

## **CHAPTER III**

### **RESEARCH METHOD**

#### **A. Research Design**

This study employs a narrative inquiry as methodological approach that aims to comprehend personal experiences through a collaborative engagement between the participant and the researcher, conducted over an extended duration and within one or more specific settings. It involves interactions within diverse social contexts and focuses on the continual process of storytelling, reliving, and recounting the stories that constitute the fabric of both collective and individual lives. The narrative inquirer becomes an integral part of this intricate narrative matrix, entering it midway and maintaining this immersive perspective throughout the research process.

The research procedure progresses through the subsequent stages in conducting this research, the researcher employed a narrative inquiry approach to systematically explore the social challenges faced by students in learning English as a Foreign Language (EFL). The initial stage involved a careful analysis of the problem by examining relevant theories and previous studies that discuss EFL learner difficulties through the lens of Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD). This theoretical grounding served as the foundation for understanding the social aspects that may hinder or support student learning.

Following this, the researcher identified individuals whose experiences could offer meaningful insight into the phenomenon. SMKN 1 Kertak Hanyar was selected as the research site. After obtaining formal permission and establishing communication with the headmaster and the English teacher, the researcher purposefully selected several students based on their varied levels of English proficiency to ensure a rich diversity of perspectives.

The data collection process focused on gathering the participants' stories and lived experiences. This was achieved through classroom observations and focus group discussions, where participants were encouraged to share their thoughts, feelings, and challenges related to learning English. These field texts served as the foundation for understanding the students' realities within the classroom context. Once the narratives were collected, the researcher carefully analyzed and organized the data to identify key elements and recurring themes. The raw stories were restructured into coherent sequences to accurately capture the essence of each participant's experience. This re-narration process helped to frame their voices within a broader educational context.

Throughout this process, the researcher maintained close collaboration with the participants. Their involvement was crucial in confirming the accuracy of the retold narratives, ensuring that the stories were not only faithfully represented but also meaningful from the participants' own perspectives. This co-construction of meaning lies at the

heart of narrative inquiry. The culmination of this research was the construction of a unified narrative that encapsulated the students' experiences. Special emphasis was placed on drawing out major themes that reflected both the personal and social dimensions of their learning journeys. The final narrative not only presented their challenges but also highlighted the value of narrative research in uncovering deeper, more human aspects of language learning.

To validate the trustworthiness of the findings, the researcher engaged in reflective dialogue with participants and actively sought alternative viewpoints. This process of validation ensured the credibility of the study and deepened the overall understanding of the educational phenomenon being investigated (Creswell, 2012). Creswell (2012) employed various techniques to elucidate the procedural steps involved in account request handling. These techniques were specifically designed to comprehensively address distinct phases in the management of account requests. The operationalization of these techniques occurred within the context of the investigation at that time. The researcher will conduct an in-depth investigation into social issues that significantly impact the process of learning English as a Foreign Language (EFL). This study will explore various aspects and dimensions related to the identified social issue, with the aim of understanding its complexity and providing deeper insights into its implications for EFL learning. The researcher subsequently selects participants who experience social difficulties and those who easily engage

in social interactions in the context of learning English as a Foreign Language (EFL). To acquire research data, the researcher will then collect narratives from the involved participants.

This research uses interviews and observation as a method of data collection. A conversation between interviewer and respondent with the intention of eliciting specific information from the respondent, is what meant by a survey interview (Bell & Waters, 2018). They go on, This might seem like a simple matter, but achieving a successful interview is far more complex than this statement might suggest. Bell & Waters, (2018) also point out that although interviews are a valuable source of information, they may not always accurately reflect what occurs because they simply provide people's perceptions of what occurs. Finding out whether someone acts as they claim to or does what they say they do can be done through observation. According to the theoretical framework presented, it can be inferred that, in addition to the utilization of interviews, the inclusion of observational methods is imperative to enhance the overall validity of the data procured through interview processes.

## **B. Research Setting**

In relation to this research, the researcher selected Class X MPLB in SMKN 1 Kertak Hanyar as the research site due to the presence of pertinent factors related to the research topic. This setting was chosen because the students showed varied levels of English proficiency and demonstrated noticeable social challenges during preliminary observations, such as low

participation, hesitation to speak, and limited peer interaction. Additionally, the school provided access to an environment where English is taught as a foreign language in a typical Indonesian vocational high school context, making it suitable for exploring the influence of social aspects within the Zone of Proximal Development framework.

