

## **CHAPTER I**

### **INTRODUCTION**

This chapter presents the introduction of this study. The discussion begins with the background underlying this study. Research questions, which became the guideline of this study, and the aims of the study are presented next. The discussion goes on to the scope and significance of this study. Finally, this chapter is ended by presenting the paper organization.

#### **1.1 Background**

Assessment is one of the important parts in teaching and learning process. Teachers would like to know the effectiveness of their teaching and the progress of their students' learning in the classroom (Cameron, 2001; Pinter, 2006); and assessment can provide such information. The information gathered from assessment can and should lead to betterment in the next teaching. Thus, it is inseparable from teaching and learning process (Pinter, 2006, O'Malley & Pierce, 1996).

There are many kinds of techniques which can be employed in assessing students' performances. They are teachers' observations, self-assessments, portfolios, project work, and tests. However, in practice, 'Paper and pencil' test seems to be more favored by many teachers in many teaching and learning practices. A survey conducted by Rea-Dickins and Shelagh Rixon (in Pinter, 2006; Cameron, 2001) in 1999 reveals that many English teachers in some parts of the world, most of whom are from Europe, used 'paper and pencil test' as their

major tool of assessment. It is probably because of its simplicity and practicality in setting and marking that make it more favored than other techniques (Pinter, 2006).

Many educator experts assume that traditional techniques used by teachers are less effective and do not really measure the students' performance. Brown (2001) also claims that traditional assessment is not effective in assessing students' ability since students only get few opportunities to show how much they know about the lesson. Thus, educators try to find the alternatives in assessment which would be more appropriate to assess students' performance. The researcher tries to summarize them from different sources (O'Malley, 1996; Brown, 2004; Nitko and Brookhart, 2007). Some of them are Portfolios, Journals, Conferences and interviews, Observations, Exhibition and Self and peer assessments. Those assessments are often called as alternatives assessment since they include moment by moment incidental and intended judgements of students' performance, techniques that are not traditionally of as assessment devices and other procedures out of traditional assessments (Brown, 2001).

Based on the explanation above, it is assumed that an alternative assessment can be the appropriate way to assess students' performance. It provides students with complex and significance tasks, while bringing to bear prior knowledge, recent learning, and relevant skills to solve realistic or authentic problems (Herman, Ascbacher, and Winters, 1992:2 cited in O'Malley & Pierce & Pierce, 1996:4). By conducting initial observations, it was found that the university conducted one of the alternative assessments as students' final exam i.e.

exhibition. In the light of the above issues, this study attempts to explore the alternative assessments used in teaching English. To be more specific, this study attempts to find out what types of alternative assessment used by the teachers, and what are the students' responses toward the alternative assessments used by the teachers.

## **1.2 Statement of Problems**

This study is conducted to investigate:

1. What types of alternative assessments are used by the teachers in teaching English?
2. Is there any difference procedure between teacher X and teacher Y in conducting the alternative assessments?
3. What are the students' responses toward the alternative assessments used by the teachers?

## **1.3 Aims of the study**

Considering the questions formulated above, this study aims at identifying and describing:

1. To identify types of alternative assessments used by the teachers in teaching English.
2. To investigate the difference procedures between teacher X and teacher Y in conducting the alternative assessments.

3. To know the students' responses toward the alternative assessments used by the teachers.

#### **1.4 Scope of The Study**

The study covers three main parts of discussion. First, the study identifies types of alternative assessments used by the teacher in assessing English. Second, this study investigates whether there is a difference procedure between teacher X and teacher Y in conducting the alternative assessments and the last this study finds out the students' responses toward the alternative assessment used by the teachers.

#### **1.5 Significance of the study**

This study is significant because it enriches research on types of alternative assessments in teaching English in Indonesia which is still sparse. Then, for the practitioners, this study provides the insight of the types of alternative assessment in teaching English. The last, this study can be the reflection for the policy makers to improve the use of alternative assessments by considering the benefits, issues and students' responses toward the alternative assessment.

#### **1.6 Study participants**

Two teachers and 40 of intermediate level students in midwifery program of a University in Bandung were participated in the study. The reasons for the

selecting of that participants are, the college, based on initial observations and interview, uses alternative assessments in assessing their students. Thus, the samples are appropriate for the researcher to conduct the study in this college.

## **1.7 Paper organization**

The paper of the research will be organized as follows:

### **Chapter 1 Introduction**

This chapter presents brief introductions to the area of investigation. It consists of an introduction which provides the information of background of the problems, the research questions, the purposes of the research, significance of the research, scope of the research, subject of the study, and paper organization.

### **Chapter 2 Theoretical Review**

This chapter elaborates several related theories and literatures. In detail, this chapter explains the theories of assessment, performance assessment, exhibition assessment, benefits of exhibition assessment, issues of exhibition assessment, and some previous research.

### **Chapter 3 Methodology**

This chapter will describe the process of investigation. Moreover, this chapter presents the research methodology which deals with research design, research participants, procedure in collecting the data and data analysis.

## **Chapter 4 Analysis and Discussions**

This chapter provides the results of the research and discussion of the research findings obtained from the exploration of observations, interviews and questionnaires.

## **Chapter 5 Conclusions and Suggestions**

This chapter will present the overview of all findings consisting of conclusion and suggestions and recommendations for further researchers.

### **1.8 Clarification of terms**

1. **Assessment** is methods used to gather information about students' knowledge, ability, understanding, motivation, and attitudes.
2. **An alternative assessment** is an assessment method to gather information about students' performance that is out of traditional assessment.
3. **Test** is one of the assessment techniques that can be used to assess a student's performance.
4. **Performance assessment and authentic assessment** are the alternative names of alternative assessment.
5. **Wash back effect** refers to the effects the tests have on teaching and instruction (Brown, 2004)