”when you have a holiday, where did you go?, when did you go there?, how about the others?, where did you go?, what for?”

The data description above showed that both of the teachers used pre questioning strategy to activate the students’ content schema in teaching reading comprehension. Through this strategy, it was likely expected that the students’ content schema about the topic could be activated. They made the students think and answer the questions. By answering the questions given by the teachers, it can be assumed that their background knowledge has been active and it will help them

in comprehending the text because the interaction between the reader and the text occurs. It is relevant with the theory discussed in the previous chapter that comprehension will take place if there is an interaction process between the reader's background knowledge and the text (Samuel and Kamil, 1988).

3.4.1.1.2. Using Pictures and Questioning

Another valuable data obtained from the classroom observation on T1 was found in M2.T1.April 23, 2009 and M3.T1.May 6, 2009. In these sessions T1 used some pictures of animals and followed by asking the students some questions related to the topic of the text.

T1 showed the pictures of animals such as elephant, turtle, lion, tiger, and rhinoceros one by one. T1 asked the students to guess and mention the name of the animal. After showing the pictures, T1 then asked the students questions which were closely related to the topic (Going to the Zoo), such as "Where do you usually see the animals?, Have you been to the zoo?, When did you go to the zoo?, What did you see there?"

By showing the students some pictures, it was likely that T1 tried to help the students remind their experience and their content schema about animals. If the students' content schema has been active the process of reading will be meaningful, since pictures as audio visual aids facilitated students in activating their background knowledge related to the text (Omaggio, 1979).

3.4.1.1.3. Using Analogy

In M3.T2.May 27, 2009, T2 presented the reading text which topic was “The Lion and the Mouse”. T2 told students her own experience that when she was walking to the shop, she dropped her wallet down unintentionally, fortunately a small boy saw it. He then took and gave it back to her. From the story T2 asked the students to make an inference that the small boy (the younger) could help the adult (the older). The moral value taken from this story was similar with one in the story about “The Lion and the Mouse”.

T2 seemed want to relate the story that she told with the story in the reading text. When the students could realize that the two stories were similar, it would be easier for them to comprehend the reading text, because they could use their background knowledge as a guide in getting the meaning from the text. In addition, schema provides ideational scaffolding for assimilating text information (Anderson, 1984). It means that a schema provides a slot for certain text information, the information that fits slot in the reader’s schema is readily learned, perhaps with little mental effort.

3.4.1.1.4. Storytelling Demonstration

In M4.T2.May 27, 2009, T2 presented a storytelling performance to the students in pre reading activities.T2 invited a student from RSBI class to perform a story in front of the class. The story was about “The Goldilocks and the Three Bears”.

T2 seemed intend to activate the students' background knowledge before asked them to read the text about "The Lion and the Mouse'. In this session T2 tried to relate the students' background knowledge on the story about animal by having them listen and watch the storytelling performance. It was conducted to make them easier in comprehending the reading text which was going to be discussed in the whilst reading activity.

3.4.1.2. The Students' Responses on the Activating Students' Content Schema

In relation to the students' responses on the activities of activating students' content schema in teaching reading comprehension, the researcher describes the data obtained as follow:

When T1 used pre questioning strategy for activating students' content schema as in M1.T1. April 22, 2009 and M4.T1, May 7, 2009, the students looked very enthusiastically responded all of the questions asked by the teacher. They answered the questions and when the teacher asked them to write the answer on the board they did it. In addition, the students' appearances during the activities were joyful and paid attention fully to the teacher.

On the other hand, when T2 used pre questioning strategy as in M1.T2. April 22, 2009 and M2.T2, May 06, 2009, the students' responses were different. When T2 asked them questions, they just kept silent or occasionally answered the questions by saying "yes or no". This happened might be caused by the types of the questions and the lack of time for students to think the answer. In other words in these session T2 did not give enough pause for students to answer the questions. However, after T2 changed the types of the questions and used realia as

medium, - such as she pointed to her teeth when she told them that she had toothache – and gave enough pause for the students to answer the questions, they could respond the questions better.

