

## **CHAPTER III**

### **RESEARCH METHOD**

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

This study employed a qualitative research method using narrative inquiry as its primary approach. Narrative inquiry, as defined by Clandinin and Caine (2008), is both a view of human experience and a methodology that enables researchers to study individuals' experiences over time and within a particular context. This approach allows for a deeper understanding of how individuals make meaning of their experiences through stories.

In this study, narrative inquiry was used to explore how young learners perceive and reflect on their first-time experience in formal English learning. The method focuses not only on what is told by the participants, but also on how it is told, making it especially suitable for studying emotional and affective aspects that may not always be visible through observation or tests. To collect data, the researcher used two main tools: semi-structured interviews and narrative frames. These instruments were designed to encourage students to share their personal stories, emotions, and perceptions in a comfortable and meaningful way.

## **B. Research Settings**

This study was conducted over a period of two months at SDN Pulau Pinang Utara, located in Tapin Regency, South Borneo, Indonesia. The school is a public elementary school situated in a rural area, with students coming from diverse family and educational backgrounds. While English is not a compulsory subject in all elementary schools in the region, during the semester in which this study was conducted, the school officially introduced English as an additional subject for fifth-grade students.

The two-month research period allowed the researcher, who also served as the English teacher, to engage closely with the students, observe their classroom behaviors, and understand their emotional and affective experiences throughout their first exposure to formal English learning. Since the implementation of English was relatively new at the school, the environment provided a timely and relevant context for observing and analyzing how students responded to the subject for the first time.

## **C. Participants**

The participants in this study were six fifth-grade students from SDN Pulau Pinang Utara, located in Tapin Regency, South Borneo. The fifth-grade class at the school consisted of 13 male and 22 female students, for a total of 35 students. The students were selected using purposive sampling, based on the researcher's long-term observation of their academic performance, classroom behavior and coordinating with the fifth-grade

homeroom teacher to identify students who exhibited the following criteria: activeness, talkativeness, and curiosity. From this pool, six students were selected, representing high, medium, and low proficiency levels to capture diverse perspectives during their first exposure to formal English learning. These criteria were considered important to ensure that the data collected would reflect authentic and varied student experiences relevant to the focus of the study. The participation of the students was voluntary, and informed consent was obtained from both the students and their parents before data collection.

The researcher also serves as the students' English teacher, which allowed for deeper familiarity with the participants' learning styles, emotional expressions, and engagement levels. This existing classroom relationship helped create a more natural and supportive environment during interviews and narrative sharing, especially considering the young age of the participants. The dual role of the researcher as both teacher and data collector was considered beneficial in building trust and enabling more open communication throughout the study.

#### **D. Data**

The data for this study were collected through two main techniques: semi-structured interviews and a narrative frame. These methods were chosen to allow participants to reflect on and express their first-time experiences in formal English learning from their own perspectives.

The participants—six fifth-grade students—were selected using purposive sampling, based on their achievement level and observable classroom behavior. This selection method allowed the researcher, who also served as their English teacher, to choose students who were most likely to provide rich and relevant data related to the emotional and affective aspects of early language learning.

The first stage of data collection involved individual semi-structured interviews. Each student was interviewed to explore their emotional responses, motivational drivers, and personal impressions during their initial English lessons. The interview questions were designed to be open-ended and child-friendly to encourage honest and comfortable sharing.

In the second stage, the same participants were asked to complete a narrative frame. This instrument consisted of structured prompts and sentence starters to help students recall and write about their personal experiences. The researcher provided assistance where needed, especially to clarify prompts and ensure that the students' responses remained authentic. This two-step process enabled students to express their experiences both verbally and in writing, enhancing the depth and validity of the collected data.

## **E. Technique of Data Collections**

### **1. Interview**

One of the primary data collection techniques used in this study was the semi-structured interview. This method involves guided conversations between the researcher and participants, using a flexible set of open-ended questions. The aim was to explore students' thoughts, feelings, and perceptions regarding their first-time experiences in formal English learning.

The interviews were conducted individually with each participant, using a list of open-ended questions developed by the researcher to suit the age, language level, and emotional capacity of the participants. The questions were carefully designed to elicit information related to students' emotional reactions, confidence, and motivation during their initial exposure to English. Topics included what they remembered most, what made them excited or nervous, and how they felt about learning English for the first time.

The interviews were conducted in a quiet classroom setting during school hours. Each session lasted approximately 10 to 15 minutes. To ensure data accuracy and allow for thorough analysis, all interviews were audio-recorded with the students' and school's permission. The recordings were later transcribed for coding and interpretation. The researcher also took brief notes during the interview sessions to capture non-verbal cues and contextual information.

The flexible nature of semi-structured interviews allowed follow-up questions to be asked depending on the participants'

responses, helping the students express their experiences more freely and meaningfully.

## 2. Narrative Frame

In addition to interviews, this study also used a narrative frame to collect students' personal stories in written form. A narrative frame is a structured, written template designed to help participants retell and reflect on their experiences through a semi-guided format. It provides sentence starters and prompts that allow students to fill in the blanks with their own words and emotions. Barkhuizen (2014) explains that a narrative frame is a type of written guide that includes sentence starters and short prompts to help participants tell their stories in writing. It helps them remember and organize their experiences, while still allowing them to use their own words and feelings.

The narrative frame was administered after the interview sessions. It served as a follow-up to reinforce and deepen the insights gained from the verbal responses. By giving students the opportunity to reflect again in written form, the researcher aimed to obtain stronger, more credible, and more nuanced data regarding their first-time emotional and affective experiences in learning English.

The narrative frame was carefully designed by the researcher to be age-appropriate and easy to understand, using simple sentence starters. The researcher guided students during this process when necessary, ensuring that their voices remained authentic while also

helping them express their thoughts clearly. The responses from the narrative frame were later analyzed in combination with interview transcripts to develop a more comprehensive understanding of the participants' experiences.

## **F. Data Analysis**

The data in this study were analyzed using thematic narrative analysis following Riessman's (2008) framework, which includes five systematic stages: attending, telling, transcribing, analyzing, and reading.

### **1. Attending**

The researcher carefully paid attention to the participants' contexts, backgrounds, and learning environments before and during the data collection process. This stage involved building rapport with the students to ensure they felt comfortable sharing their experiences openly.

### **2. Telling**

Participants were encouraged to share their first-time English learning experiences during semi-structured interviews and through narrative frames. This stage focused on allowing students to tell their stories in their own words, capturing their emotions and perspectives authentically.

### **3. Transcribing**

The audio-recorded interviews were transcribed verbatim, and the narrative frame responses were compiled systematically. Transcription preserved the coherence of each participant's story while ensuring data accuracy for analysis.

#### 4. Analyzing

The researcher conducted a close reading of each narrative, identifying key themes related to emotional experiences (positive activating, negative activating, negative deactivating) and affective factors (self-esteem and motivation). Patterns and recurring elements were noted while maintaining the integrity of each student's narrative.

#### 5. Reading

The researcher re-read the narratives multiple times to deepen understanding and ensure consistency between the themes identified and the students' lived experiences. This stage also involved cross-referencing with the research questions and theoretical frameworks to support accurate interpretation.