

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

This chapter deals with the description and account of the steps of what have been conducted in the study. The description involves (1) research design, (2) research site, (3) research questions, (4) data collection techniques, (5) participants in the study, (6) data analysis, and (7) validity.

3.1 Research Design

One of the aims of teaching English is to make students autonomous. Being autonomous learners, they have their own characteristics, they are influenced by some factors, and they seem to make some efforts to improve their English.

This study was aimed to identify the students as autonomous learners, then to determine the outstanding characteristics of autonomous learners. It was purposed also to investigate the factors influencing autonomous learners and the efforts made by autonomous learners to improve their English.

What mentioned above relates to their learning process as Benson (2001) says that research to autonomous learners refers to the learner's broad approach to learning process, rather than to a particular mode of teaching or learning. He also adds that autonomy is

not a method of learning, but an attribute of learner's approach to the learning process.

This study investigates the autonomous learners. It uses a qualitative method, which is appropriate in understanding process by which events and actions take place (Maxwell, 1996:19).

In addition, this is a case study as it is an examination of a specific phenomenon such as a process. Merriam (1988:16) says that a qualitative case study is an intensive, holistic description and analysis of a single instance, phenomenon, or social unit. Specifically, she conceptualizes the case study as a process which tries to describe and analyze some entities in qualitative, complex and comprehensive terms not infrequently as it unfolds over a period of time.

There were two steps in conducting this study. The first step was intended to identify students as autonomous learners by doing observation, distributing questionnaire, analyzing document, and conducting interviews. The observation was conducted to investigate students who were identified as good achievers. They would be selected as autonomous learners or not, as what L. Dam and Lagenhausen (1996) found in their research that autonomous learners will be more effective and learn better than non-autonomous learners. The data of achieved students were also gained from the interview with their teachers. There were 50 students who were selected as

good achievers. Then, they were asked to fill in the questionnaire consisted the items of autonomous learner characteristics based on Boud's theory. The answers of questionnaire were read and analyzed to identify the students as autonomous learners or not.

The second step was determined to investigate the outstanding characteristics of autonomous learners by using questionnaire and interview. The interview was also conducted to investigate the factors influencing autonomous learners and their efforts made by the autonomous learners to improve their English.

To get the accurate result of this study, a research design, which is called 'interactive model', offered by Maxwell, was adapted. The model consists of five components; those are purposes, conceptual context, research questions, methodology and validity. These components influence one to another, as shown in Figure 3.1

