

CHAPTER III

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

A. Research Design

This study employs a descriptive qualitative research design to describe students' use of context clues in interpreting unfamiliar vocabulary in reading texts. The study focuses on identifying the types of context clues utilized by students based on their responses and written explanations in context clue interpretation tasks.

A descriptive qualitative design is considered appropriate because it allows the researcher to explore and describe students' use of context clues in detail through their responses and written explanations. Through the analysis of students' responses, the researcher identifies the types of context clues reflected in students' interpretations of unfamiliar vocabulary and provides a detailed description of their use in reading texts.

According to Creswell (2018), qualitative research is used to explore and understand the meanings individuals assign to a particular phenomenon through detailed description and interpretation. In line with this perspective, this study aims to provide an in-depth description of students' use of context clues when interpreting unfamiliar vocabulary rather than emphasizing numerical measurement alone. Therefore, a descriptive qualitative design is considered suitable for this research.

B. Research Subject and Setting

The participants of this study were fourth-semester students of Class A of the English Tadris Program at Imam Bonjol State Islamic University Padang in the 2025/2026 Academic Year. The participants were selected through purposive sampling because they had completed several reading courses, including Basic Reading, Critical Reading, and Extensive Reading,

in which they had been introduced to reading strategies such as the use of context clues.

Class A consisted of 16 students. However, only 13 students were present during the data collection process and participated in the study. Therefore, the data analyzed in this study were obtained from 13 participants. The participants were considered appropriate for providing information related to the use of context clues.

C. Instrument & Data Collecting Technique

1. Instrument

In qualitative research, the researcher serves as the primary instrument in collecting, interpreting, and analyzing data (Creswell, 2018). The researcher administered the instrument, collected students' responses, and analyzed the data to describe students' use of context clues in interpreting unfamiliar vocabulary.

To support the data collection process, a set of open-ended response items was used as the secondary instrument of the study. The instrument was developed using reading passages adapted from TOEFL Reading (PBT/IBT) and IELTS Academic Reading materials. It consisted of 15 unfamiliar vocabulary items embedded in contextualized reading excerpts.

For each item, students were asked to interpret the meaning of the target word based on the surrounding context and provide a written explanation describing the contextual information that helped them arrive at their interpretation. The written explanations served as the primary source of data because they provided insights into the types of context clues utilized by students when interpreting unfamiliar vocabulary.

The completed response sheets served as the primary source of data for this study. Students' written responses and explanations were

analyzed to describe the use of definition, synonym, antonym, example, and general context clues in interpreting unfamiliar vocabulary.

2. Data Collecting Technique

The data in this study were collected through a set of open-ended response items designed to explore students' use of context clues in interpreting unfamiliar vocabulary. According to (Creswell, 2018), qualitative researchers may employ various data collection techniques depending on the nature and purpose of the study. In this research, open-ended response items were considered appropriate because they enabled the researcher to obtain students' written explanations regarding the contextual information used when interpreting unfamiliar vocabulary.

The data source of this study consisted of students' written responses and explanations related to unfamiliar vocabulary embedded in reading passages. The instrument contained reading excerpts adapted from TOEFL and IELTS materials, followed by target words and open-ended response sections. Through these responses, the researcher was able to obtain information about the types of context clues utilized by students when interpreting unfamiliar vocabulary.

The data collection process was conducted through the following steps:

1. The researcher selected and adapted reading passages from standardized English proficiency tests, namely TOEFL and IELTS reading materials, which contained unfamiliar vocabulary appropriate to the participants' level.
2. The researcher identified target words in the passages and prepared open-ended response items requiring students to interpret unfamiliar vocabulary and explain their reasoning based on contextual information.

3. The students read the passages and interpreted the meanings of target words based on the contextual information provided in the texts.
4. The students provided written explanations describing the contextual information that helped them determine the meanings of the target words.
5. The researcher collected the completed response sheets, which served as the primary source of data for the study.

D. Data Analysis

The data in this study were analyzed using the interactive model proposed by Miles et al. (2014). This model consists of three interrelated activities: data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing and verification. The model was considered appropriate because it enabled the researcher to systematically organize and interpret students' written responses in order to describe the types of context clues used in interpreting unfamiliar vocabulary. These activities were conducted continuously throughout the analysis process to ensure that the findings were credible and supported by the data.

1) Data Condensation

Data condensation was conducted by selecting, organizing, and simplifying students' written responses obtained from the context clue interpretation tasks. The responses consisted of students' interpretations of unfamiliar vocabulary and their written explanations regarding the contextual information used to determine the meanings of the target words.