Another data was obtained by the researcher when T1 used pictures followed by questioning the students as in M2.T1.April 23, 2009 and M3.T1.May 6, 2009. In these two sessions of observation the students were likely very enthusiastically responded the strategy used by the teacher. When the T1 showed them the pictures of animal all of the students looked at it. In addition when T1 asked them to mention what was the name of the animal, they answered it in chorus. Good responses were also shown by the students when T1 asked them some questions about their experience in visiting the zoo. Most of them said that they had ever gone to the zoo and saw many kinds of animals like in the pictures showed by T1.

The students' responses on the activating students' content schema could also be seen in M3.T2.May27, 2009. As described in the strategies used by the teachers above that in this session T2 used an analogy to activate the students' content schema in pre reading activity. T2 told her own experience which had the same moral value with the story in the reading text. Then T2 asked students some questions which had relationship with the topic of the text. Most of the students responded the questions positively. Although they did not raise their hand before answering the question, when the teacher asked them to answer, they could answer it. Even, in the last part of the pre reading activity, the students could

guess and stated their opinion that the story would be about the lion could help the mouse although their prediction could not be proven true after they read the story.

The last data obtained from classroom observation in M4.T2.May 27, 2009. In this session T2 invited a student of RSBI class to tell a story to the students. She told a story about “The Goldilocks and the Three Bears”. The students were likely very excited in attending this session. When T2 told them that she would invite a student who won the storytelling competition in province level, the students applauded lively. Along the storyteller told the story the students paid attention to her. In addition, cheerful laughter of the students often punctuated the story when they thought that they saw or heard something funny.

The data presentation above showed that generally the students gave positive responses on the activating students’ content schema conducted by the teachers. It meant that they gave positive attitudes on the activity. When the students gave positive attitudes on something their interest would be increase. The students’ interest on the activities can makes them curious to read whereas curiosity is strong motivational force (Alexander, 1988). In addition, when the students have motivation to read, the interaction between the reader and the text as the reading process in building meaning will occur.

3.4.2. Interviews

The second source of the data was interviews with the participants of the study. This was used to attain the real data from the teachers and students to answer the first and the second research questions. Merriam (1988:69) states that

qualitative data consist of the direct quotations from respondents about their experiences, opinions, feelings, and knowledge through interviews.

By having interviews, the researcher could probe the respondents for additional information in response to interesting or important answers that arise unexpectedly from planned questions. This condition might let the researcher get additional information related to the problems being investigated. So, the semi-structured interviews were used by the researcher to collect the data. Kvale (1996:124) states, "Semi-structured interview means it has a sequence of theme to be covered as well as suggested questions. Yet at the same time there is openness to the change of sequences and form of questions in order to follow up the answer given and stories told by the subject." The interview questions can be seen in appendices.

Interviews with the teachers were conducted in two terms. The first term was done at the beginning of the research. It took approximately ten to fifteen minutes. There were seventeen questions covering the preparation, the teacher's consideration and their strategies in activating students' content schema in teaching reading comprehension. The second term was conducted after each teaching session. This was aimed to cross-check the information gained during the observation (whenever it is required).

Interviews with the students were also conducted in two terms. The first one was done at the end of the research. There were five students from different classes interviewed by the researcher. This was conducted to get the data questioned by the second research question. There were twelve questions covering

their responses on the activities conducted by the teacher in activating students' content schema during the research. The second interview was conducted at every lesson ended. This means to cross-check information from the observation.

As the researcher stated above that there were two types of interviews conducted by the researcher. The first one was the interview with the two teachers and five students as semi-structured interviews. The second interviews were conducted after each teaching session ended. Two of students from each class were interviewed by the researcher to clarify what had happened during the teaching process based on their views. This was also done to the teachers. In this presentation the data obtained from two types of interviews would be described in one part of the description based on the topic of research.

3.4.2.1. Interviews with the Teachers

The data were obtained from interviews with the two teachers as respondents in this study could be described as follows:

When the researcher asked them whether it was important to help student activate their background knowledge, the teachers said that it was important to help them because it will be valuable for them in comprehending the reading texts. In addition, since every student had their own problems at home which often disturb their concentration or because of the shift from one lesson to another, driving their attention to the reading text through activating their background knowledge was important. **(I1.T1 May 7, 2009 and I1.T2 April 23, 2009).**

Furthermore, T1 said that the purpose of the activating students' content schema was to direct the students to the reading text which would be discussed.

It means that activating the students' content schema is an important aid for the students in making meaning from their interaction in the reading process. Since, activating students' background knowledge is building bridge between the students' existing knowledge to the knowledge providing by the text (Carrell and Floyd, 1987).

