CHAPTER III

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter discusses the main aspects of the research, namely: 1) method of research, 2) pilot study, 3) respondents, access, and samples, 4) instruments of the research, 4) procedures of data collection, 5) data analysis methods. They are presented in the following.

3.1 Method of the Research

This study employs a qualitative approach in analyzing students' perception towards writing portfolio assessment. Maxwell (1996) states the strengths of qualitative research are derived primarily from its inductive approach, its focus on specific situations or people, and its emphasis on words rather than numbers.

To investigate the issues, the writer used qualitative approach by applying a descriptive method. According to Creswell (1994), the descriptive method of research is to gain information about the present existing condition. The aim of descriptive research is to try out hypotheses or to answer questions concerning to the current situation of the research. Thus, descriptive method is considered relevant to this study since it has purpose to describe students' perception towards writing portfolio assessment in writing for general communication subject.

3.2 Pilot Study

There is no design or research is so complete that it cannot be improved by a small scale prior research. Prior research can serve several purposes in the study such as providing existing theory, developing a justification for the study – how the study will address an important need or unanswered question, informing about methods, suggesting alternative approaches or revealing potential problems and being a source of data that can be used to try out or modify your theories (Strauss, 1987:48-56; Marshall & Rossman, 1995:22-25; Maxwell, 1996:43).

Furthermore, Maxwell (1996:44) says:

Pilot study serves some of the same functions as prior research, but they can be focused more precisely on your own concerns and theories. You can design pilot studies specifically to test your ideas or methods and explore their implications or to inductively develop grounded theory.

The writer conducted a pilot study to try out the questions in the written reader responses. Two respondents were asked to gather data in order to answer the questions set out in the scope in 3rd January, 2011 through email. In order to explore some of the more intangible issues, the writer also held a group discussion in 4th January, 2010. Through pilot study, the writer reconstructed the questions to find the suitable issues on students' perception towards writing portfolio assessment. Pilot study resulted the final questions in the written reader responses, guiding questions in the interviews and the suitable issue on students' perception towards writing portfolio assessment.

3.3 Respondents, Access, and Samples

3.3.1 Respondents

The respondents of this study were the first semester students of 2010-2011 academic years. The respondents were a student of One Public University in Bandung since August 5th, 2010. There were students dedicated to discuss everything related to the students' perception towards writing portfolio assessment. 1A1 literature class has 17 students. The writer learned that in most of their discussion generally they created an activity point.

The writer believed that the age of the students range were between 17-18 years old. According to their age, the respondents were classified into adult. So, the writer assumed that they already had enough intellectual ability to analyze the matter being discussed. Given these developmental issues, adult might focus their attention on the main character that they perceived as experiencing similar tension and complexities. Since the respondents were students of One Public University in Bandung in 2010-2011 academic years, the writer convinced that they would provide informative information needed in this study.

3.3.2 Access

The respondents readily welcomed the survey. The writer chose analysis document writing for general communication subject as the text to which the students asked to give responses. The writer believes that the issues of writing would attract the students' interest so they will be more motivated in giving their responses. The

writer elaborated the students' perception about writing portfolio as their assessment. The first graders of 2010-2011 academic years had been accustomed to share ideas, information and experiences. It made our interpersonal relationship established.

3.3.3 Samples

Maxwell (1996:18-19) defines sampling as the technique of data collection which takes a relatively small number of individuals or situations and preserve the individuality of each of these in their analyses, rather than collecting data from large samples and aggregating the data across individuals or situations. Due to the fact that limited data would be supportive for the need of intensive data analysis, the writer took 17 samples from the total English Students offered writing for general communication subject in 2010 academic year. Patton (1990, cited in Maxwell, (1996:70) describes those 15 different types of sampling that can be employed in qualitative research, almost all of which are forms of purposeful sampling. The criterion for the selection of these samples is the respondents are active students offered writing for general communication subject 2010.

3.4 Instruments of the Research

The qualitative research usually has a kit of data-collecting devices that are keys, directly or indirectly, to the conceptual framework and research questions called instruments. In addition, instruments mean little more than some shorthand devices

for surveying events. In this study, the writer chose students responses, questionnaires and interviews to collect the data.

3.4.1 Questions to Elicit Respondents' Responses

The activity of writing involves making a stage of decisions. Particularly, the authors have to make clear statements of where they are standing. Therefore, understanding writing is a complex activity which demands lots of mind's work and full of choices. This choices activity may spring from the students' choices of most important word, passage, aspect or a particular issue, conceivably one of minor importance to the author. Then, the author finally learns something about the difference between instinct and thought.

