

# **CHAPTER III**

## **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

This chapter discusses the methodology of the research, which includes an explanation on how the research is conducted. More specifically, it presents the research design, data collection method, data triangulation, and data analysis.

### **3.1 Research Design**

This research mainly explored the Ph.D. candidates learning strategies on an EAP course on International English Language Testing System (IELTS) preparation in one language center in Bandung. This study was set out to investigate the participants speaking learning in their EAP course for IELTS test. Furthermore, it investigated the most effective strategies as perceived by the course participants.

This research is a single case study that represents a critical test to existing learning strategies theory on a unique event in an EAP course. It used a descriptive type of case study since it has been widely viewed as a method that produces data as many as possible relating to the subjects being investigated. The descriptive method is used to identify patterns or trends in one particular situation,

but not the causal link among its different elements, for that reason is subjective. This method intends to describe a phenomenon that might go unnoticed.

The data gained from the research was described in an elaborated explanation mostly in the form of words and sentences. The inferences were made based on the findings and the data gained from the research were described based on related literature. Consequently, this study was expected to describe the present practices of learning speaking for IELTS test.

### **3.2 Data Collection Method**

The section comprises the participants involved and the instrumentation comprising the questionnaire, interview, observation and the IELTS public result list in collecting the data for this study. Thus, to fit the purpose of this study, only this particular IELTS score was used to correlate with their learning strategies. This study involved a simple four-step data collection method which is illustrated in the table below:

Step	Task	Duration
First phase	Distributing questionnaire	Two days
Second phase	Observation aided with videotaping	Two days
Three phase	Conducting interview	Three days
Fourth phase	Collecting IELTS public results	One day

Table 3.1 Data collection method

### **3.2.1 Participants**

This study was conducted in one language center in Bandung. The participants of this study were 99 Ph.D. candidates granted scholarships by DIKTI in 2011 for batch 2012. The participants were divided into four parallel classes to make the learning activities much more comfortable and possible to handle for both sides; the IELTS instructors and the participants themselves. The research involved them because they were given the EAP course the shortest hours, which was three months, than the other former batches of DIKTI grantees who usually did that in four and or six months. It was assumed that this particular batch was putting more efforts in learning English as the preparation of IELTS and employed more effective strategies for mastering speaking skill.

The participants for this research were taken on census so each of the students had the same chance of being selected for the sample. Initially, 99 students from all four classes participated in this study. These classes were not divided based on level of competence, meaning that each class could have participants from beginner, intermediate and advanced levels. On 6-7 December 2011 when the questionnaire was distributed and the classroom observation was performed, there were only 86 participants attended the classes. The questionnaire was returned and fully completed by 80 of them.

Those 80 participants were then classified into three categories of low achiever, medium achiever, and high achiever based on their score on the pre-test given by the language center on 21 September 2011. The categorization of these

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participants' achievement was based on the IELTS band descriptors (British Council, IELTS Australia & University of Cambridge public version), on scale of 0 to 9. There were seven low achievers, 34 medium achievers and 32 high achievers. As much as 10% of each achievement category was taken as the sample for the interviews. As the result, one low achiever, four medium achievers and three high achievers were randomly chosen as the interview samples. The interviews were done in between 16-19 December 2011. These 80 participants took the real IELTS test on Saturday, 17 December 2011.

### **3.2.2 Collection Procedures**

This section deals with the instrumentation of collecting data, which includes questionnaire, interview and observation.

#### **3.2.1.1 Questionnaire**

The questionnaire was used as the main instrument to collect the data. It was administered to the respondents in order to collect information and identify their preferences on their strategies in learning speaking and information about the most effective strategies in learning speaking according to the course participants.

The questionnaire was administered to 80 respondents.

The questionnaire that consisted of 13 questions eliciting students' strategies in speaking learning were categorized into three: metacognitive, cognitive, and socioaffective strategies. The respondents were asked to rate their

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preferences of strategies on a frequency interval scale: never, seldom, sometimes, often and always. The questionnaire used in this study was modelled on established instruments by O'Maley et al. (1985, in McCoy, 2011). The language in the questionnaire was translated into Bahasa Indonesia, the students' mother tongue, and kept as unambiguous and as simple as possible to avoid making the questionnaire unduly lengthy. Negative questions, which can be dubious and difficult to understand were also avoided (see Appendix 1).

The following is the table of the questionnaire used in this study:

Variable	Indicators	Descriptions	Total of Items	Numbers
Speaking Learning Strategies	Metacognitive	1. Advanced Organizer 2. Selective Attention 3. Self Management 4. Self Monitoring & Evaluation 5. Delayed Production	5	1, 2, 3, 4, 5
	Cognitive	1. Repetition 2. Resourcing 3. Translation 4. Inferencing	4	6, 7, 8, 9
	Socioaffective	1. Clarification 2. Cooperation	4	10, 11, 12, 13

Table 3.2 Indicators of Speaking Learning Strategies Questionnaire

The data acquired from the questionnaire was analyzed manually. There was also an additional open-ended question at the end of the distributed questionnaire on other most effective learning strategies to improve speaking ability as perceived by the participants. The summary of the participants' answers could be found in the table 4.8.

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### **3.2.1.2 Interview**

The face-to-face semi-structured interview was conducted ten days after the students completed the questionnaire. Nunan (1992) states that through a semi-structured interview, the interviewer knows where the interview wants to go and what will come out of it but at the same time he does not enter the interview session with predetermined questions. Nunan emphasizes that by this flexibility, many researchers are in favor of using semi-structured type.

The interview was done after the distribution of the questionnaire in order to get in-depth answers to the unanswered questions attained by the previous instrument. The aim of using this interview was to identify the most effective speaking learning strategies as perceived by the course participants. The interview itself was carried out based on an interview guideline adapted from Purnomo (2009), which consisted of 15 with open-ended questions as attached (see Appendix 2).