Another data was related to the strategies used by the teachers to activate students' content schema. Both of the teachers used pre questioning strategy and pictures followed by questioning strategy. Furthermore, T2 clarified that she used a strategy which she called *drammatical session*. In this strategy the teacher acted a role like in a drama without telling the students that she was playing drama (I1.T2 April 23, 2009). However, when the researcher asked them to clarify a session of classroom observation (M4.T2. May 27, 2009), T2 stated that what she called *drammatical session* was a strategy used when she invited a story teller to tell the students a story in the pre reading activity. The story told by the story teller was the same type as what the students discussed in the reading session. (CLM3&4.T2. May 27, 2009).

The data above showed that the teachers used some strategies to activate the students' content schema such as pre questioning and using pictures followed by questioning. This is in line with the previous research conducted by Tudor (1988), Taglieber, et al (1988) and Hudson (1982) that both of strategies facilitate the students reading comprehension. Unfortunately, in relation to the *drammatical*

session strategy, the researcher did not find the reference or previous study which supports the use of this strategy to activate the students' content schema. The researcher preferred to categorize the strategy into a story telling demonstration.

In relation to the time used by the teachers to activate students' content schema both of the teachers used five to minutes. It depended on the students condition whether the teacher thought that the students' content schema have been active or not **(I1.T1 May 7, 2009 and I1.T2 April 23, 2009)**.

The teachers could check whether their schema had been active or not, by observing the students' responses on the activity. When the students could answer the questions given by the teachers, the teachers assumed that the students' schema had been active **(I1.T1 May 7, 2009 and I1.T2 April 23, 2009)**.

When the teachers had used a strategy to activate the students' content schema, but they thought that the students' content schema had not been active, they used an alternative strategy. In other case when the teachers used pre questioning strategy, but the students could not answer the questions, the teachers added some easier questions. The most important thing was the teachers could facilitate the students to comprehend the text **(I1.T1 May 7, 2009 and I1.T2 April 23, 2009)**.

3.4.2.2. Interviews with the Students

There were five students interviewed by the researcher to obtain the data of the students' responses on the activating the students' content schema in teaching reading comprehension. They were interviewed after the researcher

finished doing classroom observation in their class. The data obtained were described in the following description.

In relation to their beliefs about the activating students' content schema conducted in pre reading activity, all of them agreed that it was very important for the teacher to conduct activities which activate students' content schema in every reading session. S1, S2, S3, S4, and S5 stated that the activity was very helpful for them in comprehending the text. When the interviewer asked whether they thought that activating students' content schema helped them in comprehending the reading text, all of them said, "*Ya, sangat membantu*".

The data above showed that both of the students considered the importance of the activating students' content schema in teaching reading comprehension, since they believed it was helpful for them in comprehending the text. It meant they were likely to realize that background knowledge or schemata play an important role in comprehending the text. Because our understanding of a text depends on how much related schema we as readers' posses while reading (Al Issa, 2006). Even when the readers can not locate a schema that fits a text, they may find it incomprehensible (Anderson, 1994).

All of the students felt excited when the interviewer asked them what they feel when the teacher conducted pre reading activity particularly activating students' content schema which helps them comprehend text. They said:

S1, S4 and S5 : *Senang*(S1.M4T2)(S4.M4T1)(S5.M4T1)

S2 : *Senang , jadi kita lebih tahu dari yang asalnya sulit*
(S2.M4T2)

S3 : *Senang, kita kan jadi terbantu (S3.M4T1)*

Keeping the above condition in the teaching and learning process was important for the teacher. When the students were excited, it meant that they were interested in joining in the activity. This would increase their motivation to learn, particularly in finishing the reading tasks assigned by the teacher.

When the teacher asked the students questions and they know the answer, they responded the questions. They said:

S1: *Kalau saya tahu jawabannya saya jawab. (S1.M4T2)*

S2: *Menjawabnya. (S2.M4T2)*

S3: *Menjawab (S3.M4T1)*

S4: *Kalau saya ngerti pertanyaanya dan saya tahu, saya jawab. (S4.M4T1)*

S5: *Menjawab pertanyaan itu. (S5.M4T1)*

The data above could be used by the teachers as a way to check whether the students' content schema had been active or not. It meant that when the teacher asked the students questions and they could answer the questions, the teacher was likely to infer that the students' content schema had been active. In the contrary when the students could not answer the questions, the teachers could likely determine that the students' content schema had not been active. In this condition the teacher might consider using another strategy or asked the students with some easier questions which were closer to the students' schema.

