



CHAPTER III

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

A. Research Design

The use of qualitative research methodology was adopted in this study to acquire a more profound knowledge about the phenomenon under study. Qualitative research methodology differs from quantitative one in that it places emphasis not on the statistical nature of research but rather on meaning-making based on the interpretation of naturally occurring phenomena. Sugiyono (2013: 8–9) explains that qualitative research is conducted in the natural setting where the researcher is the main instrument in collecting data. The information is collected using various methods of data collection and analyzed through induction. Therefore, results are presented in descriptive form or visualization. The main focus is on understanding processes, such as human interactions or the development of a phenomenon, rather than simply highlighting the end result. The analysis is conducted inductively, where findings and themes emerge through repeated processing of field data, emphasizing the deeper meaning and essential significance of the phenomenon being studied.

In addition Cresswell (2024: 196) In qualitative research, the descriptive method is an analytical strategy where the researcher focuses directly on the data, employs limited interpretation, and arranges the information into themes for clearer understanding.

Based on both points above, this approach provides a richer understanding of complex social realities and offers insights that are often overlooked by quantitative methods. By examining contexts in depth and analyzing data



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inductively, qualitative research is able to reveal patterns, motivations, and hidden meanings, thereby strengthening understanding of the topic under study.

Furthermore, the researcher used this method analysis. Comprehension of the phenomenon being studied can be acquired by means of a method whereby empirical findings are explained systematically in theory. Such a method makes it possible for researchers to present the reality situation in an elaborate way and discover new meanings and facts not previously known. As stated by Reskiawan et al. (2020: 38), the main goal of such a method is to give a systematic theoretical explanation of the data gathered.

B. Location and Time

This section has two parts, location and time. For location, the researcher was conducted the research at SMPN 3 Tembilahan Hulu, in the first semester of 2026/2027 academic year, which is located at Jl.pelita Jaya No. 02, Tembilahan, Riau, Indonesia. The study took place in July 2026.

C. Population and Sample

1. Population

The research population for this research was identified as those students attending the 2026/2027 academic year at SMPN 3 Tembilahan Hulu, which made it mandatory for them to have English language lessons. Therefore, each student who had English lessons as a mandatory course was considered the research population. However, to ensure a more focused study, the population was operationally narrowed to eighth grade. Eighth-grade students were selected as participants since they are past the basic stage of language learning



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but have not yet encountered the demands of final examinations, making them an active group in vocabulary acquisition.

The main characteristics of this population include: (1) active students who regularly attend English classes, (2) have experience learning vocabulary through the same curriculum, and (3) are in a learning environment that is relatively homogeneous in terms of teaching methods, materials, and facilities. The inclusion of this population was intended to ensure that the study accurately represented the actual challenges encountered by students in acquiring English vocabulary within authentic classroom learning environments.

Table III. 1 Population of the Research

NO	CLASS	TOTAL
1.	8.1	31
2.	8.2	32
3.	8.3	32
4.	8.4	31
5.	8.5	32
TOTAL		158

2. Sample

In order to get those participants who could best provide rich data, this study utilized purposive sampling approach. Purposive sampling is one of the non-probability sampling approaches, unlike the probability sampling approaches, where participants are intentionally selected based on some set of



features that fit with the objectives of the study. As pointed out by John W. Creswell, the selection of participants in qualitative research should focus on those who can provide rich data. This aligns with the concept of purposive sampling, which selects individuals based on their relevance to the phenomenon under study.

Conceptually, purposive sampling is a technique in which the sample is selected “deliberately” because it possesses specific characteristics required for the study. Therefore, participation was not expected to include all members of the research community, rather participants had to have the ability to offer a detailed insight on the problems related to learning English vocabulary. In line with this consideration, the following criteria were used for the selection of participants in this study:

- 1) students who are active and less active in learning,
- 2) students who experience challenges in comprehending, retaining, or using the English vocabulary appropriately.

To increase the validity of the classification of students' vocabulary proficiency, data source triangulation was used as a means of validating the data. This validation strategy does not make use of one source of information only to determine the proficiency levels but rather makes use of the comparison of evidence from various sources of data. According to Sugiyono (2019: 369), data credibility in terms of source triangulation entails comparing information from various sources. In this study, the researcher combined data from classroom observations, interviews with the eighth grade students, and

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documentation. These sources were cross-checked to ensure that the findings accurately reflect the students' difficulties in mastering English vocabulary.

