

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

In this introductory chapter, the background of the study which triggered the present study will be explained. The research questions which will be answered throughout the present study are explicitly stated as well. Furthermore, the purposes and the significance of the study are articulated. In order to avoid misinterpretation, the clarification of the main terms used in the study is provided. Lastly, the organization of the paper is presented as well.

1.1 Background of the Study

Teacher is an essential part in the practice of teaching and learning. Teacher is one of the crucial factors determining a successful teaching and learning. Hence, being a teacher is not a simple task that can be done by anyone. Teacher, as a professional, is required to be able to perform varieties of tasks related to teaching and learning. As clearly stated by Indonesian Government Regulation Number 74 Year 2008 article 1, a teacher is a professional educator whose major tasks are to educate, to teach, to supervise, to lead, to train, to assess, and to evaluate students in formal kindergarten, primary school, and high school.

Highlighting the Indonesian Government Regulation Number 74 Year 2008 article 1, a teacher is demanded to be able to assess and evaluate students. In this point, it is indicated that the role of assessment and evaluation are fundamental in teaching and learning practice. It is supported by Stiggins (1991), Biggs (1999), and Brewster, Ellis, and Girard (2003) who stated that assessment is one important aspect of teaching and learning which should be paid extra attention. In addition, O'Malley and Pierce (1996) believed that assessment is essential and inseparable in teaching and learning process. Assessment and evaluation are crucial not only for students, but also for teachers.

The role of assessment and evaluation are becoming more important as a high degree of accountability becomes a concern in society nowadays (Wragg, 2001). Today's society demands a valid report of their children's learning progress and achievement in school. Teachers, headmasters, and the government are required to be accountable to the public about the teaching and learning practice. In this point, assessment and evaluation play the role. Pinter (2006) stated that the result of assessment and evaluation is needed by teachers, students, parents, school authorities (principals), and administrators. The result of assessment and evaluation will be a source of information to be further interpreted as the report of teaching and learning practice. Often, the result of assessment and evaluation are considered as the reflection of teaching and learning quality (Miller, Linn, & Gronlund, 2009). Hence, assessment and evaluation are fundamental in educational practice.

During 1980's and 1990's, the majority of research on assessment focused on standardized testing and only a few paid attention to classroom assessment (Webber & Luppatt, 2011, Waugh & Gronlund, 2012). Nevertheless, currently, there is an emergent movement to bring a balance between standardized testing and classroom assessment. The reason is because classroom assessment is vitally important and contributes to every other component in teaching practice (Brookhart, 2010). As the result, teachers are required to be able to articulate their knowledge of assessment and design assessment that is not only measuring educational outcomes, but also improving teaching and learning (McMillan, 2000; Shepard, 2000). It was also supported by Gallagher (1998) who stated that it is important for teachers to know the core knowledge of classroom assessment involving principles and theories, techniques and practices, and application and outcomes.

In spite of the fact that classroom assessment can involve test and non-test, test becomes one important component of classroom assessment since it is frequently used in the classroom assessment practice. Test is a vehicle of measurement which is utilized to measure students' learning (Oosterhof, 2003).

Furthermore, Oosterhof (2003) argued that teachers have to periodically administer test as a formal assessment because if teachers depend only on non-test and informal assessment, the students' mastery of a lot of skills might be unexamined.

In order to measure students' learning with precision and accuracy, the test items used in the test need to be precise and accurate as well. Teacher, as the test-maker in the classroom assessment needs to ensure that the test items constructed are valid, reliable, and encouraging students to think critically. Furthermore, in the attachment of the Indonesian Ministry of Education Regulation Number 20 Year 2007, it is stated that as an instrument, the test used by teachers should meet the criteria of: (a) substance: represent the competence being assessed, (b) construction: meet the technical requirements, and (c) language: using appropriate and communicative language. In addition, Airasian (1994) stated that test items used in classroom assessment should match with the learning objectives, reflect appropriate sampling of the materials, and promote high-order thinking skills.

As it is clear, teachers' skill and knowledge in test construction and the quality of the test items used in the classroom assessment practice are essentials. However, existing research on classroom assessment found that teachers lack the skill required to design effective assessment (Guskey, 2003). A plethora of studies investigating the quality of the test items has been conducted as well (Purnomo, 2007; Zamsir, 2012; Hamafyelto, Hamman-Tukur, & Hamafyelto, 2015). The studies confirmed that teachers' knowledge and skills in test construction are still limited. As the result, it was often found that the test items made by teachers do not meet the criteria of good test items. In other words, the quality of the test items made by teachers is relatively low.

The data taken from the Pusat Penilaian Pendidikan (Puspendik) Indonesia (2012) also revealed that teachers' understanding and ability in test construction is below expectation. The reasons were because teachers lack

understanding on how to construct the test item and lack of time. Consequently, teachers sometimes only take test items from various sources without considering the validity, reliability, and appropriateness of the test items for their students. Also, teachers often do not consider the cognitive domain covered in the test items.