3.5. The Research Procedures

As mentioned above that this study took place five weeks, from April 15 to May 15 2009. It consists of two parts; it was the preliminary study and the main study.

3.5.1. The Preliminary Study

It was not an easy task for the researcher to find the respondents for this study. He visited several schools and met some English teachers to find the teachers who were ready to become respondent. Unfortunately, many teachers were not ready to take part as respondents in this study by telling him various reasons. Finally, on April 15, 2009 the researcher visited an SMP in Lembang, a school where he had ever conducted a mini research there. The headmaster assistance majoring in curriculum allowed him to conduct the study there. He also recommended two teachers who were ready to become respondents. As mentioned in the participant sub-chapter above both of them taught English in the grade eight. He then invited the teachers and gave opportunity to the researcher to extend his purpose.

In this occasion the researchers told them the topic of the study and also the procedures of the study which were going to be conducted. They understood their position as respondents and they showed the researcher the schedule of their teaching which could be used for the study. In addition, one of them allowed the researcher to observe the class when she was teaching reading. As the result, the researcher obtained valuable data to reformulate the instruments used in this study.

3.5.2. The Main Study

After the researcher reformulated the research instruments, he began to conduct the main study by interviewing both of the teachers to obtain the data whether they applied pre reading activity by activating students' content schema in their teaching process and other data related to it.

The next steps were observing the teaching process which consists of eight session of observations, four sessions for each respondent. After each observation conducted, the researcher interviewed the teacher and two of the students to clarify what he saw in the observation.

Lastly, after eight sessions of classroom observations were completed, the researcher interviewing five students from different class and different teacher who taught in their class.

The data obtained from the two kinds of research instruments then transcribed and gave back to the respondents to give the opportunity for them to check what they did and said were really what they wanted. The final data transcriptions then categorized, coded, condensed, and finally interpreted to answer the research questions of this study.

3.6. The Issue of Validity

Validity is a goal rather than a product, it is never something that can be proven or taken for granted (Maxwell in Alwasilah, 2006:169). Validity is also relative; it has to be accessed in relationship to the purposes and circumstances of the research, rather than being a context-independent property of methods or conclusion.

The data gathered from the field can be proven to be valid by doing several steps in triangulation methods, because as it is stated by Maxwell (1996) triangulation reduces the risk that the conclusion will reflect only systematic biases or limitations of a specific method. It allows the researcher to gain a better assessment of the validity and generality of the explanation developed by the researcher. Therefore, in this research, to maintain the validity and gain a more valid and accurate data, some strategies were used such as triangulation measure and “rich” data. Maxwell also says that triangulation is to collect the information from diverse range individuals and setting and to use variety of methods. Hence, observation and interviews were used as the methods of collecting data in this study. For member check, this strategy was undertaken to ensure internal validity as well. The respondents re-read what they have said before and possibly new information can be added or deleted. Furthermore to make students and teachers comfortable and being honest to the researcher, the students and the teacher assured that their real names and identity were disguised and they were anonymity and interviewed in a location distant from the classroom or teacher room.

3.7. Data Analysis

All the data gathered were analyzed qualitatively. The data analysis was done soon after classroom observations and interviews conducted. Alwasilah (2006:158) states that the data analysis must be done as soon as possible after the data are gathered. Therefore, the researcher began to analyze the data as soon as they obtained. Some techniques were used for analyzing the data like the following:

First, all the recorded data from audio recorder (MP4) during the observation was transcribed. After getting the data through observation, then, the researcher interviewed the respondents including the teachers and the students to cross-check. All the interviews data were also repeatedly listened to be transcribed.

Second, the researcher read the transcribed data which consist of observation and interview transcripts, the researcher coded the data by using certain marks. Related to coding Maxwell (1996:78) suggests that the goal of coding is to code the data and to rearrange into categories that help the comparison of data within and between the categories.

Third, the transcribed data were condensed based on the data which had relationship with the topics of the research, and categorized based on the topic of the research questions. Finally the data presented based on the data collection methods used in this research.