

CHAPTER III

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter discusses the research methodology applied in this study. It describes the research problems, method of study, data collection method, and data analysis.

3.1 Research Problems

This study mainly explores and documents junior high school students' language learning strategies (LLS) as an attempt to find their relationship with students' achievement in learning English. It is also intended to investigate the students' LLS that are relevant to the strategic competence and attitudes towards learning English proposed by the English curriculum 2004. The problems of study are formulated in the following research questions.

- a. What learning strategies are applied by junior high school students in learning English?
- b. What learning strategies are applied by junior high school students categorized as good language learners in learning English?
- c. Is there any relationship between the LLS the students apply and their achievement in learning English?
- d. To what extent are the students' frequently used LLS related with the strategic competence and attitudes towards learning English proposed by the 2004 English curriculum for junior high school?

3.2 The Method of Study

Since this study is intended to explore the most LLS the whole students and good language learners apply in learning English, the students' strategic competence and attitude towards learning English as proposed by the 2004 English curriculum and the correlation between students' LLS and their achievement, it applies the descriptive and correlative quantitative procedures.

The descriptive procedure is to describe the most frequent LLS whole students and good language learners apply in learning English. They are selected based on the 10 most frequently used strategies students apply in learning English. Their intensity of use or frequency is presented in the form of percentage. The descriptive procedure is also applied to describe the students' LLS that are relevant to the strategic competence and attitude towards learning English proposed by the 2004 English curriculum. The criteria are selected based on the LLS of the overall respondents and good language learners with their frequency or intensity of use 50% or above. Further, the LLS are compared with the strategic competence and attitude towards learning English proposed by the 2004 English curriculum to find their similarities. The Pearson Product Moment Correlation with Ex-post facto design is used to examine if students' achievement is correlated with the LLS they apply in learning the language. It is based on what is put forward by Hatch and Farhady (1982:26):

Ex post facto designs are often used when the researcher does not have control over the selection and manipulation of the independent variable. This is why the researcher looks at the type and/or degree of relationship between the two variables rather than at a cause and effect relationship.

The data obtained is then analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Science (SPSS) version 12.0.

3.3 Data Collection Method

This section discusses the participants involved and the research procedures including the questionnaire, document analysis and interviews employed in this study.

3.3.1 Subject

This study was conducted in three classes of three best government junior high schools with national standard (SSN) coded as SMP A, SMP B and SMP C in Cirebon municipality. SMP A is the oldest and the most favorite junior English school in this city. It is also considered the best school because it always gets the best score in national final examination (UAN) every year. SMP B is the second favorite junior high school for its second position in UAN achievement and SMP C is the third favorite junior high school for its third position in UAN achievement.

Initially, 132 students participated in this study. However, due to their inappropriate answer to the questionnaire, only 118 respondents were included in this study. The 118 participants consisted of 43 students of class 3E of SMP A, 36 students of class 3A of SMP B and 39 students of class 3E of SMP C. The classes from the three schools were chosen based on the principle of representativeness. The choice of participants was basically to achieve representative data of the whole junior high school students. Since the study investigates the LLS of the good language

learners as well as those of the average ones, the three classes of the three schools are considered suitable for this study. The three schools in Cirebon are also chosen for the reasons of practicality and good access. As the researcher belongs to a community of teachers and his close relationship with his fellow teachers in this city, he has a good access to get detailed information and data needed in doing the research.

3.3.2 Procedures

This part discusses the procedures to collect the data applied in this study. In this study, the data were gathered through questionnaires, document analysis and semi-structured interviews.

3.3.2.1 Questionnaire

The questionnaire was used as the main instrument to collect the data. It was used to collect the information about students' learning strategies and the information on the students' strategic competence and attitudes towards learning English. The questionnaire was adapted from the *Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL) Version for Speakers of Other Language Learning English* developed by Oxford (1990). The questionnaire was simplified based on the capacity of junior high school students. The questionnaire contains thirty-five questions dealing with students' attitudes and strategies they apply in learning English. They consist of questions dealing with the use of *memory strategy* (4 items), *cognitive strategy* (10

items), *compensation strategy* (5 items), *metacognitive strategy* (6 items), *affective strategy* (5 items) and *social strategy* (5 items).