In the more specific context of English language testing and assessment, many studies focused on the important issues such as test validity, washback and fairness had been conducted (Cheng, 2008). However, studies examining how the English tests are developed, administered, and used are relatively scarce (Fan & Jin, 2013). Meanwhile, English teachers' ability in test construction along with the quality of the test items is very important since English is one of the major subjects in Indonesia. Hence, the present study intends to reveal English teachers' ability in test construction by identifying and observing the steps taken by the English teachers in the process of test construction and examining the quality of test items constructed by the English teachers. Moreover, considering several previous studies which had found that there were some problems with teacher-made multiple choice test items (Fleming & Chambers, 1983; Badgett & Christmann, 2009), also because multiple-choice test items is frequently used in formal classroom assessment practice, multiple-choice test items made by the English teachers will be the foci of the present study.

1.2 Research Questions

According to the background of the study, several research questions to be answered throughout the present study are formulated. Explicitly, the present study intends to answer the following research questions:

1. What are the steps taken by the English teachers in constructing multiple-choice test items?
2. What are the difficulties faced by the English teachers in constructing multiple-choice test items?

3. How is the quality of the multiple-choice test items constructed by the English teachers?
 - a. How are the item format analysis and the item quality analysis of the multiple-choice test items constructed by the English teachers?
 - b. How are the validity, reliability, and the β -index analysis of the multiple-choice test items constructed by the English teachers?
 - c. How is the proportion of high-order and low-order thinking in the multiple-choice test items constructed by the English teachers?

1.3 Purposes of the Study

Based on the questions formulated in the study, the purposes of the present study are as follows:

1. To reveal the steps taken by the English teachers in test construction whether or not it follows appropriate procedures. Moreover, the difficulties faced by the English teachers in the test construction will be investigated as well.
2. To reveal the quality of the test items constructed by the English teachers in terms of the validity, the reliability, and the β -index. Moreover, the item format analysis and the item quality analysis of the test items will be conducted. Lastly, the proportion of high-order and low-order thinking covered in the test items will be figured out.

1.4 Scope of the Study

In order to narrow the focus of the present study, the scope of the study is presented. The present study falls into two main points: teacher-made multiple-choice test construction and the quality of the test items. The teachers involved in the study are English teachers teaching in Public Senior High School in Indonesia.

Moreover, the test items which are investigated throughout the present study are multiple-choice test items made by the English teachers in summative assessment.

1.5 Significance of the Study

The result of the present study is expected to be able to give significant contributions to the following field:

- For English teachers:

The result of the present study can be a tool of measurement for the English teachers on their ability in multiple-choice test construction. Moreover, by reading the present study, teachers can understand how to construct multiple-choice test items. In the future, teachers are expected to be able to construct multiple-choice test items better.

- For the Indonesian Government

The result of the present study can be a source of information about English teachers' ability in test construction and the quality of multiple-choice test items made by the teachers. It is necessary to be known since English is one of the major subjects in Indonesia. Furthermore, the Government will be able to determine the kind of appropriate training to conduct in order to improve English teachers' ability in test construction.

- For further researcher:

For further researcher, the result of the present study can be a preliminary research in the field of teachers' ability in test construction. Deeper studies on how to improve teachers' ability in test construction will be needed.

1.6 Clarification of Terms

In order to avoid misinterpretation, clarification of the main terms used in the study is necessary. Thus, the terms used in the present study are defined as follows:

- Test is the vehicle used to measure students' learning and achievements (Oosterhof, 2003)
- Teacher-made test is the type of test which is designed, constructed, and conducted by teachers in the classroom (Popham, 2003)
- Test items in the present study refer to teacher-made multiple-choice test items used in summative assessment
- The teachers in the present study are EFL teachers teaching in Public Senior High School in a selected city in Indonesia

1.7 Organization of the Paper

This paper consists of five chapters presenting different parts of the present study. In details, the explanation of each chapter is presented as follows:

- Chapter I
This introductory chapter presents the background of the study, the research questions formulated, the purposes of the study, the scope of the study, the significance of the study, clarifications of the main terms used in the study, and the organization of the paper.
- Chapter II
Chapter II covers the theoretical framework of the study along with the literature review and the report of several previous studies in the same field. The theory of teacher competencies, assessment, evaluation, and testing are elaborated in this chapter.
- Chapter III
In Chapter III, the explanation of the research methodology employed in the study is provided. This chapter also presents the subject of the study, the instruments used to collect the data, the data collection, and the data analysis. Moreover, the schedule of the study can be found in this chapter as well.
- Chapter IV

Chapter IV presents the findings of the study along with the discussions of the findings. In this chapter, the answers of the research questions formulated in Chapter I are presented. Moreover, the result of the data analysis is also provided.

- Chapter V

Chapter V is the concluding chapter of the present study. Beside the conclusion, some recommendations for the further studies can also be found in this chapter.