

## **CHAPTER 3**

### **RESEARCH PROCEDURES**

This chapter presents the methodology used in this research to achieve the desired goals with seven main points: method of the research, setting, and participants, collecting data, analysing data, steps of the research, and research schedule.

#### **3.1 Method of the Research**

A descriptive case study design was used to describe the benefits and obstacles in writing reflective journals because the study is based on a phenomenon that occurred. Yin (2003) defines case studies as an empirical inquiry investigating a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context. According to Pandey and Patnaik (2021), descriptive case study design attempts to present a complete description of a phenomenon within its context, and the goal set by the researcher is to describe the data as they occur. Additionally, a descriptive case study is used to develop a document that fully illuminates the details of an experience (Stake, 1995). For that reason, the related phenomenon of writing reflective journals in the Professional listening and speaking course was investigated further through a descriptive case study.

#### **3.2 Focus of the Research**

This research focuses on the benefits and obstacles of reflective journal writing in a Professional listening and speaking course. The researcher wanted to know the benefits and obstacles of reflective journal writing based on the student's experiences, including involvement in certain activities and feelings about writing reflective journals.

#### **3.3 Setting and Participants**

This study was conducted in one of the public universities in Tasikmalaya, West Java, Indonesia, which provides a reflective journal as one of the students' assignments. Reflective journals are available in one of the 4th-semester courses, namely the Professional Listening and Speaking course in the English Education

Department, Faculty of Educational Sciences, and Teachers' Training in a state university in Tasikmalaya, Indonesia. Professional listening and speaking are mandatory courses that English education students must take, and they last for 16 weeks in a semester. This course is designed to train students in speaking and listening through various activities and cases. In addition, at that time it was still Covid-19, where almost all learning was done online. The students were divided into several groups and did the listening and speaking practices every week on different topics in the class. After that, the students were given the assignment to fill out a reflective journal consisting of questions about the students' engagement when working on those weekly projects. The teacher used 4F's reflection model by Dr Roger Greenaway (2018), with the following questions: (1) Facts: How do you do the project? (2) Feelings: What do you feel when doing the project? (3) Findings: What do you think about the result? and (4) Future: What will you do for the future project?

The participants in this research are four students who have enrolled in a professional listening and speaking course. The students consist of two males and two females who are around 21-23 years old, with the criteria: 1) English education students, 2) enrolled in the professional listening and speaking subject, 3) experienced in writing reflective journals, and 4) willing to contribute as a participant. The reason for choosing four participants was to obtain valid data, so it is hoped that the researcher could explore more about the students' experience in writing reflective journals.

### **3.4 Technique of Collecting the Data**

The data was collected through semi-structured interviews of the participants who enrolled in the professional listening and speaking course at a state university in Tasikmalaya, Indonesia. This research chooses interviews because interviews allow the participant to tell a story based on their experiences from the beginning until the end of the classes. A semi-structured interview allows the participants to give more detailed information based on their experiences by asking several open-ended questions. In addition, a semi-structured interview is more

potent because it allows the researcher(s), especially in qualitative research, to acquire in-depth information from informants compared to structured interviews. Also, it is flexible and adaptable (Mashuri et al., 2022).

To conduct the interview, the researcher adapted and modified 11 lists of questions. Additionally, the questions used during the interview are about the benefits and obstacles of reflective journal writing based on the student's experiences, including feelings and involvement in writing reflective journals adapted from Roth and Jornet (2013). Moreover, to avoid misunderstanding, the questions were in Indonesian (L1) and only focused on the benefits and obstacles of writing reflective journals in a professional listening and speaking course. However, the interview process was conducted in 20 minutes for each participant. The interview was conducted two times, on 16th March 2024 and 17th March 2024, through Zoom meetings to get the data recorded clearly. Further, the data was transcribed for analysis.

### **3.5 Technique of Analysing the Data**

The interview results were analysed using thematic analysis by Braun and Clarke (2006). They stated, "Thematic analysis is a method for identifying, analysing, and reporting patterns (themes) within data" p.6. The thematic analysis allows researchers to understand collective or shared meanings and experiences (Braun & Clarke, 2012). The authentic data were transcribed and re-read several times, and the data coding was highlighted in several colours, searching for a theme. After choosing the potential theme, the writer reviewed the themes by eliminating a few potential themes, defining the theme, and producing the report (Braun & Clarke, 2006). These are the following stages:

1. Familiarizing with the data, the researcher transcribed and read the interview results several times.
2. Generating initial codes, in this phase, the researcher highlights the data with several colours relevant to this study's purpose and represents the benefits and obstacles in writing reflective journals in professional listening and speaking

courses. Here are the examples of interview transcriptions and the initial codes generated from the data.