> Probst (1988:48-49) states that written responses are likely to be not fragments of ideas, but full of logical chains. The technique is a compromise between freedom and control, directing the readers, but directing them to look inside themselves. It is explaining the reader's choice of most important word, passage, or aspect, ask the reader to look both the text and themselves and examine the transaction that has taken place between the two. The questions are sufficiently open to allow readers their own responses and reply in private through notes returned with the papers. The details of questions in the written responses are described as follows

3.4.2 Interview's Guiding Questions

The interview aimed to get deeper understanding about the readers' responses by asking them the reasons of their responses. Maxwell states (1996:55) that interview-based study; in particular, often employ a sampling logic, selecting interviewees in order to generalize to some population of interest. To ensure that

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everything stated is preserved for analysis, the interviews were transcribed. The details of guiding questions in the interview are described as follows:

a. Asking about students' personal feeling, attitudes, drive and goals.

b. Asking about the sensory nature of the stimulus.

c. Asking about the background or the setting of the stimulus.

d. Asking about students' learning experiences.

Adopted from Sperling's theory (1982),Resmiati (2007), Rahmita (2010)

3.5 Procedures in Collecting the Data

As has been mentioned above, the data collection in this study was gained from the results of survey, the results of questionnaire, and the results of interviews. The writer used triangulation, member checking, and feedback in collecting the data. In line with this, Alwasilah (2005:150) states that triangulation refers to the collecting the data as much as possible from different range of sources such as human, background, and event through different methods.

Alwasilah (2005: 178) proposes this technique that is member checking in order to (1) prevent misunderstanding toward respondent' answer in interview, (2) prevent misunderstanding toward respondents' behavior during observation, and (3) confirm respondent's perspectives toward what was happening. To prevent all misunderstandings, the researcher asked the respondents (teachers and 17 students) especially the teachers, to check the transcripts and interpretation of the data in order to enable the researcher to achieve validity of the research.

Feedback from others was needed in this research to prevent bias of research and identify the logical weaknesses of the research (Alwasilah, 2005: 176). Alwasilah declares that in qualitative research, the more feedback from others, the more validity will achieve. Therefore, the researcher asked feedback from her supervisors, experts in writing portfolio assessment, and also some friends who interested in classroom writing for general communication. The writer used survey, questionnaire, and interviews.

The survey on students' responses was carried out to collect the data from 17 respondents who were students of One Public University in 2010-2011 academic year. This method used to elaborate the respondents' opinions, ideas, attitudes, perspectives and perceptions about related issues. Meanwhile, the respondents were kept confidential, however they feel free to express and share their ideas, opinions, and perceptions about related issues. The interview aimed to validate the students' responses by ensuring that their responses are consistent and to discover additional information which cannot be achieved by readers' written response.

3.5.1 Questionnaire

Questionnaire is the most common instrument used in descriptive method. It is extensively used to collect the data about phenomena that are not directly observable such as inner experience, opinions, perception, values, interest (Alwasilah,2003) or when factual information is desired (Best, 1950: 167 cited in Rahmita, 2010: 29). Questionnaire is a short of statements written in a paper and delivered respondent to

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get her opinion about the problem that is researched by researcher. The advantage in using questionnaire in the research is the respondents free to express their feeling without any pressure from anyone (Alwasilah, 2003:152). The questionnaire is designed in this study as one of the instruments to reveal students' perception and it was divided into two forms.

Form A is closed-questionnaire. The closed form questionnaire is the check responses that provide for making a yes/no, a short response, or checking an item from a list of suggested responses (Best, 1950: 168 cited in Rahmita, 2010). Form A is consisted of thirty statements with five optional answers: Strongly agreed (SA), Agreed (A), Uncertain (U), Disagreed (DA), and Strongly Disagreed (SDA). This form arranged with the scale of attitude because attitude scale is used when opinions rather than facts are desired. The technique in giving score towards students' responses is using Likert Scale and each statement in the questionnaire consists of values from 1 to 5. Likert scale is very easy constructed and scored for measuring perception or attitudes. (Linn and Gronlund, 1995: 285). Based on the Likert each statement in the questionnaire consists of values from 1-5 which 5 is the most positive one.

Table 3.1
The Scoring System of the questionnaire

Statements	Strongly Agree (SA)	Agree (A)	Undecided (U)	Disagree (DA)	Strongly Disagree (SDA)
Positive	5	4	3	2	1

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Before constructing the statements for the questionnaire, the framework had been made and the categories were based on the Sperling's theory (1982) cited in Rahmita (2010), which consist of students' personal feelings, attitude, drive and goals, the sensory nature of the stimulus, the background or the setting of the stimulus and students' learning experience.

