

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, the writer presents background of the study, limitation of the study, problem statement, objective of the study, significance of the study, and thesis organization.

A. Background of the Study

Reading is one of the most important skills of language proficiency which plays a very major role in academic achievement of students in common and foreign language learners in particular. Hatch (1979) in Asshabi (2013) believes that reading is a skill that everyone needs whether she/he is a student in elementary, university, or adult school. So, all English teachers are involved in teaching reading at all levels of learners; primary, intermediate and advanced level. Thus, reading skill looks like to be one of the most major skills to be dealt with in teaching any language.

Brown (2004: 185) states that with the omission of a small number of people with learning disabilities, reading is a skill that is taken for recognized. It is quite obvious to the researcher that students get much more knowledge through using reading skill than other skills. Rivers (1981: 259) in Asshabi (2013) contends that reading is one of the most significant skills by which learners gain information and combine other areas of language in any language class. Reading is important for foreign language learners because in most of the cases and almost most of the students use this skill much more than the other skills.

In order to know the mastery of students' reading, it can be seen from their reading comprehension level. The simple view of reading (Gough & Tunmer, 1986) in Mellard (2010) that reading comprehension resulted from two necessary sets of reading skills; decoding and language comprehension. In addition, good reading comprehension involves reading the words on the page, accessing the meanings, computing the sense of each sentence and much else as well. In order to understand text in a meaningful way, readers need to

integrate the meanings of successive sentences. Then, readers need to establish how the information fits together as the whole. In addition, readers need to add together between background knowledge and ideas. Understanding reading comprehension and the skills necessary for adequate comprehension in adults will give a more complete understanding of comprehension ability. In order to know how far the students' reading comprehension, the lecturer or teacher need to do assessment of reading.

During the last few decades, assessment has more than any issue becomes one of the significant topics in educational language policies in different countries. Assessment is generally accepted that certain standards and goals are needed on which to base assessment. The standards narrow the choice of specific items that are considered important and relevant for any specific assessment within any given context. Therefore, all these elements must be taken into account when making a judgment (Taras 2005: 467) in Lehto and Maijala (2013).

In general, assessing reading is complicated and more difficult. It is also more time-consuming than measuring other types of language use such as listening, speaking, writing, grammar, and vocabulary. In addition, according to Alderson (2000: 4) in Lehto and Maijala (2013), the process of reading is normally silent, internal, and private. So, we as the teachers or lecturers do not know what exactly happened in the students' heads while they read. They just need to read the text or article and then apply that reading in some purposes.

The best way in assessing language skill including reading skill is applying authentic assessment. Based on colorincolorado (2017) authentic assessment allows the teachers to follow the ongoing progress of their students regularly and often. While standardized tests measure students at a particular point in the year, ongoing assessments give repeated snapshots of where students are throughout the school year. In addition, ongoing assessments are particularly important for English language learners. Standardized tests in English do not usually reflect English language learners true content knowledge or abilities. However, authentic assessment can provide a better rounded picture of their skills, abilities, and ongoing process.

Authenticity is regarded as an important feature of language tests, but commonly the notion is related only the use of authentic material and authentic assessment. According to Alderson (2000: 138) in Lehto and Maijala (2013) the goal of reading assessment is typically to know how well readers read in the real world. Authenticity is thus an important aspect of testing since it describes the relationship between the test and the real world. So, there is similarity between the goal of reading assessment and the authenticity in terms of applying it in the real world.

Reading for Academic Purposes is one of reading subjects which is taught at the third semester of English Education Program in Universitas Pekalongan. Reading for Academic Purposes is taught by a lecturer because there are only two classes in this year; Class A and Class B. The interesting fact of this subject is that the lecturer seldom gives the A as final grade for his students. He just gives B+ as the maximal grade for his students as long as he teaches this subject. He states that the competences of the students in reading for academic purposes can not reach the minimal standard competence of students who get grade A. In addition, the lecturer does not believe if the reading techniques like orientation, skimming, scanning, decoding, and global understanding can improve the students' reading competence. He believes that if the students read the texts in many times, it makes the students have many experiences in reading. The students have many general background and information to understand the text. Then, the lecturer states that he can know the students' reading competences if the students present the content of the article which has been read by them orally. These are the reasons why the lecturer chooses to apply the authentic assessment to assess the students' reading competence in their class.