The process of data condensation involved several steps. First, each item was classified according to the type of context clue embedded in the text based on the framework proposed by

Baumann et al. (2003), namely definition clues, synonym clues, antonym clues, example clues, and general context clues.

Second, students' written explanations were reviewed to examine how they responded to each type of context clue. The responses were analyzed according to these predetermined categories.

Third, responses that demonstrated similar uses of context clues were grouped together under the corresponding context clue categories. This process enabled the researcher to organize the data according to the five types of context clues and prepare them for further analysis.

2) Data Display

Data display involved organizing the condensed data into a structured form to facilitate interpretation. According to (Miles et al., 2014), displaying data helps researchers identify patterns and relationships within the data.

In this study, the data were displayed in tables showing the five types of context clues and students' responses associated with each type. Representative excerpts from students' written explanations were also included to illustrate how the context clues were utilized when interpreting unfamiliar vocabulary.

The data displays enabled the researcher to identify which types of context clues were most frequently reflected in students' responses and to describe how students utilized each type when interpreting unfamiliar vocabulary.

3) Conclusion Drawing and Verification

The final stage of analysis involved drawing conclusions and verifying the findings. According to (Miles et al., 2014), conclusion drawing refers to interpreting the meaning of the analyzed data,

while verification refers to checking the consistency and credibility of the interpretations.

In this study, conclusions were drawn by examining patterns across the five types of context clues represented in the instrument and reflected in students' written responses. The analysis focused on describing students' responses to each type of context clue and identifying which clue types were associated with the most and least extensive use among the participants.

The conclusions were continuously verified by reviewing students' responses, comparing them with the categorized data, and ensuring that the interpretations were supported by evidence from the participants' written explanations.

Student	Item	Clue Type	Target Word	Written Explanation	Context Clue Used

Table 3.1 Students' Response Analysis Sheet

E. Trustworthiness of The Data

Trustworthiness is used to ensure that qualitative research findings are credible, consistent, and supported by the data. According to Lincoln & Guba (1985), trustworthiness consists of four criteria: credibility, dependability, confirmability, and transferability. These criteria were applied in this study to ensure that the findings regarding students' use of context clues in interpreting unfamiliar vocabulary were based on a systematic analysis of the data.

1) Credibility

Credibility refers to the extent to which the findings accurately represent participants' responses. In this study, credibility was established through careful analysis of students' written

explanations collected from the context clue interpretation tasks. The analysis focused on identifying the types of context clues reflected in students' responses based on the framework proposed by Baumann et al. (2003), namely definition clues, synonym clues, antonym clues, example clues, and general context clues. To reduce misinterpretation, the researcher repeatedly reviewed and cross-checked the students' written explanations to ensure that the categorization of context clue types was consistent and accurately reflected the data.

2) Dependability

Dependability concerns the consistency and transparency of the research process. In this study, dependability was established by clearly describing each stage of the research procedure, including data collection, data analysis, and interpretation. The process of preparing the context clue interpretation tasks, collecting students' written responses, identifying the types of context clues reflected in the responses, and organizing the data into relevant categories was conducted systematically and consistently. Furthermore, the use of the interactive data analysis model proposed by (Miles et al., 2014) provided a clear analytical framework that guided the organization, interpretation, and verification of the data. As a result, the research process remained transparent and the findings could be traced logically to the data collected in the study.

3) Confirmability

Confirmability refers to the extent to which the findings are derived from the data rather than from researcher bias or personal assumptions. In this study, confirmability was established by ensuring that all interpretations were based on students' written

explanations collected through the context clue interpretation tasks. The findings were supported by data displays and representative excerpts taken directly from students' responses. In addition, the categorization of responses was guided by the context clue framework proposed by Baumann et al. (2003), which provided clear criteria for identifying definition clues, synonym clues, antonym clues, example clues, and general context clues. These procedures helped ensure that the conclusions reflected the participants' responses and were supported by the collected data rather than by the researcher's subjective interpretations.

4) Transferability

Transferability refers to the extent to which the findings may be relevant to other contexts with similar characteristics. In this study, transferability was established by providing a detailed description of the research context, including the participants, research instrument, data collection procedures, and data analysis process. By describing the context of the study clearly, readers and future researchers may determine whether the findings are applicable to other EFL learning contexts, particularly those related to students' use of context clues in interpreting unfamiliar vocabulary in reading texts.