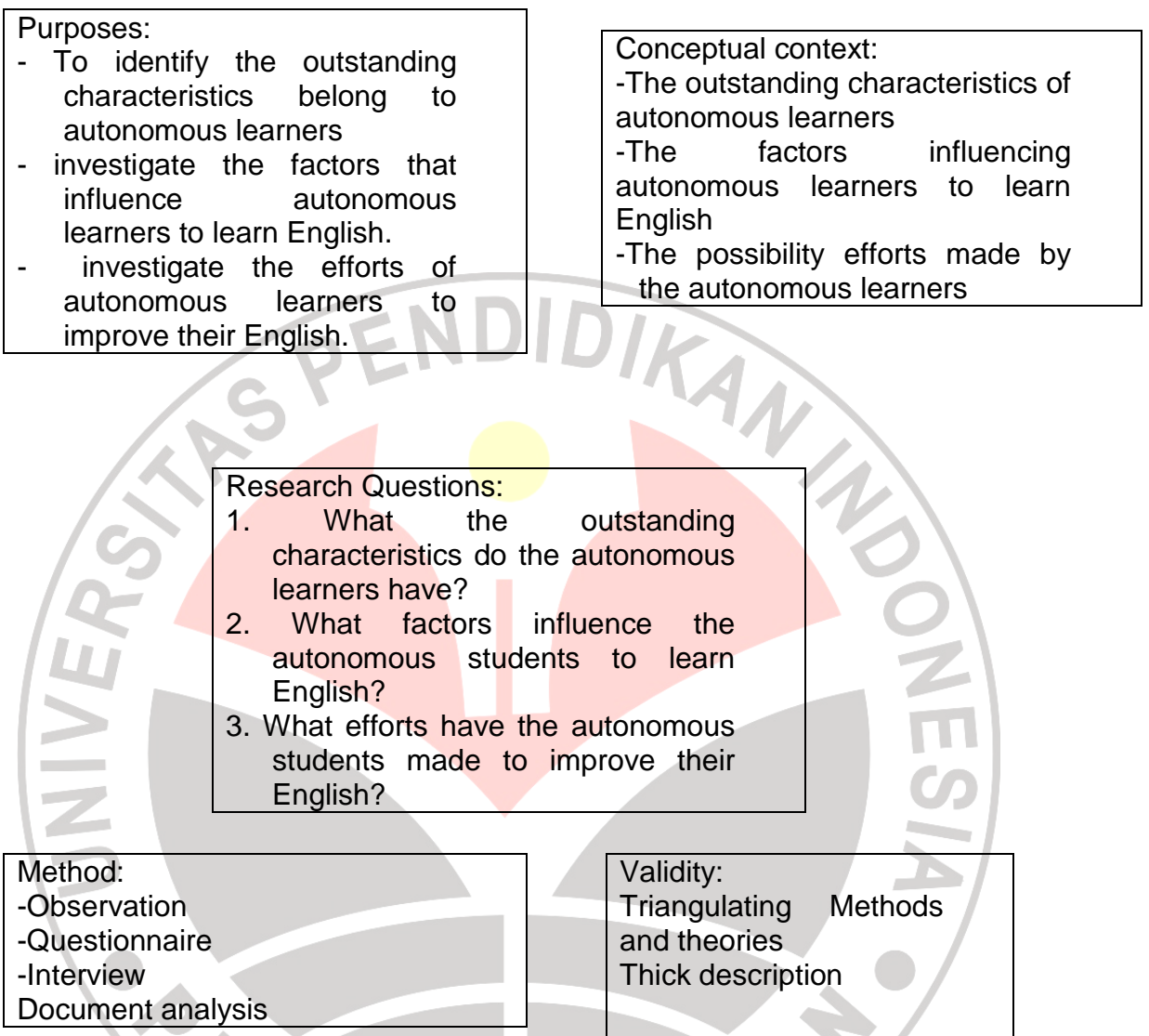


Figure 3.1: A Research Design Model of Autonomous Learners (adapted from Maxwell, Joseph A., 1996).

3.2 Research Site

This research was conducted in STBA Yapari-ABA Bandung. This college is one of educational foreign languages institutions which one of the aims is to produce students who will be able to speak one

of foreign languages fluently. It has vision and mission to produce students to become autonomous learners.

To gain the participants in this study, some of the English students at fifth semester were involved in this study and they were from different classes, from five classes of fifth semester of English department.

3.3 Research Questions

Research questions for this study are:

3.3.1 What the outstanding characteristics do the autonomous learners have?

3.3.2 What factors influence the autonomous learners to learn English?

3.3.3. What efforts have the autonomous learners made to improve their English?

3.4 Techniques of Collecting Data

In conducting this study, there are some techniques of collecting data that have been used. Those are as follow.

3.4.1 Observation

Conducting qualitative research, observation is the best technique of collecting data to use when an activity, event, or situation

can be observed first hand when a perspective is desire, or when participants are not able or willing to discuss the topic under study (Merriam, 1994:89).

Observation was conducted to select students who could be identified as good achievers. It means they had achievement better than others. Then, they were investigated to identify as autonomous learners.

3.4.2 Questionnaire

In order to gain the written data which identify the students as autonomous learners or not, the questionnaire was also administered. For many good reasons the questionnaire is the most widely used technique for obtaining information from the subject. It is relatively economical, has the same questions for all subjects and can ensure anonymity. Questionnaires can use statements or questions, but in all cases the subject is responding to something written for specific purposes (McMillan, 2001:257).

There were two kinds of questionnaire. The first one was about the characteristics of autonomous learners taken from Boud's theory. It was distributed to 50 students who had been identified as good achievers based on the data gained from observation and interview with their teachers. There were 18 items in the questionnaire.

The second questionnaire was open questionnaire and there were 15 items. It was distributed to investigate some outstanding characteristics that the autonomous learners have. Table 3.1 shows the items of questionnaire.