### **C. Participants**

The decision to select only six participants was based on the principle of depth over quantity, which is a common approach in qualitative research. By involving a small, focused group, the study could explore each participant's experiences and perspectives in more detail. This number was also manageable for conducting an in-depth Focus Group Discussion, allowing every student enough time to share their thoughts without feeling rushed or overshadowed. Additionally, selecting six participants with different English proficiency levels—two high, two moderate, and two low—ensured a diverse representation of language abilities and social experiences. This variation was essential for understanding how students at different proficiency stages perceive and cope with social challenges in EFL learning, particularly within the framework of the Zone of Proximal Development.

To identify these participants, the research commenced with the observation of various students during their learning processes. Following this initial observation, a few participants were selected—some who exhibited the capability to work independently and others who required

external assistance. This selection was based on observed behaviors and characteristics aligning with the study's focus.

The next step involves engaging in interviews with the chosen participants. These interviews will delve into their learning experiences and social interactions. Open-ended questions will be used to gather qualitative insights. The obtained data from the interviews were then validated, ensuring its reliability. This may involve cross-referencing interview responses with observed behaviors or using other validation techniques. Following the interviews and data validation, a concluding observation will be conducted to consolidate findings. This final observation aims to observe any changes or patterns that may have emerged. The study will be summarized, highlighting key insights gained from both observations and interviews.

The researcher aims to explore how various types of students navigate social interactions and learning experiences, while assessing the impact of the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) theory on their learning and educational journey. Participant selection prioritize willingness to participate, and privacy rights were upheld throughout the study.

### **C. Data Collection Overview**

It is essential to describe the data collection process that served as the foundation of this narrative inquiry. This study employed two qualitative techniques: classroom observation and focus group discussion (FGD). These methods were used to explore the social aspect challenges faced by

EFL learners and how such challenges are addressed through the lens of Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD).

The classroom observation was conducted over the course of five English class meetings in Class X MPLB at SMKN 1 Kertak Hanyar, taking place between April 30 and May 8, 2025. The researcher attended the classes as a passive observer and took detailed notes on students' behaviors, interactions, and participation levels in a natural classroom setting. Each session was conducted on a different day and time, allowing the researcher to capture a variety of classroom moods and engagement dynamics.

The first observation took place on April 30, 2025, from 09.15 to 10.30 AM. This initial session allowed the researcher to become familiar with the classroom setting and observe the students' seating arrangements, peer grouping tendencies, and initial reactions to English instruction. The second observation, conducted on May 2, 2025, from 10.00 to 11.15 AM, focused more on how students responded to individual and group-based tasks. It was observed that while some students engaged actively, others remained quiet or hesitant, showing early signs of unequal participation.

The third session, on May 5, 2025, took place from 09.30 to 11.00 AM. This meeting involved structured group work where students were assigned collaborative tasks. The researcher noted how students interacted across groups, including how some helped their peers while others seemed isolated or disengaged. The fourth observation, held on May 7, 2025, from 09.00 to 10.20 AM, focused on how the teacher used media and games to

encourage participation. During this session, a mix of enthusiasm and anxiety was observed, especially among students who were usually silent but seemed more responsive during interactive activities.

The final observation occurred on May 8, 2025, from 10.15 to 11.45 AM. As the last session, it provided a comprehensive view of student behavior throughout the unit. This lesson included a language-based game that offered students more relaxed and playful interaction, revealing valuable insights into their social comfort zones and peer dynamics.

On the same day, after the final class, an FGD was conducted to further explore students' personal experiences regarding classroom interaction and social learning. The discussion involved six students, selected through purposive sampling to represent varied levels of English proficiency. Their identities are anonymized using initials: A, D, Nl, Nd, Nv, and S. Through this conversation, students expressed their views on peer support, social anxiety, classroom participation, and how they perceived the teacher's role in facilitating their learning.

The combination of direct observation and reflective dialogue through the FGD enabled a more nuanced understanding of the classroom's social environment and the factors that support or hinder effective EFL learning. This variation in participant background aimed to capture both the commonalities and contrasts in students' experiences — especially in terms of peer interaction, classroom participation, and foreign language anxiety. The insights gathered through this discussion serve as a vital component in



understanding the classroom dynamics that influence EFL learning outcomes.

Each stage of data collection was carefully structured:

1. Pre-observation preparation: The researcher reviewed the observation sheet and coordinated with the teacher.
2. Observation sessions: Conducted in a non-intrusive manner, with notes taken on student interaction, peer collaboration, and teacher scaffolding.
3. Focus group discussion: Guided by predetermined open-ended questions, students were encouraged to share their honest experiences, thoughts, and suggestions regarding classroom social dynamics and EFL learning.