Unlike quantitative research, there is no standard formula for determining sample size in qualitative research. Therefore, this study does not use formulas such as Slovin's or Lemeshow's. The determination of sample size is based on the principle of data saturation that is, the condition in which the data obtained becomes repetitive and no longer provides new information. Typically, in qualitative educational research, the sample size ranges from 10 to 15 participants, depending on the complexity of the data required.

The use of purposive sampling contributes to qualitative research in terms of methodology through increasing the reliability and validity of the study. Credibility of the study findings is ensured through the careful selection of respondents whose features match with the aims of the research. On the other hand, reliable outcomes will be obtained due to the consistency in conducting the process of data gathering and data analysis. Also, triangulation, such as conducting interviews, observations, and documenting, can be used as a means of improving credibility of the research findings.

It was deemed as the most suitable approach in relation to the nature of the research since qualitative research focuses more on making interpretations and having a deep understanding of social phenomenon instead of generating statistics. Accordingly, Sugiyono describes that the people who participate in qualitative research are called as informants not respondents as they are chosen

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based on purposive considerations regarding the aims of the study. This underscores that data quality is more important than sample size.

Further empirical support has been provided for the justification of the use of purposive sampling in qualitative research. The extensive use of the method can be attributed to the fact that the method allows the researcher to recruit participants that possess traits that fit well the purpose of that specific research. Indeed, in line with the above reasoning, Ahmad and Wilkins (2024: 2) indicate that purposive sampling continues to be the commonest method used in participant selection in qualitative research. Furthermore, other studies confirm that this technique helps researchers gain an in-depth understanding of complex phenomena through the selection of information-rich cases.

Taking into consideration the aims of this particular research, purposive sampling emerged to be the most appropriate technique for selecting participants since it allows gathering in-depth information. Using purposive sampling allows gathering information from people who have firsthand knowledge about the studied. In such a way, this technique will help in exploring problems encountered by students in learning vocabulary in English.

Table III. 2 Sample of the Research

NO	CLASSES	SAMPLE
1.	8.1	3
2.	8.2	3
3.	8.3	3
4.	8.4	3



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5.	8.5	3
TOTAL		15

D. Research Procedure

This research procedure was conducted in several stages:

1. Determine the sample of 15 eighth grade students at SMPN 3 Tembilahan Hulu using purposive sampling.
2. In order to get a thorough insight into the problems that students encounter when acquiring English vocabulary, interviews were conducted among participants who were chosen purposively.
3. During the interviewing sessions, the conversation revolved around four main problems associated with vocabulary acquisition, which include pronunciation, spelling, grammar use, and meaning of the words.
4. In order to maintain the validity of the collected data, the participants' answers were recorded in the researcher's field notes.
5. After the collection phase, the collected information was subjected to the process of data reduction. The reduced data were then organized and presented descriptively to show repeated patterns concerning vocabulary learning problems.
6. The findings were analyzed inductively, categorizing the difficulties into the four indicators mentioned above.
7. Lastly, conclusions were drawn to answer the research question and provide recommendations for improving vocabulary teaching strategies.



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E. Research Instrument

In order to conduct research on the problems faced by Grade 8 in learning English vocabulary, interviews were used as the main method for collecting data. As noted by Sugiyono, as quoted by Abubakar (2021: 67-68), an interview is a structured conversation between the researcher and the respondent using a question and answer technique to obtain complete information, perspectives and ideas relating to the objectives of the study. Interviews are divided into two types, unstructured interviews which are conducted freely by the researcher without using a systematically arranged guide, and structured interviews, which are conducted using written questions and alternative answers determined by the researcher. However, in this study, the researcher choose to conduct semi-structured interviews with using Indonesian language entirely to make it easier for students, which combine both types with the aim of exploring information in greater depth and variety.

The following is an outline of the guidelines for the upcoming interview.

Table III. 3 Interview guide

Research Focus	Sub Focus	Aspect Asked
The difficulties faced by Eighth grade students of SMPN 3 Tembilahan Hulu Academic year 2026/2027 in mastering English vocabulary.	1) Pronunciation	1) The amount of difficulty in pronouncing English words. 2) vocabulary that appears difficult to read.