Table 3.1
The Items of Questionnaires

Characteristics of autonomous learners	The items of Questionnaire I	The items of Questionnaire II
Identifying learning needs	1	1,2
Setting goal	2	3,4,5,6,7,8
Planning	3,4,9,10,12	11,12,14
Finding resources	8	15
Working collaboratively	15	9
Selecting learning projects	5	10
Creating problem to tackle	6,7	
Choosing when and where they will learn	13	13
Using a teacher as a guide	14	9
Learning outside	3 (f)	
Deciding when learning is complete	17,18	11

3.4.3 Interview

This third technique used was the interviewing of selected individuals who are considered as autonomous learners. Fraenkel and Wallen (1993:385) state that interviewing is an important way for a researcher to check the accuracy of—to verify or refute—the impressions he or she has gained through observation. It is the most important data collecting technique of a qualitative research. Maxwell

says that interview can provide some additional information that was missed in observation and can be used to check the accuracy of the observations (Maxwell, 1996:76).

Interviews with the students who were considered as autonomous learners were intended to gather data to answer research questions. The interview which consisted open-ended questions, were given to eight participants, and were recorded and transcribed. In general, the interview items were the factors influencing autonomous learners and their efforts to improve their English.

3.4.4 Document Analysis

One of data collecting techniques is document analysis as Merriam says that the researchers can use documentary material as data (Merriam, 1988:1). She also adds that this technique is not much different from using interviews or observation.

The documents used for this study were the records of GPA (Grade Points Average) and the result of TOEFL test. These were used as the last step to select students as the participants in this study.

3.5 The Participants in the Study

The participants in this study were English students of one of the school of foreign languages in Bandung. Considering that there were a lot of students, two kinds of selection were conducted to decide students to be participants in this study. The first was to select the students who were considered as good achievers. It means that they had achieved their study better than others. This was done based on the result of research conducted by L. Dam and L. Lagenhausen (1996 cited in Benson, 2001). They say that autonomous learners will more effective and learn better than non-autonomous learners. It was conducted by observation and by interviewing to their teachers. The second was to select students who were considered as autonomous learners and would be the participants in this study. The questionnaire was used to gain the data.

More than two hundred students of five classes were observed. They were observed to know whether they had achieved their learning well or not. The interview with their lecturer was also conducted to get some information of the students 'achievement. As a result, there were fifty students considered as achieved students.

The first questionnaire was distributed to the fifty students. The questionnaire was about the characteristics of autonomous learners based on the theory of Boud (1988). The answers of the questionnaire was calculated and analyzed to select students who

could be categorized as autonomous learners. Table 3.2 shows the results of the questionnaire.

Table 3.2
The results of the first questionnaire.

Characteristics of autonomous learners	The number of students	Percentage
Identifying learning need	44	88%
Setting goals	36	72%
Planning learning activity	44	88%
Finding resources	36	72%
Working collaboratively	36	72%
Selecting learning projects	40	80%
Creating problem to tackle	24	48%
Choosing when and where they will learn	38	76%
Using a teacher as a guide	50	100%
Learning outside	28	56%
Deciding when learning is complete	20	40%

Based on the data shows at table 3.2, the most autonomous learner characteristic was using a teacher as a guide. It shows that most of students did not depend totally on their teachers.

There were three data gained from the questionnaire showing that most of students had autonomous learner characteristics better than others, those were identifying learning needs (88%), planning learning activity (88%), and selecting learning projects (80%). To select and investigate students as participants in this study, these data were calculated and analyzed deeply, as Benson (2001; 187)

says that while it is difficult to judge whether learners have become autonomous or not, it is possible to judge whether they are able to produce more effective learning plans, participating more decision making processes, and reflect more deeply on their learning.

3.5.1 Identifying Learning Needs

One of characteristics stated by Boud (1988) is identifying learning needs. The question number 2) was to investigate their learning needs. It was intended to find out whether it was their own willing to learn English or somebody asked them to learn it. As Higgs (1988) states that autonomous learners will choose what they want to learn because they want to learn it and they know why they learn it, so students who learned English as their choice were identified as autonomous learners. Table 3.3 shows the data of the students' learning need

Table 3.3
The Students' Learning Needs

Learning needs	The number of students	Percent age
They learn English because of their parents	6	2%
They learn English because of their choice	44	88%
They learn English because of their friends	-	-

The data show that most of the students stated their own learning needs. There were 88 % of students can be categorized as

autonomous learners because it was their choice to learn English. The 2 % of students (six students) were not considered as autonomous learners because they did not know what they wanted to learn. They learned English because their parents asked them to. The six students were S#10, 12, 28, 29, 30, and 49 and they were not taken also to be further selected as the participants in this study.

