CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter introduces the study by providing essential information. It begins with the background, presenting the context and rationale for the research. The research questions and objectives are then outlined, guiding the investigation. Additionally, the study's assumptions, significance, scope, and limitations are discussed to set clear parameters. Finally, key terms are defined to ensure clarity throughout the research, laying the groundwork for a comprehensive exploration of the subject matter.

1.1 Background of the Study

English language proficiency assessments play a crucial role in evaluating individuals' language skills and ensuring accurate measurement of their abilities. As the demand for reliable and valid proficiency tests continues to grow, the development of new assessments becomes essential. Therefore, in this context, the present study focuses on the validity analysis of TPELT (Test for Primary English Language Teachers), a newly developed proficiency test by a research team at Faculty of Language and Literature Education, Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia (UPI). The test consists of four English language skills: listening, reading, speaking, and writing, to examine the English ability of primary English teachers in non-native English-speaking countries, particularly in Indonesia.

The development process of TPELT used the Indonesian national curriculum and the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) standard as its framework. Renandya, Hamied, and Nurkamto (2018) emphasized the necessity for a CEFR-based proficiency test tailored to the requirements of English language educators in Indonesia. Crafting such a test entails the integration of two fundamental components: General Proficiency and Pedagogical Language Proficiency. Therefore, TPELT offers a proficiency test with specific topics for primary English teachers. TPELT is expected to enrich the existing types of English language tests and become one of the suitable and credible measurement tools needed in Indonesia's education system.

However, to be considered as a credible proficiency test, TPELT must undergo a series of validity analyses to establish its reliability and validity. Therefore, this analysis is a part of it. This research aims to conduct an a priori and a posteriori validity analysis of the reading test of TPELT. Validity analysis is the process of examining the extent to which a test measures what it is intended to measure. It involves assessing the reliability and validity of a test to ensure that the scores obtained from the test are accurate and meaningful. An a priori validity analysis is conducted before the test is piloted to investigate the framework and blueprint of the test. A posteriori validity analysis is carried out after the test event to measure the validity of the test using the scores of the trial participants. Hence, the present research aims to conduct both an a priori and a posteriori validity analysis of the reading test of TPELT to establish its reliability and validity.

Yuanjun Qi (2014) conducted a comprehensive study to analyze the a priori and a posteriori validity of TEM 8 and TOEFL, using qualitative data from published documents and quantitative data from test scores. The findings revealed differences in a priori validity evidence domains between TEM 8 and TOEFL, while also identifying some overlap in their construct definitions. However, the construct definition of TEM 8 was found to be less precise and specific compared to TOEFL, potentially leaving out certain areas of English language proficiency covered by TOEFL. This underscores the importance of refining construct definitions in standardized language proficiency tests for accurate and comprehensive language assessment. Additionally, the a posteriori validity study showed that TEM 8 and TOEFL shared some a posteriori validity evidence supporting their proclaimed purposes, although the objectives of each test differed. Nonetheless, TEM 8 exhibited lower concurrent validity than TOEFL, with a paired section correlation of only 0.371. Ultimately, the study concludes that the construct definition established for TEM 8 is less adequate than that of TOEFL.

In light of the findings from Yuanjun Qi's research, which highlighted the need for well-defined construct definitions in standardized language proficiency tests, this study aims to enhance the validity and reliability of the reading section

of TPELT. To achieve this goal, the study will employ the framework of Weir (2005) to conduct a comprehensive validity analysis of the reading section of TPELT, examining both its a priori and a posteriori validity. The a priori validity analysis will assess the alignment of the test items with the established test blueprint and framework, ensuring that the content and format appropriately measure the intended construct of reading proficiency. Subsequently, the a posteriori validity analysis will investigate the extent to which the test scores obtained from the reading section align with the expected outcomes based on the established framework. By employing a rigorous validity analysis, this study seeks to strengthen the reading section of TPELT and contribute to the improvement of English language education for primary English teachers in non-native English-speaking countries, with a specific focus on Indonesia.