Education and Cultural Ministry Regulation Number 30, 2016 about Education Assessment Standard informs that there are nine assessment principles. One of the assessment principles is authentic. It is stated that authentic principle is an assessment orientated in the continuous learning process. The characteristic of authentic is the assessment has to reflect the nature of students' competence in doing task. Thus, the Universitas Pekalongan which is known as the one of private university in Pekalongan should follow

the Education and Cultural Ministry Regulation number 30, 2016 in assessing the students' competence. It means that, the lecturer who teaches reading for academic purposes subject of English Education Study Program in Universitas Pekalongan should apply the authentic assessment in assessing the students' competence.

Based on the facts which are explained above, the study do investigation to find out how the authenticity of assessments used in reading class at the third semester of English Education Program in Universitas Pekalongan academic year 2016/2017.

B. Limitation of the Study

This study is impossible to cover the entire assessments of subjects which used at the third semester of English Education Program in Universitas Pekalongan. The limitation of the study focuses on the reading for academic purposes assessments used for the students in the III-A and III-B class at the third semester of English Education Program in Universitas Pekalongan academic year 2016/2017. The authenticity of assessments used in reading for academic purposes class is analyzed based on the ten indicator of the authenticity of assessment because it will help the researcher to identify the level of the authenticity of assessments. The ten indicators are based on O'Malley and Pierce (1996), Lund (1997: 25), and Hidayati (2016: 68-70). The ten indicators of the authenticity of assessments stated in Hidayati (2016: 68-70) based on Hymes (1991), Newmann and Wehlage (2007), Mc Alister (2000), Brown and Hudson (2004), and Standard of Assessment issued by the Ministry of Education and Culture of Republic Indonesia (2014).

C. Problem Statement

Based on the background of the study, the problems of the study are formulated as follows:

1. What are the types of assessment used in reading class at the third semester in Universitas Pekalongan?
2. What is the most frequently used assessment in reading class at the third semester in Universitas Pekalongan?

3. How is the authenticity of assessment used by the lecturer in reading class?
4. What are the problems faced by lecturer in applying authentic assessment in reading class at the third semester in Universitas Pekalongan?

D. Objective of the Study

The study aims at finding the answers to the questions stated in the problem statement. Therefore, the objectives of the study are:

1. to describe the types of assessments used in reading class at the third semester in Universitas Pekalongan
2. to describe the most frequently used assessment in reading class at the third semester in Universitas Pekalongan
3. to know the authenticity of the assessment used by the lecturer in reading class
4. to describe the problems faced by lecturer in applying authentic assessments in reading class at the third semester in Universitas Pekalongan.

E. Benefit of the Study

The results of the study are expected to bring benefit and contribution in teaching learning English both of theoretically and practically.

1. Theoretical Benefits
 - a. The findings of the study give the contribution in applying appropriate reading assessment for the students in English teaching learning process.
 - b. The findings of the study identify the problems in applying authentic assessment in English teaching learning process.
2. Practical Benefits
 - a. For the lecturer or teacher, the results of the study give the information about the authenticity of assessments used in reading class so the teacher or lecturer can apply the appropriate kinds of assessment in assessing their students' reading.

- b. For the students, it gives information to the students about the kinds of assessment in reading so it helps them to finish the assessment correctly.
- c. For the other researcher, it gives information to other researchers as the review for the previous work in their study.

F. Thesis Organization

Thesis organization is given to the readers so that they can easily understand the content of the study. In this study, the writer organizes it into five chapters.

Chapter I is an introduction that consists of several parts, namely: background of the study, limitation of the study, problem statement, objective of the study, significance of the study, and thesis organization.

Chapter II is review of related literature that consists of previous study, underlying theories, and theoretical framework. The underlying theories consist of assessment, authentic assessment, principle of language assessment, reading, authenticity of reading assessment in English Language Teaching, and problem faced in applying authentic reading assessment in English Language Teaching,

Chapter III tells about the methodology of this research which consists of type of research, setting of research, object of research, research subject, data and data source, technique for collecting the data, validity of data, and technique for analyzing data.

Chapter IV is research finding and discussion about the authenticity of assessment used in reading class at the third semester of English education program in Universitas Pekalongan academic year 2016/2017.

Chapter V deals with conclusion, pedagogical implication, and suggestion.