3.5.2 Planning Learning Activities

The autonomous learners will state their planning learning activities (Boud, 1988). The question numbers 6 of the questionnaire was aimed to investigate how many learning activities which the students had planned.

Table 3.4
The Students; Planning Learning Activities

Leaning activity	The number of students
Going to the library to read some English books	16 (S#2,3,4,6,8,15,27,29,32,33,36,37,41,45,47,48)
Reading some English books	29 (S#1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8,15,16,17,20,22,26,27,32,33,36,37,38,39,40,41,42,43,45,47,46,48)
Watching and understanding English films	44 (S#1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8,9,11,13,14,15,16,18,19,21,22,23,24,25,26,27,31,32,33,34,35,36,37,38,41,42,43,44,45,47,46,48,50)
Making communication in English with friends	42 (S#2,3,4,6,8,11,16,17,18,23,25,26,31,33,35,36,37,41,42,46,47,48)
Discussing some English subjects with	17 (S#1,2,3,4,8,11,14,15,16,17,22,33,35,36,38,49)

friends	45,47,46)
Taking an English course	14 (S#1,4,7,11,14,15,16,18,23,26,33,38,45,46)
Participating conversation club actively	10 (S#2,3,4,8,11,15,16,17,26,45)

Table 3.4 shows the planning learning activities had been done by the students. Most of the students had more than one activity. According to Benson (2001), the autonomous learners are responsible for their own learning, they routinely initiate and manage their own learning both outside and within the context of formal learning. Therefore students who had many learning activities more than others were taken to be the participants in this study.

Based on the data above, there are 23 students who had planned many learning activities. This shows that they were more active than the others. To gain the participants of this study, these students were investigated deeply.

3.5.3 Selecting Learning Projects

One of autonomous learner characteristics stated by Boud (1988) is selecting learning projects. The question number 8 of the questionnaire was aimed to investigate the autonomous learning projects. There were seven learning projects suggested to be chosen by the students.

Table 3.5
The students' Learning Projects

Learning Activity	The number of students
Study English at least 2 hours a day	13 (S#2,4,8,11,17,26,37,38,41,45,46,47)
Write at least one composition a week	8 (S#2,3,4,5,15,36,44,45)
Read at least one book a week	15 (S#1,2,4,5,6,8,11,17,26,37,38,41,45,47,48)
Watch and understand at least one film a week	20 (S#1,2,3,4,5,6,8,11,15,16,17,26,33,37,41,44,45,48,47)
Listen to the radio English program once a week	3 (S#15,37,46)
Listen and understand to English songs once a week	21 (S#1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8,11,15,16,17,26,33,36,37,41,44,45,47,48)
Watch the English program on television once a week	18 (S#1,2,3,4,5,7,15,16,17,33,36,41,45,46,47)

Table 3.5 shows the students' learning projects. Most of the students had more than two learning projects. To state the participants in this study, the data above were analyzed and finally, there were 14 students who had showed their learning projects better than the others. They were S# 1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8,15,17,26,41,46,47. These students were selected to investigate deeply by analyzing their documents of GPA and the result of TOEFL test.

Table 3.6
The GPA and TOEFL Test

No	Students	GPA	TOEFL
1	S#1	3.20	533
2	S#2	3.70	463
3	S#3	3.03	450
4	S#4	3.25	503

5	S#5	3.90	513
6	S#6	3.81	493
7	S#7	3.59	463
8	S#8	3.81	470
9	S#15	3.38	460
10	S#17	3.86	470
11	S#26	3.54	553
12	S#41	3.86	470
13	S#46	3.86	567
14	S#47	2.95	427

To decide the participants in this study, the data of students' GPA and the result of TOEFL test were calculated. Considering the GPA was taken more time than TOEFL test, they were calculated to make them balance by using the portion of 70% for GPA and 30 % for TOEFL test. Table 3.7 shows the result of the counting.

Table 3.7
The Portion of GPA and TOEFL Test

No	Students	70%of GPA	30% of TOEFL	Total	Rank
1	S#1	2.24	159.9	162.14	3
2	S#2	2.59	138.9	141.49	
3	S#3	2.12	135	137.12	
4	S#4	2.275	150.9	153.175	5
5	S#5	2.73	153.9	156.65	4
6	S#6	2.667	147.9	150.567	6
7	S#7	1.813	138.9	140.713	
8	S#8	2.667	141	143.667	
9	S#15	2.366	138	140.366	
10	S#17	2.702	141	143.702	8
11	S#26	2.478	165.9	168.378	2
12	S#41	2.702	147.9	150.567	7
13	S#46	2.702	170.1	172.802	1
14	S#47	2.065	128.1	130.165	

The data above shows that S# 46, 26, 1, 5, 4, 6, 41, 17 are the eight best students so these eight students were taken as the participants in this study.

