CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

This chapter describes the sample size, how data were collected, represented and analyzed. Based on the research questions, it is obvious that they require the empirical phenomenology method to analyze to data because this is a qualitative research.

Selecting Materials

Since texts are commonly classified as fiction or non-fiction, the data needed are the 80 book reviews from the two main categories as mentioned above from the website Amazon.com (http://www.amazon.com). Then, reviews in four sub-categories in each main category were randomly collected from 1 November 2010 to 28 February 2011. For non-fiction, the sub-categories are science, finance and economics, crime and criminals, and religion and spirituality, while for fiction, they are comics, drama, mystery and thrillers, and romance. The reason for selecting these eight sub-categories is that they clearly identify the objective of the book content and are not mixed with other sub-categories. For example, in non-fiction, the books about religion are generally not found under economics, and vice versa. However, even though some parts of the book reviews in the comic section may mention crimes or

drama for some reasons, the main content of the book is not impacted. The expectation of the analysis of the writing style and rhetorical devices of the book reviews posted on Amazon.com is to examine and analyze the how these two elements work together in order to persuade the readers or customers. The analysis aims at discovering the specific characteristics of book reviews posted on Amazon.com and the persuasive and rhetorical strategies; the researcher assumes that the book reviews posted on Amazon.com use some persuasive strategies either to make the books appeal to the readers or dissuade the readers from buying them. So some new essentials related to the thesis topic might be captured during the analytical process, and they will also be presented.

Data Collection

In the fiction and non-fiction categories, ten book reviews from each sub-category will be collected from Amazon.com. Therefore, 40 book reviews will be collected under the fiction category and another 40 under the non-fiction category. The researcher selected the website Amazon.com as the source for collecting data because this website is, at present, the largest on-line bookstore. By considering the content of the books, as described in the review, along with the sub-category or genre defined by the website for each book, the researcher will select the most relevant book reviews.

Research Methodology

Because this is a qualitative research study, the analysis method concerns empirical phenomenology, taking an analysis with direct observation on the characteristics that happens frequently, and holding the relationship of existence in all cases. The qualitative analyses of the persuasive strategies and rhetorical devices are supported by the frequency of the occurrence of rhetorical devices and informative materials. In other words, the researcher observes some specific characteristics, rhetorical devices, and informative materials that frequently occur in book reviews and lists them in a frequency table. Then, the researcher interprets some meanings from the findings for different kinds of books.

Data Presentation

The results of this analysis are presented in the form of frequency table and descriptive writing. The frequency of occurrence of rhetorical devices and the informative materials appearing in book reviews are presented in the form of tables (as displayed in chapter 4) and descriptive analysis. The characteristics of book reviews, rhetorical devices, and informative materials are examined and presented with descriptive analysis.

Summary

In this chapter, researcher described the source material used for the purposes of this study, and the criteria used for the selection of specific book categories for analysis. The researcher then described the methodology used in analyzing the book reviews in terms of the characteristics of book reviews, writing styles, and approaches, as well as the rhetorical devices they employ. To answer the research questions, the analysis of data obtained from book review will be presented in tables and descriptive analysis in order to answer the research questions mentioned in Chapter 1.