The study's sample will consist of documents related to the reading section of TPELT and the reading scores of participants who teach English in junior high schools in Indonesia. These documents and scores will serve as the research instruments. Junior high schools in Indonesia mark the beginning of formal English language instruction, and the English teachers in this setting play a crucial role in imparting foundational language skills to students. Understanding the effectiveness of English language education at this stage holds significant implications for students' future academic and professional pursuits. By focusing on this sample of TPELT documents and TPELT reading test scores of junior high school English teachers, the study aims to gain valuable insights into the efficacy and impact of the reading section of TPELT in assessing language proficiency. The research findings will contribute to the improvement of language teaching practices and benefit language learners and educators throughout Indonesia's educational system.

In summary, this study aims to contribute to the validation of TPELT's reading section by evaluating its a priori and a posteriori validity. The results of this study are expected to provide valuable insights for the further improvement of TPELT and its potential use as a reliable and valid tool for assessing the English language proficiency of primary English teachers in Indonesia.

1.2 Research Questions

The research question for this study has been formulated based on the background of the study, a comprehensive review of relevant literature, and an in-depth exploration of the research area. Therefore, drawing on the insights gained from existing studies and theoretical frameworks, the research question has been carefully designed to address specific gaps in the literature and to contribute meaningfully to the field of study as follows:

1. To what extent can evidence be generated from the result of a priori and a posteriori validity analysis of the reading test of TPELT?

Specifically, it seeks to explore the evidence that can be generated from the result of a priori and a posteriori validity analysis of the reading test of TPELT. Through this investigation, the study endeavors to shed light on the validity of the TPELT reading test and its alignment with the intended construct of English language proficiency for primary English teachers.

1.3 Objective of the Study

The primary aim of this research is to assess the validity of a specific skill tested in TPELT, ensuring that the test can be ethically and responsibly utilized when introduced for widespread and commercial use. To achieve this objective, a comprehensive investigation of both a priori and posteriori validity evidence is essential to ascertain the degree of validity exhibited by the reading test of TPELT. By conducting this thorough examination, we seek to provide concrete evidence regarding the test's validity, establishing its alignment with the intended construct of English language proficiency for primary English teachers. The findings of this research will be instrumental in determining the trustworthiness and effectiveness of the TPELT reading test, serving as a crucial resource for test developers, educational institutions, and policy makers in enhancing the quality and reliability of the assessment.

1.4 Assumption of the Study

In undertaking this research, it is assumed that the analysis and evaluation of the TPELT reading test will lead to the identification of any potential errors or shortcomings, providing valuable feedback to the test developers. The ultimate goal is to ensure that this newly developed proficiency test for primary English teachers attains the desired levels of validity and reliability necessary for it to be recognized as a high-stakes assessment, capable of meeting national standards and requirements. To substantiate the research findings, a robust foundation of theoretical insights gleaned from reputable books and academic journals will serve as the underpinning framework. Additionally, the study will involve the active participation of 30 primary English teachers who will be invited to partake in a pilot and trial test, thereby ensuring the collection of comprehensive and reliable data. Through a thorough examination of this data, the research aims to provide conclusive evidence regarding the test's validity, contributing to the enhancement of the assessment's quality and its potential applicability on a broader scale.

1.5 Significances of the Study

The present study holds substantial significance in the realm of English language testing, particularly within the context of Indonesia, as it seeks to offer both theoretical and empirical evidence of test validity for the TPELT. Distinguishing itself from prior research, this study adopts a comprehensive approach to evaluating the validity of the TPELT, thereby providing valuable insights into the intricacies of conducting such analyses for this specific type of language proficiency test. By presenting a robust examination of TPELT's validity, this research aims to serve as a model for future scholars, offering guidance on how to effectively conduct similar analyses for other language proficiency assessments.

Moreover, this study endeavors to bolster the recognition and reliability of the TPELT among its user base, instilling confidence in both test developers and test-takers regarding the test's accuracy and effectiveness in assessing English

language proficiency. The empirical evidence gathered through this research will not only substantiate TPELT's efficacy but also contribute to the continual improvement and refinement of language testing practices, particularly within non-native English-speaking countries like Indonesia. In doing so, this research bears the potential to positively impact the assessment landscape for primary English teachers in Indonesia, ensuring that a validated and reliable language proficiency test is readily available to inform important decisions related to language instruction and teacher qualification. Overall, the findings of this study are poised to advance the field of language testing, foster greater trust in language proficiency assessments, and ultimately contribute to the enhancement of English language teaching and learning practices in Indonesia.

