

## **CHAPTER I**

### **INTRODUCTION**

This chapter presents general points of the study including background of the study, research questions, aims of the study, scope of the study, significance of the study, methodology, and organization of the thesis.

#### **1.1. Background**

Assessment has major consequences for both students and teachers. In assessing students' learning, teachers use tests. Test becomes the most possible tool that teacher can use to see students' learning (Arikunto, 2005). That relates to teachers' competence in test construction, including developing reading test.

Teachers need to be testing literate. That is clearly mentioned in the government regulation number 19 in 2005 about the national standard of teachers. Teachers should accomplish four competencies; namely professional competence, pedagogical competence, self-competence, and social competence (Suherdi, 2013). Furthermore, Suherdi (2013) mentions that constructing test is one of a teacher's pedagogical competences besides the ability to plan, to teach, and to develop students' reflection on learning. In line with Suherdi (2013), Richards (2011) states that there are two kinds of content knowledge that teachers need to master, which are disciplinary and pedagogical content, in which assessment is included to one of them, the pedagogical content.

Based on the aforementioned things of the teacher made test, there are some research studies about the quality of reading test made by the teacher. A study from Parr and Bauer (2006) highlight that the reading test made by the high school teachers are less consistent and reliable. Parr and Bauer (ibid) further mention that the teacher made test remain the low quality. Another study from Wise, Lukin & Roos in Zhang (1996) explicitly mention that most teachers believe that they need strong measurement skills in developing the reading test. The teacher did not have sufficient knowledge of constructing appropriate reading test.

A study conducted by Razali & Jannah (2015) elaborate the comparison of the quality of teacher made-test on try-out with the national test items. The finding showed that more than fifty percent of try out test items are not relevant with the national test items. Meanwhile, the final national examination test items were designed with higher cognitive domain than teacher made test items. It shows the teacher made test items (tryout) is more superficial than final national test items. It can be as a reason why the students who pass the tryout which made by the teacher cannot pass the national examination.

On the contrary, a study from Aulia, Sukirlan, & Sudirman (2014) reveal that secondary teachers are able to construct reliable questions for their students. Furthermore, Aulia, Sukirlan, & Sudirman (ibid) point out that teacher made test on the questions of mid semester test are classified into three classifications; *need revising, good enough, and very good*. Meanwhile, the level of difficulty of teacher-made mid semester test items can be classified into four categories: good items, very difficult, very easy, and too difficult.

On the contrary, others report a level of discomfort with the quality of their own tests Stiggins & Bridgeford in Crooks (1988). Marmah & Impraim (2013) find out that most lectures do not follow the standard process to construct the test items well.

Furthermore, Saefurrohman and Balinas (2016) conducted a study to Philippines' senior high school teachers and Indonesian's junior high school teachers in constructing a test which showed that Philippines teachers tend to use their own made test, meanwhile Indonesian teachers prefer to use test available from textbooks.

As designing reading test includes to pedagogical competence, it is an important part of assessing students' understanding of course content and their level of competency in applying what they are learning. Thus, they need to be tested by a valid and reliable test. However, research in Indonesia regarding teachers' competence in reading test construction, to researchers based

knowledge, are still limited. Therefore, it is worthwhile to conduct a study under the topic of teachers' competence in a reading test construction.

## **1.2. Research Questions**

The research questions are essential element of the research because they would lead and frame the process of the research. In order to reach the aim of the study. Therefore, this study addresses the following questions:

1. How do teachers construct a reading test for their students?
2. Do the reading tests created by the teachers fulfill the principles of testing and criteria of a good reading test?

## **1.3. Purpose of the study**

Relevant to the research questions above, this study has one ultimate purpose that is to investigate the ability of teacher in constructing a test, especially a reading test. Then, the main purpose is divided into more specific purposes as follows:

1. To investigate the process of making a reading test by the teacher of English at vocational school.
2. To investigate the quality of teacher made-test on reading.

## **1.4. Scope of the study**

As any other qualitative studies, relevant to the problems have been formulated above, this study has some limitation and cannot be generalized into other situations. This study is concerned to investigate English vocational school teachers' ability in a reading test construction in Banjar, West Java.

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

The results of this study are significant from three perspectives: 1) theoretically, 2) practically, and 3) policy. The results of this study are expected to

contribute to the development of the theory and to enrich the literature on assessment literacy, especially the ability, quality, and steps in constructing questions for reading test. Furthermore, practically, for teachers, the study is expected to give a picture of English language teachers' ability, especially who teach in vocational school, in constructing a reading test. Finally, in terms of policy, the results of this study are expected to lead to a policy of the development of teachers' capacity in assessing students' language skills, especially reading skill.

### **1.6. Approach to the study**

This study emphasizes on English vocational school teachers' in construction of a reading test. Since the aims of this study were required thorough investigation, qualitative study is the most appropriate method to be adopted. Within the framework of qualitative approach, this study was conducted under the case study design (Creswell, 2012). Additionally, Malik & Hamied (2014) point out that case study approach is commonly used evaluation and this is relevant to the study investigated.

### **1.7. Clarification of terms**

To avoid misunderstanding, the writer thinks it is necessary to clarify the key terms frequently used in this research.

1. The first key term is test. Hughes (2003) defines test as a tool to measure language proficiency of students. Echoing Hughes, Brown (2004) describes test as a method of measuring a person's ability knowledge, or performance in a given domain. To wrap up, test is a process that is administered to measure the students' ability to perform in a particular field in a certain time limit with some specific goal (Sah, 2012).
2. The second term is teacher made - reading test. Teacher made – reading tests are normally prepared and administered for testing classroom achievement of students, evaluating the method of teaching adopted by the teacher and other curricular programs of the school (Disha, 2012).

3. The last but not the least term is reading test construction competence. The competences are determined as the overall concept of combination of knowledge, understanding, and skill. Then, reading test construction competence is determine as the concept of knowledge, understanding and skill in developing a reading test. It includes to the pedagogical competence (Richards , 2011).

## **1.8. Organization of the thesis**

The study is organized into five chapters. The Chapter I presents general points of the study including background of the study, research questions, purpose of the study, scope of the study, significance of the study, approach to this study, clarification of terms, and thesis organization. Chapter II elaborates theoretical overview that supports this study. Chapter III contains the detailed methodology that is applied in this study. Chapter IV presents, elaborates, analyses, and discusses the findings. Chapter V provides the summary and some suggestions for further related studies.