These participants were coded as R#1 (S#1), R#2 (S#6), R#3 (S#5), R#4 (S#26), R#5 (S#41), R#6 (S#4), R#7 (S#46), and R#8 (S#17). It is done in order to keep the participants' privacy, so their real names are not mentioned here. The profiles of them are as following.

R#1 was 24 years old. She is Javanese. She likes English since she was an elementary school student at second year although at that time she has not got an English subject at her school. She likes English because her grand mother was an English teacher therefore she was always motivated by her grand mother. At first, she listened to English songs (Beatles's songs). She tried to understand the songs and tried to sing them to make her pronunciation better. Then, she is used to watching film and whenever she watched it she never read the Indonesian sub-title. She tried to understand by herself. If she found some difficult vocabulary, she opened the dictionary. She used to do it so she has got a lot of English vocabulary when she studied English at SMP, and she never opened the dictionary again if she had to translate English texts. Her grand mother always taught her English since she was an elementary school. If she got any difficulties in English she always asked to her grand mother. To improve her

English, she is used to doing some efforts, those are filling crossword to enlarge her vocabulary, doing scrabble, watching English films, and listening English songs.

R#2 was 23 years old. He has finished his diploma (D3) in 2005 and directly continued his study to take S1 in the same year. He finished his study in 2006. He likes English since he was an elementary school student at second year. He likes it because he saw his friends like English songs and he tried to listen to. It made him interested in listening English songs then he tried to understand the songs by translating them into Indonesia by his own. In translating the songs he used to open the dictionary. He likes reading very much. He has a reading habit. He used to read *Newsweek* and *Times* on Wednesdays. He is also used to reading English novels on Fridays.

R#3 was 22 years old. She finished her study at STBA in 2006 with the highest grade point average (IPK) that is 3.90. She likes English very much. She started to learn English when she was an elementary school student, at third year although she has not got an English subject at her school at that time. She likes watching film very much. She is used to watching films and she tried to understand it by translating it. She bought an English dictionary by herself when she was 9 years old. She has taken an English course for one year. It was only formality to make sure her English good or not. She has a good habit in improving her English. She has to read at least two pages of

English book everyday. She used to read *Reader Digest* and *Jakarta Post*. She likes studying alone because she did not believe her friends, she said. Right now she is trying to get scholarship to study abroad.

R#4 was 26 years old. At first, she took diploma program (D3) at STBA and finished it in 2004. Then she worked, she taught English at an English course (AIL). In 2005, she continued her study to take S1 program at STBA. She finished it for one year, in 2006. She likes English since she was an elementary school student at fourth year although she did not get an English subject at her elementary school. She started to learn English from her brother's English book. She tried to read it and tried to do the exercises of the book. She did it alone; she did not ask her brother or anyone else. She always watches films, listens English songs, reads an English novel. To improve her English, she is used to speaking English everyday. She has some best friends who always make communication with her in English. They are English teachers too. So, whenever she has got any problems with her English, she discusses with her friends.

R#5 was 22 years old. He likes English very much. He likes watching film, listening to English song especially Celine Dion's songs. He wanted to understand any English songs he listened therefore he asked her brother to teach him English. His brother taught him when he was eight years old. He taught him on Sundays.

He also always asked her brother to translate the English songs into Indonesian. Then, he tried to memorize any new vocabulary he found. When he was studying at STBA, he tried hard to improve his English. He spoke English with his best friends and if they spoke Bahasa Indonesia they had to pay two candies for one Indonesian word. He did it everyday. He took part actively in ASES and he was a member of Center. It is an English conversation club.

R#6 was 24 years old. She likes English very much. She liked it for the first time when she was an elementary student. She learnt English from her parents, her brothers, and her relatives in abroad. She learnt English also from films especially series films (*Mc Gryver* and *Beverly Hill*). She has ever taken an English course for six months at EF. She improved her English by making communication through internet with her relatives in abroad or with her father's guests from abroad who stay a night at her father's inn.

