

CHAPTER III

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1. Introduction

This chapter discusses aspects related to the way this paper was written which consist of five sections. It begins with the research questions then followed by the research design. It also describes the research site and participants, techniques of collecting data and data analysis.

3.2. Research Purpose and Research Questions

The purpose of the study was to investigate the difficulties encountered by students participating in this study in speaking English seen from both students and teachers' perspectives, to find out the causes of the difficulties and the possible solutions to overcome the difficulties. Based on the above purposes, three research questions are proposed as follows:

1. What difficulties are encountered by students in practicing speaking in English class from students' and teachers' perspective?
2. What have caused those difficulties?
3. What are the possible solutions to overcome the difficulties?

3.3. Research Design

This study employed a qualitative exploratory design which mainly aims ‘to investigate-understood phenomena’ (Marshall and Rossman, 2006). Through this research design, the researcher intends to find out and understands a certain phenomenon (Merriam, 1998) which in this study focused on difficulties of a second grade of senior high school students in speaking English seen from both the students and teachers’ perspectives. In addition, this study is also focused on investigating causes of the students’ difficulties in speaking English as well as possible solutions to overcome them.

Moreover, this study can also be regarded as a case study since it was carried out in ‘a small scale, a single case’ and focused on one particular instance of educational experience or practice and not be generalized (Creswell, 1994; Freebody, 2003 in Emilia, 2005; and Alwasilah, 2009). In this case, the researcher only coped, as mentioned above, with investigating students’ difficulties to speak in English class, the causes of the difficulties and the possible solutions to overcome the difficulties in a Senior High School. Therefore, the results are not to be generalized as general conditions of the whole students in Indonesia.

3.4. Research Setting and Participants

This study was undertaken at a senior high school in South Tangerang, Banten province. The reasons for choosing this school are the convenience and the

accessibility of the researcher to carry out the research. This is to follow Alwasilah (2009) who suggests that convenience factor should be taken into consideration to support the researcher in conducting the research.

The participants consisted of both students and English teachers because the researcher manages to find out the difficulties from their perspectives. The second grade students were chosen in this study with the assumption that they have already had more English knowledge compared to the first-grade students. In this study, the third-grade students were not involved due to their final examination preparation. In sum, 68 second grade students and two English teachers involved as the participants of this study.

3.5. Techniques of Collecting Data

This study employed three techniques of collecting data namely observations, questionnaires and interview. Each of the technique will be described below.

3.5.1. Classroom Observation

The observation was done to get direct and actual information about students' activity and difficulty in speaking. As what Silverman (1993) said, the observation is aimed to get to know firsthand information about social processes in a naturally occurring context. As a non participant observer in this study, the researcher acted as a complete observer and was only present at the scene of action but did not interact or

participate in the activity (see Creswell, 1994; Stainback, 1999 in Sugiyono, 2008). This type of observation is useful in exploring topics that may be uncomfortable for respondents to discuss (Creswell, 1994).

The observation was carried out to find out students' participations and responses in speaking activity. In this case, when they do not actively react or give responses in the activity, it might indicate that they encounter some difficulties to speak. In terms of time, the speaking activity was done for thirty minutes for each observation and carried out by the teachers in the beginning of the English class.

Classroom observation was done six times in two classes. The observation was carried out from the first week until the fourth week of March 2011. During the observation the researcher took a note on what was going on in the class. Observation notes focused on what was said and done by both the teachers and the students in the speaking activity in order to get data in a more detailed way (Sugiyono, 2008). An example of observer's note can be seen in Appendix 4.

3.5.2. Questionnaires

The questionnaires were used to obtain certain facts about the respondents (Dorney, 2003). Open-ended questionnaires were addressed to the respondents to get their responses in a form of written data (Nunan, 1992). To follow Dawson (2009), this open-ended questionnaire is used as it provides more opportunities for the

participants to raise new issues. Dawson further says that this type of questionnaire also allows the participants “to feel that they have been able to speak their mind”. In this study, the open-ended questionnaires were distributed to find out students’ difficulties to speak in English class as well as the causes of the difficulties and the possible solution to overcome them.

The questionnaires present the students with a series of questions and statements to which they can both write out their answer and select among existing answers (Brown, 2001 in Dorney, 2003). In this study, the questionnaires consisted of eight numbers of choices about students’ difficulties in which students can select their answer. Furthermore, each choice comprises the questions about the causes and the possible solutions of the difficulties in which the students can write out their answer (see Appendix 1). The questionnaires were distributed to students on March 31th – April 1st 2011.