**Table 3. 1** Generating Initial Codes

Data	Initial Codes
<p>My first impression when I was told to write a reflective journal <b>was excitement.</b> I like writing, and reflective journals ask us to describe our feelings and what we have learned. It helps me understand <b>how much and what I do not understand yet.</b></p>	<p><b>Students' Enthusiasms</b></p> <p><b>Self-assessment</b></p>
<p>There are no significant difficulties, but <b>recalling what we have learned.</b></p>	<p><b>Difficulty in remembering material</b></p>
<p>I am happy because I have learned some <b>new vocabulary in English.</b> Sometimes, I write the reflection in Indonesian and translate it into English. Apart from that, I gained new knowledge and <b>learned the structure of how to write, like grammar.</b></p>	<p><b>New English Vocab</b></p> <p><b>Structure improvement</b></p>
<p>I am happy and proud because I can write a reflective journal, even though, at first, <b>I felt it was not easy.</b> It became more complicated because I had to write a journal with the same weekly questions.</p>	<p><b>Task Repetition</b></p>
<p>At first, I was a bit confused because there was a lot to write about, but <b>there was a lack of vocabulary.</b> Just writing one paragraph seemed like it had been a long time, even though I liked writing, but if I made it a task, it seemed like I tended to make it better. It was a lack of vocabulary, and the <b>grammar was afraid of making mistakes,</b> then the <b>word order.</b></p>	<p><b>Lack of Vocab</b></p> <p><b>Grammatical problem</b></p> <p><b>Word order</b></p>
<p>It is hard to understand myself, sometimes I am confused about what to express if the personal type is like how do you feel about your assignments, do you</p>	

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enjoy the class, I want to be honest, but if someone reads my statement, **it is like there is a lack of emotion** because someone reads our statement.

**Awkward feeling**

What I like is that **we can remember what we have learned and then improve on the strengths and weaknesses of that day's lesson** to be even more effective at learning in the next week's lesson.

**Self-awareness**

What I like most about reflective journaling is that it is like writing a diary; when I write **my feelings at least feel relieved**, like self-healing.

**Self-Expressions**

I am having a little difficulty with **grammar**, so after I finish writing, I always check on Grammarly or Google Docs to check again to see if there are any mistakes or if there are some grammatical errors.

**Grammatical problem**

Initially, I often **felt exhausted** because I was tired of online learning, especially in an area where signal problems were difficult in the countryside. So, I grumbled that I had finished class, but why were there still assignments?

**Feel burdened**

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The participants' interview transcriptions showed that 13 initial codes represented different aspects. Here is the following list of initial codes and their frequencies.

**Table 3. 2** Initial Codes

Colours	Initial codes	Total
Yellow	Students' Enthusiasm	11
Bright Green	New English vocab	4
Gold	Self-assessment	7
Orange	Self-awareness	9
Turquoise	Structure improvement	1
Gray	Difficulty in remembering material	1
Red	Task Repetition	1
Peach	Lack of vocab	1
Pink	Feel burdened	1
Dark Yellow	Self-Expressions	4
Green	Word order	2
Teal	Awkward feeling	1
Light Gray	Grammatical problem	2

- When searching for themes, the researcher groups several codes that possibly have the same theme to help the researcher analyse the data. Here is the following process of searching for themes (merge the codes into categories).

**Table 3. 3** Searching for Themes

<b>Themes</b>	<b>Sub-themes</b>	<b>Codes</b>	
The Benefits of Reflective Journal Writing	Students' Self-Improvement	Self-assessment	7
		Self-awareness	9
		Self-expression	4
	Students' Writing Skills Improvement	New English vocabulary	4
		Structure improvement	1
	Students' Emotional Engagement	Students' enthusiasm	11
The Obstacles of Reflective Journal Writing	Internal factors	Difficulty in remembering material	1
		Task repetition	1
		Awkward feeling	1
		Burdened	1
	External factors	Lack of vocabulary	1
		Word order	2
		Grammatical problems	2

4. Reviewing potential themes, the researcher reviewed the most appropriate themes based on the research question and eliminated some potential themes irrelevant to answering the research question.
5. Defining and naming themes, the researcher started to define the nature of each theme and the relationship between them. Moreover, the researcher generates a clear name for each theme based on the research question.

**Table 3. 4** Defining and Naming Themes

Themes	Sub-themes
The Benefits of Reflective Journal Writing	Students' Self-Improvement Students' Writing Skills Improvement Students' Emotional Engagement
The Obstacles of Reflective Journal Writing	Internal Factors External Factors

6. Producing the report: the researcher reported what had been gained from the data in Chapter 4.

### 3.6 Steps of the Research

In conducting this research, some stages were carried out, as follows:

1. Exploring the Issues Related to Reflective Journal Writing in EFL Classroom

The researcher has previously written reflective journals in several courses during class. Then, the researcher discussed their thoughts about reflective journal writing with several EFL students and found the phenomenon that some students had obstacles in writing reflective journals in a professional listening and speaking course. Accordingly, this fact is the phenomenon raised by the researcher as the basis of the study.

2. Conducting a literature review

The researcher read some journals related to writing reflective journals in the EFL classroom and then searched for literature reviews on the same topic to obtain more references and support for the statements needed in this study.

3. Determining research objectives

After the necessary references have been collected, the researcher determines the objectives of the research to be carried out, which are related to students' challenges and advantages based on their experience in writing reflective journals in the EFL classroom.