R#7 was 23 years old. She finished her study in 2006. She likes watching TV and films very much especially series films (*Beverly Hill*). She used to watch film with her family. Whenever she watched films she tried hard to understand it without reading the Indonesian subtitle. She said she liked English for the first time when she was a kindergarten student. When she was at the elementary school she has understood the film.

R#8 was 23 years old. She likes English for the first time when she studied it for the first time (when she was an SMP student). She took an English course for four years. Then she taught English for the first time at her English course when she was an SMA student, at second year. She likes reading but she prefers to read cultural books especially an American culture. She is active in browsing cultural articles through internet. She was also an active member in *Center*, a conversation English Club. She never got any difficulties while she was studying at STBA. She said that she was an independent student therefore she never depended on her teachers. She likes studying alone.

All participants in this study had made some efforts to improve their English. Table 3.8 shows the participants' learning improvement.

Table 3.8
The Participants' Learning Improvement

Participants	Fifth semester GPA	Eight semester GPA
R#1	2.83	3.20
R#2	3.58	3.81
R#3	3.83	3.90
R#4	3.37	3.54
R#5	3.65	3.86
R#6	3.25	3.25
R#7	3.5	3.86
R#8	3.75	3.86

3.6 Data Analysis

The steps in the analysis included the following.

3.6.1 The raw field notes from research's observation were re-written and read.

3.6.2 The data obtained from the interview with teachers were analyzed.

3.6.3 The data obtained from the first questionnaire was calculated. The first step was analyzing the students' learning need. The second was analyzing the students' planning learning activities. To analyze students' selecting learning projects was the third step.

3.6.4 The data obtained from the students' learning documents, GPA and TOEFL test was calculated.

3.6.5 To conduct the interview to autonomous learners

3.6.6 The data obtained from the interview were transcribed.

3.6.7 The data obtained from the interview was then identified into some tentative ideas of outstanding characteristics autonomous learners and the factors influencing autonomous learners and the efforts made by them to improve their English.

3.6.8 The next step was making use of coding. Strauss (1987 cited in Maxwell, 1996: 78) describes it that in qualitative research, the goal of coding is not to produce counts, but to "fracture" the data and rearrange into categories that facilitate the

comparison of the data within and between these categories and that aid in the development of theoretical concepts.

3.6.9 The last step was taking out the conclusion about the study.

Table 3.7 summarizes data analysis categories for autonomous learners.

Table 3.9
Data Analysis Categories for Autonomous Learners

Categories	Sub Categories
The Outstanding characteristics of autonomous learners	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Taking responsibility 2. Awareness of needs 3. Setting goals 4. Planning learning Activity 5. Finding resources 6. Allocating time 7. Working collaboratively
Factors influence autonomous learners	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Psychological factors 2. Environmental factors
Efforts done by autonomous learners to improve their English	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Watching 2. Taking Course 3. Reading 4. Listening 5. Speaking 6. Playing Games 7. Teaching
Resources	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Electronic sources 2. Print sources 3. Database

3.7 Validity

Creswell (1994) states the qualitative researchers have no single stance consensus on addressing traditional topics such as validity and reliability in qualitative research. Mc Millan (2001:407)

says that qualitative researchers are able to use many strategies as possible to enhance validity. Therefore a number of techniques are used to ensure the validity, those are:

3.7.1 Triangulation

Triangulation is using multiple methods of gathering data and multiple sources of data to confirm the emerging findings (Merriam, 1988:169). To ensure the validity of this research, data sources: field notes and transcripts, were triangulated. Four techniques of collecting data were also applied: observation, document analysis, interview, and questionnaire. Those were used to identify the outstanding characteristics of autonomous learners, the factors influencing them, and the efforts made by the autonomous learners to improve their English.

The data obtained from observation were analyzed and triangulated with the data gained from interview with teachers. Then, the data obtained from the questionnaire were analyzed and calculated to identify students as autonomous learners, based on the characteristics of autonomous learners from Boud (1988). Analyzing and calculated are also applied for the data obtained from the interview with the participants.

3.7.2 Thick Description

In an effort to build the reliability of the data, this study is described in detail in a rich description as the end product of the study, so that the findings of the study can be applied to other situations (Meriam, 1988:177). Analyzing, presenting, discussing the data as complete as possible were done to provide a detailed description of the study.