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2) Spelling

- 1) The difficulty of writing down English vocabulary during a dictation.
- 2) The difficulty of spelling English vocabulary.

3) Grammar

- 1) The difficulty of creating English sentences.
- 2) The difficulties in choosing the right word.

4) Meaning

- 1) The difficulty of understanding English vocabulary.
- 2) Ability to recall the meanings of English vocabulary words



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F. Data Collection Techniques

For data collection, the researcher used interviews as the instrument method.

The researcher gave 8 questions to the students to answer, using a semi-structured interview system. In gathering data, the researcher used the following procedures:

1) Observation

In this research, the observation technique applied was direct participant observation. During the Teaching Practicum Program (PPL), the researcher actively engaged in the teaching process while simultaneously observing the students' learning behavior. By taking part in classroom activities, the researcher was able to identify the students' difficulties in mastering English vocabulary more closely, such as problems in pronunciation, spelling, grammar, and meanings.

2) Interview

In this research, interview conducted in semi-structured interview at Eighth grade of SMP Negeri 3 Tembilahan Hulu with combining closed questions (Yes or No type) and open-ended questions to obtain both short responses and deeper explanations. The interview was conducted only with students, without involving teachers, in order to directly explore learners' experiences and difficulties in mastering English vocabulary. A total of 15 eighth-grade students at SMP Negeri 3 Tembilahan Hulu were selected purposively as participants. The interview guide focused on four main indicators of vocabulary mastery difficulties, namely pronunciation, spelling, grammar, and meaning. Through this interview, the researcher obtained



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detailed information about students' vocabulary learning difficulties and how these aspects influenced their overall English learning process.

3) Documentation

The documentation technique in this study was conducted by collecting photographs and audio recordings as supporting data. As stated by Sugiyono (: 314) Documents are records of past events, documents can take the form of writings, images, or a person's monumental works, Document analysis complements the use of observation and interviews in qualitative research. In this research, documentation consisted of photographs taken during classroom activities and interview sessions, as well as audio recordings of the student interviews. These materials provided concrete evidence of the research process and participants' responses, complementing the interview results and ensuring the validity and reliability of the data.

G. Data Analysis Techniques

Findings that are significant and communicable can be obtained only after the qualitative data have been properly organized and analyzed. In this case, Miles et al. (2014: 31-32) have explained qualitative data analysis as a systematic method of analyzing and managing information gathered through interviews, observations, and other sources of data. The stages of the research are presented below:

1. Data Condensation

In order to ensure that the results obtained have a clear analytical focus, the qualitative data will require being subjected to a process of condensation where the gathered data is refined to extract the most pertinent data. This step



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strengthens the data by making it clearer and more meaningful, ensuring that findings can be easily understood and communicated to others. The term “condensation” is preferred over “reduction” because it highlights the enrichment of data rather than the loss of important information.

2. Data Display

For a proper understanding and decision making, qualitative data needs to be displayed in a structured manner. Therefore, data display is regarded as the second key element of the analysis process, where information is displayed in an organized and summarized way in order to help the researcher in detecting patterns and drawing conclusions about what should happen next. Similar to data condensation, the construction and utilization of displays are integral to the analytical process rather than separate from it. Qualitative analysis consists of many different activities that are meant to help organize data in order to make sense of it. These activities may involve the creation of matrices, the ordering of rows and columns, and the choice of information that will go into each cell of the matrix. Moreover, the design of displays inherently involves elements of data condensation, as it requires structuring and simplifying information to enhance clarity and facilitate interpretation.

3. Drawing and Verifying Conclusions

As qualitative data analysis progresses, emerging interpretations are continuously examined and refined until they develop into well-substantiated conclusions. This final analytical phase, known as conclusion drawing and verification, begins during the initial stages of data collection, when the

researcher systematically interprets the evidence by recognizing recurring patterns, constructing explanations, identifying causal linkages, and formulating propositions. Although these interpretations are initially provisional, they become increasingly credible and firmly supported through the ongoing process of verification and analysis. Final conclusions may only emerge after all data have been collected, depending on the volume of field notes, the methods of coding and data management, the researcher's analytical skills, and the time constraints of the study.

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