Since many LLS indicators are similar with those of the indicators of strategic competence and positive attitudes towards learning English proposed by the 2004 English curriculum for junior high school, and in many cases they overlap each other, the questionnaire was used to investigate these two aspects. The questionnaire is presented in Appendix A. The data were described in the form of simple quantitative description; therefore, the *Likert Scale* was used with the criteria shown in Table 3.1.

Table 3.1
Student's LLS score category

CATEGORY	SCORE
Never	1
Seldom	2
Often	3
Always/Very often	4

The scores from students' LLS are calculated to find the intensity of use or the frequency of every indicator in the questionnaire. Regarding to negative and positive responses, the scores of Never and Seldom are combined to be the score of N+S and the scores of Often and Always are combined to be the score of O+A. The scores, later, are presented in the form of percentage.

3.3.2.2 Document Analysis

Document analysis was used to gather information about students' overall achievement in studying English. The achievement was based on the students' overall scores for the English subject in the previous semester, semester five in

academic year 2005/2006. The score included their daily performance and their formative and summative test results for the whole semester.

From the whole 118 students involved in this study, 30 out of 118 students are categorized as good language learners. This categorization is based on students' achievement in learning English in their class. They are 10 students with the highest English scores from each class. Since they are from different classes of different schools, the ranges of their achievement scores vary as shown in Table 3.2.

Table 3.2
Good language learners' scores range

Student Respondents	Range of Score
SMP A Class 3E	8,20 – 8,72
SMP B Class 3A	7,17 – 8,73
SMP C Class 3E	8,12 - 8,80

3.3.2.3 Interview

There were 18 student respondents invited for the interviews. They were six students from every class involved in the study who were chosen based on their achievements in learning English. From the six students interviewed, two students represented the best students, two students represented the average ones and the other two represented the low achievers.

The interview was conducted to get more detailed information and to crosscheck the information from the questionnaires. The open-ended interview is applied as an attempt to get the interviewee to discuss further the points under focus. The interviews were recorded, transcribed, coded and categorized to identify the patterns of the responses.

3.4 Data Analysis

As previously mentioned, this study is largely quantitative. Firstly, to find the LLS that the students mostly use in learning English, the data from the questionnaires were analyzed using simple computation. The data is presented in the form of the percentage which is taken based on the frequency or intensity of use of the LLS. Secondly, to find the correlation between students' achievement and students' LLS, the data is interpreted in the form of scores. The students' LLS scores were correlated with the students' achievement scores using Pearson's coefficient correlation formula. Since both the LLS and the achievement scores in this study were given in the interval scales, the parametrical analysis was applied.

The formula used to calculate correlation value between LLS (X) variable and Students achievement (Y) variable is

$$r_{xy} = \frac{n \sum xy - \sum x \sum y}{\sqrt{\{n \sum x^2 - (\sum x)^2\} \{n \sum y^2 - (\sum y)^2\}}}$$

Note:

r_{xy} : Coefficient Correlation between X variable and Y variable.

n : number of students

x : the score of Language Learning Strategy

y : Students' achievement scores

The significance of the correlation value is determined statistically by the hypothesis testing in which null hypothesis is chosen.

H_0 : $\rho = 0$ (There is no correlation between the two variables)

The two-direction hypothesis is used to anticipate the positive or negative correlation.

To explore whether the students' frequently used LLS are relevant to the strategic competence and attitude towards learning English proposed by the 2004 English curriculum, the data from the questionnaire were compared with the strategic competence and attitude towards learning English proposed by the curriculum. The criteria are selected based on the LLS of overall respondents and good language learners with their frequency or intensity of use 50% or above. Further, they are compared with the indicators of the strategic competence and attitude towards learning English proposed by the curriculum to find their similarities.

The functions of the three research instruments in seeking the answers to the research questions were described below.

- a. Questionnaire was distributed to students to find the answers to the questions number 1, 2 and 4. Some of the answers to the questionnaire were to be confirmed in the interview as a crosscheck. The data from the questionnaire were also used as the supporting data in answering question number 3.
- b. Document analysis was used as supporting data to answer question number 3. The data from the document analysis (achievement scores) were then correlated with the score of students' LLS to find their correlation coefficient.
- c. Interviews were used to obtain more information that was not revealed by the questionnaire. The data from the interview were also used to crosscheck the data collected from the questionnaire to answer the questions 1, 2 and 4.