Table 3.2
The framework of Students' Questionnaire

No.	Categories	Indicator	Item number	Total
1.	Students' personal feelings, attitude, drive and goals	Students' personal feeling toward the Writing for General Communication subject and the implementation of portfolio	1-8	15
		Students' attitude and drive toward the implementation of portfolio	9	
		Students' learning goals toward the implementation of portfolio	10-15	
2.	The sensory nature of the stimulus	The implementation of portfolio assessment in improving students' English competence	16-20	5
3.	The background or setting of the stimulus	Students' learning process	21	4
		Teachers' role in implementing portfolio	22	
		Process of assessing the portfolio	23-24	
4.	Students' learning experience	The advantages of implementing portfolio assessment in learning	25-30	6
Total				30

Adopted from Resmiati (2007) cited in Rahmita, (2010:30) unpublished

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Form B of the questionnaire is an open questionnaire. It is a type of questionnaire calls for a free response in the respondent's own words (Best, 1950: 169 cited in Rahmita, 2010: 30). This form is consisted of two questions. The data gathered were used to support data in form A. the distribution of the questionnaire was held on 3rd January, 2010 at 18.14 p.m via email. After collecting closed questionnaire and open questionnaire, the data gathered from the questionnaire were tabulating and presenting through and presenting through some stages were employed, namely: (1) examining the data obtained from the questionnaire, (2) selecting and classifying the data derived from the questionnaire into groups of factors to simplify the tabulation and interpretation based on percentages statistics. To ease the interpretation of the data the respondents' answers were classified into four classifications, namely (1) calculating the frequency (fo) of the respondents who answer each of items or statements, (2) then, it is calculating the percentage (0%) of each total frequency of the respondents' answers to the item, (3) Interpreting the result of percentage (%) calculation based on the total frequency (fo) of each item, (4) and classifying the data to be interpreted, therefore it is using reference according to Suryadi (1987:20) in Hamidah (2005) cited in Rahmita (2010:35) as follows:

Tabel 3.3
Classification of Percentage

No	Percentage	Classification
1.	00,00%	None
2.	00,01 – 24,	A few of

3.	25,00 – 49,99%	Nearly half of
4.	50%	Half of
5.	50,01 – 74,00%	Best part of
6.	75,00-99,99%	Nearly all of
7.	100%	All of

3.5.2 Interview

After collecting the students' responses and students' written work, the writer conducted interviews to 3 respondents in order to get additional data for this study. Besides asking the questions, the writer also asked some more questions to elaborate the issues coming up in the students' responses. In the interview process, the writer used Indonesian so that the interviewee can easily answer the questions; express their opinion and feeling about the subject matter. In the collecting the data, the writer used tape recorder because it provides the best source of information when the writer doesn't have direct access to respondents. Then it transcribes the result in the form of dialogue.

3.6 Coding

The data was gathered from students' responses, questionnaires, and interview. Maxwell (1996:77) states that any qualitative study requires decisions about how the analysis will be done, and these decisions should influence, and be influenced by the

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rest of the design. The qualitative researcher begins data analysis immediately after finishing the first interview or survey and continues to analyze the data as long as the researcher is working on the research, stopping briefly to write reports and papers.

In analyzing the data, the writer adapts coding stages from Alwasilah's method of data analysis (2006). There was a group of coding carried out by the writer. The writer also wrote codes near the lines such as S1 for the first students' responses, S2 for the second students' responses, S3 for the third students' responses and many more.

As Miles and Huberman (1984:56) say that a code is an abbreviation or symbol applied to a segment of words – most often a sentence or paragraph of transcribes field notes – in order to classify the words. Therefore, Alwasilah (2006:159) draws the advantages of coding, namely: (1) It helps researchers to identity a phenomenon, (2) It makes the calculation of the frequency of phenomenon appearances easier, (3) The frequency of code appearances is helpful in finding the tendency of research result, (4) It helps researchers to propose categorization and sub-categorization.

In conclusion, the main categorizing strategy in qualitative research is coding. It is also stated that "To fracture the data and rearrange it into categories that facilitate the comparison of data within and between these categories and that aid the development of theoretical concepts. Another form of categorizing analysis involves sorting the data into broader themes and issues" (Maxwell, 1996:78-79; Alwasilah, 2006:160).

3.7 Concluding Remarks

The writer used member check, giving feedback, triangulation in collecting the data. Triangulation method is used to decrease refraction from one method and to increase the validity and reliability conclusion. The writer used survey, questionnaire, and interviews. The data was collected through students' responses in order to get information about students' perception toward writing portfolio assessment and perceived advantages for the students in using portfolio as their assessment. Interviews were carried out in order to elaborate students' responses considering the varying and interesting statements that might contribute to the important findings. Interviews were also aimed to validate the students' perception towards writing portfolio assessment by ensuring that their perceptions are consistent. The data collection methods conducted by the study are guided by the aim of the research that to describe students' perception towards writing portfolio assessment and the perceived advantages for the students in using portfolio as their assessment. To clarify and simplify the analysis of data findings, the writer carried out coding.