

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the introduction of this research which is divided into several parts, background of the study, statement of problem, aims of the study, scope of the study, significance of the study, research methodology, clarification of terms and organization of the paper.

1.1 Background of The Study

Assessment is a term that is sometimes mistaken as a synonym term of test, but they are not a synonymous term. In the arena of education, Khan (2010, p.121) describes assessments as an ongoing and continuous effort to improve quality of teaching, learning, testing, and curriculum design. Meanwhile, in learning assessment is defined as the process of seeking and interpreting evidence for use by learners and their teachers to decide where the learners are learning, where they need to go and how best to get there (Assessment Reform Group, 2002). Moreover, as a part of learning and teaching process, assessment is classically claimed as a way to find the result of learning process in a period of time. In learning and teaching process it plays an important part as the informer for both teachers and learners about how effective teachers' teaching and how well learners' performance and progress (Pinter, 2009, p.131).

According to Macintosh and Hale (1976) as cited by Conner (1991, p.4), assessment and teaching are inseparable. Therefore, assessment should not be seen as isolated activity. In the past, assessment was decided by government especially ministry of education, school administration or program coordinator while along with the development of learning-centered and communicative teaching methodologies, teachers have their own authority to decide what kind of assessment that is suitable with their own classroom (Shaaban, 2005, p.35).

Assessment which is a result of an interactive process including teacher and students in monitoring the students' performance (Hancock, 1997) acts as diagnostic tool which provides feedback for both teachers and learners that can evaluate teachers themselves and encourage students through showing them their strength and weakness based on the assessment result. It is supported with what Jeon (2010) states that learners have the right to be given proper feedback to achieve proficiency. It also can be used to improve instruction and help students take control of their own learning as stated by Bostwicz and Gakuen (1995 as cited by Kim, 2003, p.2).

According to Popham (2000), assessment also helps teachers to assign grades to students. Students' personal accomplishment which is a set of record about what they have learnt in the classroom is usually represented by grades. Those grades are gained by the students after completing some assessments given by the teachers. Assessment is a way to collect evidence that contains information needed by the teachers to help them to decide whether a student will get an A, B or 90.

In the process of formal teaching of four basic language skills (listening, reading, speaking and writing), speaking tends to be considered as the most important skill to develop and have. McKay (2008) assumes that in language learning speaking is important because as a part of oral language it acts as a base to the learners when they start to learn a language and will develop their literacy skill. As a skill that language learners should develop and have, speaking skills also play an important part of the curriculum in language teaching and an important object of assessment as well (Louma, 2009, p.1).

Morover, it is known that most of students are learning English for communicative purposes (Widiati and Cahyono, 2006, p.269). According to Harmer (2007, p.46), it is also one of reasons why people communicate because they want something to happen as a result of what they say. Communication using language itself can be conducted in two ways: orally (speaking) and in a written form (writing) (Widiati and Cahyono, 2006, p.271). However, the success

of learning foreign language in education program is considered by how effective students communicate in the language (Riggenback and Lazaraton, 1991 as cited by Widiati and Cahyono, 2006). Therefore, Richards and Renandya (2002, as cited by Widiati and Cahyono, 2006, p.269) state that most of language learners study English in order to develop proficiency in speaking.

Despite being claimed as one of language skills that is important to be mastered, speaking is also considered as a challenging skill to assess (Louma, 2009, p.1) for most teachers and even it is often avoided because of practical consideration. The problem of finding the right time, the facilities and personal for testing oral ability, the problem of designing productive and relevant assessment tasks are other problems that often come up in assessing speaking and frequently lead teachers into using inadequate oral test (Knight, 1992, p.294).

According to Kim (2006, p.1) there are two fundamental issues that need to be considered in a speaking assessment area that is to ensure the fairness between the use and consequences of a speaking test. It is related to the assessment reliability and accuracy in order to avoid unreliable and inaccurate interpretation in assessing learners' speaking skill.