1.6 Scope and Limitation

The significance of this study lies in its focus on clarity in the analysis of the TPELT, incorporating elements from the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) and the Indonesian national curriculum known as the Merdeka curriculum. Through this analysis, the research aims to illuminate how TPELT effectively integrates aspects of both the CEFR and the curriculum, specifically in the reading section, where the utilization of text formats required by the curriculum will be evident. By examining how test-takers interpret and engage with these texts in the reading section, the study will provide valuable insights into how all the test constructs are clearly manifested in this specific context, setting TPELT apart from other language proficiency assessments.

It is essential to acknowledge that the present study is limited to analyzing the theory-based, context, and scoring validity of TPELT. Two other dimensions of a posteriori validity, namely criterion-related validity and consequential validity will not be included in this research. Criterion-related validity involves the measurement of how test results can predict relevant future outcomes, such as academic achievement or job performance, necessitating an extended period in the future to confirm validation. Similarly, consequential validity examines the social

and societal consequences of the test and its impact, requiring adequate time to analyze the validity process in a broader context.

In conclusion, this study is expected to make a significant contribution to the advancement of English language testing, particularly in Indonesia. Through a comprehensive examination of the validity of TPELT, this research aims to provide empirical evidence that enhances its efficacy, reliability, and recognition among its users. By addressing the specified dimensions of validity and carefully considering the incorporation of CEFR and curriculum elements, this study seeks to promote clarity and confidence in the use of TPELT as a valuable tool for assessing English language proficiency among primary English teachers. However, it is important to acknowledge the limitations of this study, focusing solely on specific validity aspects while recognizing the potential for future research to explore additional dimensions of validity and further contribute to the refinement and development of language proficiency assessments in the Indonesian context.

1.7 Definition of Key Terms

In order to avoid misunderstanding of the terms used in this study, the following definitions are given:

a. Primary English Teacher

In the context of this research, a Primary English Teacher refers to an educator who specializes in teaching English language skills to students at the primary school level in Indonesia. These teachers are specifically targeted as the test takers for the TPELT Reading Test. As primary English teachers, they play a crucial role in fostering students' language development and communication abilities during their early years of education. Their primary focus is on equipping young learners with fundamental English language skills, including reading, writing, speaking, and listening. These teachers are responsible for creating engaging and age-appropriate English language lessons that cater to the needs of their primary school students. They are expected to understand their students' learning preferences, cultural

backgrounds, and individual interests to enhance teaching effectiveness and student motivation.

b. Proficiency Test

In this research, a Proficiency Test specifically refers to the Test of Primary English Language Teaching (TPELT) Reading Test, which is designed to assess the English language proficiency of primary English teachers in Indonesia. The TPELT Reading Test measures the test takers' ability to comprehend written texts and assesses their reading skills, such as understanding main ideas, identifying specific details, making inferences, and drawing conclusions from the given passages. The test aims to evaluate the language proficiency level of primary English teachers based on their reading comprehension abilities, which are essential for effective English language teaching in primary schools.

c. Reading Test

The Reading Test in this research context refers to the section of the TPELT that assesses the reading comprehension skills of primary English teachers. This test component includes a series of reading passages with associated questions that require test takers to read and comprehend the texts to select the correct answers. The reading passages are carefully selected to cover various topics related to education and teaching in primary schools. Test takers are expected to demonstrate their ability to understand the content, identify key information, and make inferences based on the given texts.

d. A Priori Validity

A Priori Validity in this research pertains to the evidence of the TPELT Reading Test's validity that is established based on the test's alignment with the theoretical framework and the intended construct of English language proficiency for primary English teachers. Before administering the test, the developers ensured that the test content, items, and scoring methods were aligned with the theoretical principles of language competence and strategic competence, as outlined in Bachman's Communicative Language Ability model. The a priori validity evidence was obtained through a thorough review

of the test's content by language experts and test developers to ensure its relevance, appropriateness, and alignment with the intended construct.

e. A Posteriori Validity

A Posteriori Validity in this research refers to the evidence of the TPELT Reading Test's validity that is gathered from the actual administration of the test to a sample of primary English teachers. The researchers collected empirical evidence by analyzing the test scores in relation to other measures or criteria related to English language proficiency, such as teachers' actual classroom performance or their ability to integrate language teaching strategies effectively. The posteriori validity evidence provides valuable insights into the effectiveness and accuracy of the TPELT Reading Test in measuring the English language proficiency of primary English teachers in Indonesia.