It is expected that the data gathered from both observation and FGD provide rich and authentic insights into the social barriers students face, the emotional atmosphere of the classroom, and the role of teachers in supporting students' development. The data also aim to inform practical strategies for improving the social and emotional conditions necessary for effective language learning within the ZPD framework

#### **D. Data**

The data in this study consist of students' narratives and personal accounts of their experiences, which were collected through classroom observation and focus group discussions (FGD) involving students from Class X of the Office Management and Business Services (MPLB) Program at SMKN 1 Kertak Hanyar. The purpose of this data collection was to identify and analyze the social challenges faced by students in learning

English as a Foreign Language (EFL), as well as to understand how teachers manage these challenges using strategies aligned with Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) theory. The observation data include field notes recorded during five classroom sessions conducted between April 30 and May 8, 2025. These notes document student interactions, teacher-student dynamics, group work behaviors, and instances of scaffolding or support provided by the teacher.

The FGD data were collected on May 8, 2025, through a structured discussion held after the English class. The discussion was guided by open-ended questions aimed at exploring students' social experiences, their hesitations or challenges in participating in class, and their suggestions for creating a more supportive learning environment. All data collected are descriptive in nature and are used to identify recurring themes and patterns related to the research questions. These data provide the foundation for the findings and analysis in this study.

#### **E. Technique of Data Collection**

This study utilizing two primary data collection techniques: observation and focus group discussion (FGD). These techniques were selected to gain a deeper understanding of the social aspect challenges students face in learning English as a Foreign Language (EFL), as well as the strategies used by teachers to address these challenges in the classroom.

## 1. Observation

The observation was conducted over the course of five days, from April 30 to May 8, 2025, in Class X of the Office Management and Business Services (MPLB) Program at SMKN 1 Kertak Hanyar. During this period, the researcher closely observed classroom activities, focusing on student-to-student and student-to-teacher interactions, peer collaboration, group work, and the teacher's scaffolding practices. The observation aimed to identify social behaviors, participation levels, and the presence of any social barriers in the EFL learning environment. A structured observation sheet was used to record relevant data systematically and consistently throughout the observation period.

## 2. Focus Group Discussion (FGD)

Following the observation phase, a focus group discussion was conducted on May 8, 2025, after the English class session. The FGD aimed to explore students' personal experiences, perceptions, and reflections regarding the social challenges they encountered while learning English. Additionally, it provided insight into how students perceive the teacher's role in supporting them through these challenges. The discussion was guided by a set of pre-designed FGD questions that encouraged open sharing and dialogue among participants. The combination of observation and FGD provided a comprehensive perspective on both the observable behaviors and the internal thoughts and feelings of the students.

## **F. Data Analysis**

Upon gathering data through interviews, the subsequent step involves analysis. The analysis process is simplified to transform the data into a comprehensible arrangement that can be easily read and interpreted. As outlined in preceding sections, this study aims to understand the EFL learners' social aspect challenges through ZPD theory. To ensure the relevance of the results in data analysis, the researcher employs a qualitative interview analysis procedure. Referring to the instructions outlined by O'Connor and Gibson (2017), numerous components are involved in this form of analysis, which are detailed as follows:

### **1. Data Organization**

In the initial phase, the interview questions need to be identified and categorized based on the specific topics or discussions the researcher is investigating. The data should be arranged in a manner that enhances readability and facilitates the researcher in isolating relevant information related to each topic. This method of organizing and presenting data enables a focused examination of responses to individual topics and specific questions, simplifying the identification of themes and concepts

### **2. Observation and Concept Formation**

In this step, the researcher is tasked with recognizing diverse expressions conveyed by the interviewees. Participants may articulate their opinions or perspectives through indirect descriptions. Following the collection of responses during the interview session, the researcher

must pinpoint frequently spoken phrases or expressions and discern the ideas conveyed by the participants. These identified ideas are then organized into categories for further analysis.

### 3. Ensuring Reliability and Validity in Data Analysis and Findings

The personal characteristics of both the interviewer and the interviewee are shaped by communication patterns. Factors such as age, gender, education, background, and language differences can influence the dynamics of the interview. Consequently, feedback from interviewees may prompt the researcher to scrutinize the validity of the data analysis and findings. This ensures that the results are reliable and accurately reflect the intended insights.

### 4. Identifying Possible and Plausible Explanations of Data Analysis

Once specific findings are gathered in the research, the researcher initiates the compilation of a summary encompassing the identified themes. This summary becomes a foundation for discussions aimed at uncovering possible and plausible explanations for the findings. Utilizing educational references such as literature, research journals, and observations can aid the researcher in establishing connections between the interview findings and existing knowledge.