In assessing speaking, teachers need to organize and conduct assessments that are able to measure their language use ability in speaking through suitable assessment technique. It can be through interviews, observation, pair-work task and group interaction (Pinter, 2009, p.133). Besides that, there are four categories that should be assessed in assessing speaking. There are grammar and vocabulary, discourse management, pronunciation and interactive communication (Aslanishvili, 2011, p.105). Assessing speaking will help learners in building a strong foundation in their literacy skill and raising their awareness about the language they are using, if it is implemented appropriately and using appropriate tasks.

Recently, even though the purpose of most learners in learning language is to communicate, they are still unable to use the language for communicative purpose. The fact that speaking is less frequently taught in the classroom (Goh,

2007) and often avoided to assess are some of the reasons. Therefore, because assessment plays an important role in teaching learning process, this research is intended to discover, describe and collect deep information about assessment techniques used by teachers at a senior high schools in Tasikmalaya especially in assessing speaking skill along with the revelation of teachers' reason to use those techniques and some obstacles that teachers might found in implementing those techniques.

1.2 Research Questions

Based on the background of the study that has been mentioned before, this research is conducted in order to answer the following questions:

1. What assessment techniques are used by the teachers in assessing students' speaking skill?
2. Why do the teachers use those assessment techniques in assessing students' speaking skill?
3. What are the difficulties in implementing those assessment techniques?

1.3 Aims of The Study

The aims of this research are:

1. To discover the assessment techniques used by teachers in assessing speaking skill.
2. To determine teachers' reasons in choosing those assessment techniques.
3. To reveal the difficulties in implementing those assessment techniques.

1.4 Scope of The Study

The research attempts to describe the assessment techniques used by English teachers in Senior High School in Tasikmalaya in assessing speaking skill. It also investigates teachers' reasons and difficulties in implementing the

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assessment technique. Thus, it is limited to get the information from several English teachers who teach at ten grade.

1.5 Significance of The Study

This study is expected to provide both theoretical and practical significances. From theoretical perspective, it is expected to enrich the literature through providing references related to various kinds of assessment techniques that can be used by English teachers in assessing their students' speaking skill. It is provided to overcome the phenomena of avoiding assessing speaking skill among teachers, because speaking plays an important role in learning language as the first skill that learners learn and as the basis of language literacy.

Meanwhile, from practical perspective, it is expected to provide information about teachers' reason and difficulties in implementing assessment techniques to assess students' speaking skill revealed in this study is expected to increase teachers' creativity and help them to overcome their problems in choosing and using assessment techniques that are appropriate with students needs and characteristics.

1.6 Clarification of Terms

1.6.1 Assessment

According to Pinter (2005, p.131) assessment is a process of data analysis that teachers use to get evidence about their learners' performance and progress in English. Assessment is also defined as a part of teaching learning process which is conducted in order to measure the learners' performance and progress in learning and giving teachers information whether their teaching is effective and reach the goals or not. While in this research, assessment refers to how teachers measure their learners' performance and progress in learning speaking skill.

1.6.2 Techniques

Techniques are specific activities manifested in the classroom that consistently described as an overall plan in presenting language based on the nature of language, learning and teaching (Brown, 2001, p.129-130). In this research, techniques refer to various task or activities that used in assessing learners in the classroom.

1.6.3 Students

According to Cambridge Advance Learner's Dictionary, student is a person who is learning at a school which refers to the senior high school students in this research.

1.6.4 Speaking

Speaking is parts of oral language that refer to the ability to speak in a foreign language (Luoma, 2009), which in this research, refers to learners' ability to speak in English.

1.7 Organization of The Paper

The paper will be presented into five chapters, as follows:

Chapter I: Introduction

In this chapter, the paper will elaborate the background of study, statements of problems, purposes of the study, scope of the study, research methodology, clarification of terms, and organization of the paper.

Chapter II: Theoretical Foundation

This chapter consists of theoretical foundation in this study, which serve as a basis to investigate the research problem.

Chapter III: Research Methodology

This chapter elaborates the research methodology conducted to answer three research questions previously stated in chapter one. It covers research design, sample, data collection, and data analysis.

Chapter IV: Findings and Discussion

It analyzes the result of the study and discusses the result of the study.

Chapter V: Conclusion and Suggestion

This chapter presents the conclusions of the study and also provides the suggestions in accordance with the study.