3.5.3. Interview

The interview was addressed both to students and teachers involved in this study. The main purpose of an interview is to obtain a special kind of information (Merriam, 1988). Further she explains that interview is the best technique to use when conducting intensive case studies of individuals. In this study, the interview was conducted to gain further information about students’ difficulties to speak in English

class and the causes of the difficulties as well as the solutions to overcome the difficulties.

In this study, a semi-structured interview was used (see Appendix 3) in which interview has a sequence of themes to be covered as well as suggested questions and the interviewer has a general idea of where s/he wants the interview to go (Kvale, 1996; Marshall and Rossman, 2006). Further Kvale adds that in this kind of interview, it is possible to change of sequences and forms of questions to follow up the answers given by the subjects.

The interview addressed both the students and teachers carried out on 7th – 10th April 2011. Interviewing students was conducted to gain further information about their difficulties to speak English in the class and to get in-depth information that could not be attained by observations and questionnaires. The interviews addressed to 12 students by reference of their English teachers namely 4 students of high achievers, 4 students of medium achievers, and 4 students of low achievers. In this study, the questions given to the students were based on the information obtained from the questionnaires given before. In addition, interviewing teachers was done to get their perceptions about the students' difficulties to speak English in class as well as to search out their opinion about the causes of the difficulties and the solutions to overcome the difficulties.

3.6. Data Analysis

Data analysis in this study was conducted over the course of the study. On going data analysis and interpretation was done based on the data from document analysis including questionnaires, observations and interviews. Each steps of analysis of the three sources of data is given in the following section.

3.6.1 Classroom Observation

Data from the observation were analyzed descriptively. This is to follow Cresswell (1994) who says that data that emerge from qualitative study are descriptive and should therefore be reported in words (primarily the participants' word). The analysis process was commenced by making verbatim transcription of classroom interactions. Then, the transcriptions were read repeatedly. During the reading process, the researcher employed coding activity by matching the data with the research questions. This coding process was aimed at fracturing the data and rearranging them into categories that facilitate the comparison of data within and between these categories (Maxwell, 1996:78).

Data from observation were analyzed to validate the data from the interviews with the teacher. The analysis based on difficulties encountered by the students in speaking English which are the focus of this study.

3.6.2 Questionnaires

It is mentioned above that this study employed the open-ended questionnaires in order to gain students' responses in a form of written data (Nunan, 1992). This use of open-ended questionnaire was to provide the participants more opportunities to raise new issues and to allow them "to feel that they have been able to speak their mind" (Dawson, 2009).

The analyses of these questionnaires were conducted in several steps below.

The first step is identifying the data from students' and teachers' perspective about students' difficulties in speaking English. This was done by identifying their answers in the questionnaires given. In this case, the researcher focused on finding out their answers. The second step was categorizing the both students and teachers' answers based on the theories given in Chapter Two.

Furthermore, the categorized data were quantified and presented in the form of percentage. The following step was comparing the results of the quantified data about the difficulties from the students' perspective with the teachers' perspective and discussing the difficulties and the causes of the difficulties as well as the possible solutions to overcome the difficulties by relating them to the available theories as given in Chapter Two.

3.6.3 Interviews

Data from the interview were transcribed, categorized and interpreted to answer the research questions proposed. During the transcription stage, students' names were replaced with pseudonyms (Silverman, 1993). In the following step, to follow Cohen and Manion, (1994) and Kvale (1996) the transcripts were given back to the participants to make sure that it was exactly what the students said and meant. The transcripts were then condensed into briefer statements in which the main sense of what is said is rephrased in a few words (Kvale, 1996, p. 192), as can be seen in appendix 4. Finally, the data were coded and categorized by using thematic data analysis. In this sense, the researcher categorized students' comments into themes that had become the focus of the study, i.e., students' difficulties to speak English, the causes of the difficulties and the possible solutions to overcome the difficulties.

3.7. Conclusion

This chapter has outlined the research methodology and design applied in this study. It has discussed how this study was conducted. The research design, research site and participants, techniques of collecting data and data analysis have been discussed clearly. This data presentation and discussions will be presented in Chapter Four.