

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter deals with the discussion of steps taken by the researcher in conducting the research. There are five sections in this chapter. The first section is research design. It presents the methodology used and illustrates how the study is carried out. The second section is related to research site and participants involved in the study. The data collection including the instrument employed is discussed in the third section. The last section elaborates on how the data gathered is analyzed and interpreted.

3.1 Research design

Yin (1984) said that research design is a plan that guide researcher in the process of collecting, analyzing and interpreting data. Furthermore he said that one of the factors determined research design is the research question. This study investigates how teachers carried out language assessment for young learners. Therefore relevant to the nature, this study would employ qualitative research design as Lynch (1996) said that qualitative paradigm emphasizes on observing, describing, interpreting and understanding how events take place in the real world.

The aim of this study is to identify the process of language assessment for young learners, hence this study is designed as a qualitative and descriptive study. Hadari (1990) said that descriptive study is concerned with condition or relationships that exist, opinion that are held, process that are going on.

3.3 Research site

Since the focus of this study is English assessment for young learners, this study conducted in elementary schools. Three elementary schools located in Gedebage subdistrict were chosen as the research sites of the study. Those schools were selected based on the assumption that they shared similar features with many other public elementary schools. The features shared are: teachers must deal with a great number of students, usually fifty students. English teachers come from various backgrounds (English and non-English background). Another reason for choosing this elementary school is because the researcher has the access to conduct the research, thus data can be gathered easily. As Maxwell (1996) said that researcher should build a good rapport with respondents, thus data can be gathered easily

3.4 Profiles of the participants

This study involved three participants. Those teachers are teaching English from grade one until six. However the research would be focused on assessment carried out by participants in grade four. In order to go along with the ethics, the code of the teacher are respondent 1, respondent 2 and respondent 3. Below are the profiles of the three teachers.

Respondent 1 was born in 1975. She graduated from Indonesia University of Education in 2000, majoring in PKK/Tata boga. She has been teaching English at elementary school since 2005. Through out her career as an English teacher she has never participated in any seminars or workshop in dealing with how to teach English to young learners.

Respondent 2 was born in 1970. She graduated from STBA-ABA Yapari Bandung in 1992, majoring in English. Her teaching career was started in 1994. She has taught English in various levels, such as elementary school, junior high school and high school. She has taught English at the research site for seven years. She has never attended seminars or workshop concerning teaching English to young learners.

Respondent 3 was born in 1983. He graduated from UIN Sunan Gunung Djati Bandung with Sarjana degree in Arabic pedagogy. He has taught English for one year and has never attended any seminars or workshop about teaching English to young learners throughout his career.

3.5 Data collection

In this study the researcher had role as non-participant observer (Merriam 1998 cited in Alwasilah 2000) during the data collection process. Since this study is designed as qualitative and descriptive, Gray (1990) said that descriptive data are usually collected an observation, interview, questionnaire or interview. Therefore instruments employed to obtain data for the study are:

a. Questionnaire

Questionnaires were administered to three participants. The questionnaires functioned as pre-interview activity, so that participant would get the picture of the research. It enabled participants to focus on questions during interview. The questionnaires are divided into two parts. First is the participants' personal data. It is used to attain the information about teachers' background, such as personal data, educational background and working experience. And the last part covers

the questions about activities teachers employed in assessment process, teachers understanding towards assessment for young learner, techniques employed by teachers in assessing young learners and difficulties they encounter in conducting assessment.

The questionnaire included both open-ended questions and questions with fixed alternatives. The questionnaire was written in Bahasa Indonesia to ensure complete understanding of the items by participants.

b. Interview

Data collected from questionnaires was followed up by interview. Thus the questionnaire may function as pre-interview, while an in-depth interview aimed to clarify data. According to Alwasilah (2002) interview should be conducted in accordance to the researcher's need. In this study, interview was conducted twice. The first interview aimed to get the respondents' perspective of assessment, while the purpose of the second interview is to clarify data gained from the first interview. The respondents also conducted interview which was unrecorded during the observation process. The type of interview employed for this research is semi-structured interview. Nunan (1992) expounds that semi-structured interview provides three advantages for researcher. First it provides the interviewee a degree of power and control over the course of the interview. Second it gives the interviewer a great deal of flexibility. And the last one this form of interview gives one privileged access to other people's lives.

c. Observation

To validate data gained from questionnaire and interview, class observations were carried out by the researcher. As Maxwell (1996) said that through observation researcher would get some data that cannot be acquired through questionnaire or interview such as participants' tacit understanding and how theory- in-use.

The aim of classroom observation is to see the actual process of assessment carried by participants. To observe the class, the researcher used field notes since the students' attention was distracted when they were videotaped. The classes were observed carefully until the researcher able to identify the pattern of participants' assessment. The researcher was also present during the process of mid-semester test and final test. During the observation some assessment tools applied by teachers were collected.

3.6 Data analysis

Data analysis is the process of interpreting and making sense of the collected materials (Boglan and Biklen 1992). Data analysis was guided by the research questions Data gathered from questionnaires, interviews and observations were coded and classified based on research questions. Each classification was analyzed and interpreted. The interpretation was limited to the data findings to produce grounded theory on the phenomenon observed in this theory.