The students were purposefully selected for the interview came from each category of low achiever, medium achiever and high achiever based on the participants' pre-test scores. The numbers of the students on each category was written in small piece of papers which then were folded and put into a glass. The glass was covered with a paper that was given a small hole and sealed with a rubber band. The glass was shaken and the random numbers of the students to be interviewed was one by one drawn.

The interviews were conducted in unstructured open-ended questions and an interview guideline was used in order to find out the EAP course participants' learning strategy for speaking in IELTS test. The interviews were conducted in Bahasa Indonesia, as it allowed the chosen participants to express their thoughts more freely. The questions were asking about the 8 interviewees' reasons to speak English, with who, when and where do they usually use English, and what are their problems of speaking in English. Furthermore, they were asked about the evidence of their English speaking improvement(s), learning strategies that they chose to use to make their speaking more fluent, and whether there are some strategies given by their instructors that could be used to help them speaking English fluently.

There were more questions about the number of IELTS test that the interviewees had taken, what were their preparations on learning English for IELTS in the EAP course, and whether they thought that this type of course would help them to be more fluent in English. At the end, the interviewees were asked about their own efforts to improve their speaking ability, be it was done inside and or outside of the EAP course classes, the speaking learning strategies that they wish to use and or the ones that they liked to do and whether they believed those chosen strategies were effective to make them fluent in English.

The interviews were recorded and then transcribed one by one soon after the interviews took place. The transcriptions were then analyzed to enrich the previous data gained from the questionnaire (see Appendix 3). Further

explanation of the interview data is provided in chapter IV. The following is the question mapping on the interview guideline as in how those interview questions are answering the research questions:

Number of Interview Question	Number of Research Question	
	1	2
1		√
2		√
3		√
4		√
5		√
6	√	
7		√
8	√	
9	√	
10	√	
11	√	
12	√	
13		√
14		√
15		√

Table 3.3 The Question Mapping of the Interview Guideline

### 3.2.1.3 Observation

The observation was conducted to investigate the learning activity and the students' learning attitude in the classrooms interaction. From observation, the evidence of the metacognitive, cognitive and socioaffective strategies could be found. The data were recorded by videotaping the classrooms activities. As states by Alwasilah (2006), an observation facilitates the researcher to see how the theory put into practice in the real situations. Rubin's 1981 research in O'Maley

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and Chamot (1990) proved that classroom observation is the least useful method for identifying strategies, therefore this study less focused on the data analysis from the observation. However, McCoy (2011) argues that even though observation cannot reliably identify all factors in students' classroom activities, it is particularly useful for some.

The students' learning activity and their attitude towards the learning session were able to be analyzed through observing their efforts in being active and interactive with the instructor. In addition, by videotaping, the students' facial expressions, gestures and body language could be thoroughly observed. For that reason, the videotape was put in the corner front of the classroom in order to get a better view on the whole class situation and on the whole students' behavior; whether they have prepared for class, whether they keep notes regarding the lessons taught, whether they used translation, whether they were willing to work in pairs, in groups or any other interpersonal contact (O'Malley and Chamot 1990, Nunan 1992, as cited in McCoy 2011). The observation sheet alone was adapted from Manurung (2005) that provides three areas for each learning strategy observed from the students' classroom interactions includes prompts regarding what should be observed (see Appendix 4).

### **3.3 Data Triangulation**

Jarvinen (2001) pinpoints that in qualitative research triangulation aims to enhance the credibility and validity of the results since it gives a more detailed and balanced picture of the situation. He adds that data triangulation can be achieved through multiple data collecting, sources, procedures and strategies. To strengthen the findings, the data from questionnaire and interview were triangulated with the videotaped observation. This study also involved an IELTS public results list, and because this result comes from an acknowledged international high-stake standardized test, reliability and validity could be ensured.

### **3.4 Data Analysis**

The data of this research were analyzed by using a descriptive method. The data were mostly described in a qualitative way, which is not amenable to be counted or measured objectively and therefore subjective. The data analysis was soon completed after the questionnaire was given to all of 80 EAP course participants. An interpretation was made on the data analyzed by classifying, analyzing, synthesizing and interpreting the data collected.

The data from the questionnaire was analyzed manually one by one according to the chosen particular learning strategies used in this study. After this, a simple calculation of each major category's frequency was made, so that a conclusion for research question number one could be drawn. The data collected

through interviews were analyzed to understand the patterns of the chosen respondents' answers better in supporting the data found from the questionnaire. There were all eight interviews and each interview was transcribed carefully. After all interview recordings were transcribed, they were compared thoroughly to obtain the data needed for this present study in order to answer the research question number two. Last of all, the data available from the videotapes was acquired based on what was seen, heard, and observed during classroom observation sessions. The videotapes were not transcribed, it was described in a qualitative way instead. This data was used for the data triangulation process later.

Data analysis that was done all together with data collection was facilitated to focus and shape the study as it proceeds. To intensify the data gained from the questionnaire and interviews, other sources like documents such as the participants' pre-test scores, the IELTS public results list, and second hand written inputs by several colleagues on the recorded observation videos, were also gathered. The findings from the questionnaire were then triangulated with the findings from the interview and observation. At the end, a conclusion of the research was made. The table below illustrates the methodology used for this present study:

Research Question	Data Collection	Framework
1. What strategies do the EAP course participants use in learning speaking for IELTS?	Questionnaire	McCoy (2011) based on O'Malley & Chamot (1985)

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2. What strategies are most effective as perceived by the participants?	Interview	Purnomo (2009)
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Table 3.4 Research method used in this present study

