

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. Background of the Study

Reading is one of the most important skills of language proficiency which has a very crucial role in academic achievement of students in common and foreign language students in particular. Hatch (1979) in Asshabi (2013) stated that reading is one of skills that must be mastered by everybody whether she/he is a student in elementary, university, or adult school. In this case, all English educators should be involved in teaching reading at various levels of students such as primary, intermediate and advanced level. Therefore, reading skill can be assumed as one of the most major skills to be dealt with in teaching any language.

Moreover, Brown (2004, p.185) stated that reading is a skill that is taken to be recognized by the omission of a small number of people with learning disabilities. It means that all of students get much more knowledge by applying reading skill than other skills. Besides, Rivers (1981, p. 259) in Asshabi (2013) argued that reading is most significant skill by which learners to gain information and combine other areas of language in any language class. It can be concluded that reading is really important skill for foreign language learners because in most of the cases and almost most of the students apply this skill much more than the other skills.

In mastering reading skill, every student must increase reading comprehension level. Gough & Tunmer (1986) in Mellard, et al (2010)

described that reading comprehension is resulted from two necessary sets of reading skills namely decoding and language comprehension. In addition, good reading comprehension can be conducted by 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, students need to integrate the meanings of successive sentences. Then, they need to establish how the information fits together as the whole. Moreover, the students must add both of the knowledge's background and the ideas. Understanding reading comprehension and the skills necessary for adequately comprehension in adults are expected to build a more complete understanding of comprehension ability. In order to know how far the students' reading comprehension, the lecturers or teachers must apply assessment of their students' reading skill.

In the current decade, assessment has more than any issue becomes one of the significant topics in educational language policies in different countries. Taras (2005) in Lehto & Maijala (2013) defined that assessment is generally accepted that certain standards and goals are needed as the basics of assessment. It means that the standards narrow the choice of specific items that are considered important and relevant for any specific assessments within any given contexts. Therefore, all these elements need to be taken during creating an assessment.

In general, assessing reading skill is very complicated and more difficult than other skills. It is viewed on more time-consuming than measuring other types of language use such as listening, speaking, writing, grammar, and

vocabulary. In addition, Alderson (2000, p.4) in Lehto & Maijala (2013) elaborated that “the process of reading is normally silent, internal, and private”. It is implied that the teachers or lecturers cannot understand what exactly happened in the students’ minds while they just read texts. They just need to read the text or article then applying reading in some purposes.

The best way in assessing language skill including reading skill is applying authentic assessment. Based on Colorincolorado (2017) stated that 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. Alderson (2000, p.13) in Lehto & Maijala (2013) described that the goal of reading assessment is typically to know how well readers read in the real world. It means that authenticity is an important aspect of testing since it describes the relationship between the test and the real world. Thus, there is similarity between the goal of reading assessment and the authenticity in terms of applying it in the real world.

In every program in university is needed to apply English as one the subject matter, Informatics Technology Program in Universitas Surakarta for instance which establishes reading for Academic Purposes that taught at the first semester. Most of people know its English type namely English for Specific Purpose (ESP). Mackay & Mountford (1978, p.2) stated that “ESP is generally used to refer to the teaching of English for a clearly utilitarian purpose.” It can be said that English is taught to achieve specific language skills by using real situations or real condition, in a manner that allows to use English in their future profession, or in order that comprehending English discourse related to their specialty. Moreover, the English lecturers as the educator actually describe that the competences of their students in reading for academic purposes cannot reach the minimal standard competence of students who get grade A. In addition, they do not believe if the reading techniques like orientation, skimming, scanning, decoding, and global understanding can improve the students’ reading competence. They believe 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 lecturers state that they 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 lecturers decide to apply the authentic assessment to assess the students’ reading competence in their class.

Education and Cultural Ministry Regulation Number 30 in 2018 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 Surakarta which is known as the one of private university in Surakarta should follow the Education and Cultural Ministry Regulation number 30 in 2018 in assessing the students' competence. It means that the lecturers who teach reading for academic purposes subject of English for Specific Purposes in Informatics Technology Program in Universitas Surakarta should apply the authentic assessment to know the students' competence.

Based on the explanations above, the researcher decided to investigate a research entitled "The Authenticity of Assessment Used in Reading Class of English for Specific Purpose in Informatics Technology Program of Universitas Surakarta on 2018/2019 Academic Year".

B. Limitation of the Study

The researcher limits the scope of this research because of limited time and knowledge. The focus is just on the authenticity of assessments used in reading class of English for Specific Purpose that placed on Informatics Technology Program in Universitas Surakarta. Its class is separated into two type namely regular class and non-regular class. Regular class consists of the students who attend the meeting at morning until evening while non-regular

class contains the students who work as the employees of any corporation which usually attend in night class. Moreover, the research is conducted during first semester on 2018 / 2019 Academic Year.

C. Problem Statement

Based on the description in background of the study, the researcher formulates several problem statements as following:

1. What are the types of assessment used in reading class of English for Specific Purpose in Informatics Technology Program of Universitas Surakarta on 2018/2019 academic year?
2. What is the most frequently assessment used in reading class of English for Specific Purpose in Informatics Technology Program of Universitas Surakarta on 2018/2019 academic year?
3. How is the authenticity of assessment used by the lecturers in reading class of English for Specific Purpose in Informatics Technology Program of Universitas Surakarta on 2018/2019 academic year?
4. What are the problems faced by lecturers in applying authentic assessment in reading class of English for Specific Purpose in Informatics Technology Program of Universitas Surakarta on 2018/2019 academic year?

D. Objective of the Study

This research has the aim to find the answers of the questions stated in the problem statement. Therefore, the objectives of the study are as following:

1. to describe the types of assessment used in reading class of English for Specific Purpose in Informatics Technology Program of Universitas Surakarta on 2018/2019 academic year,
2. to describe the most frequently assessment used in reading class of English for Specific Purpose in Informatics Technology Program of Universitas Surakarta on 2018/2019 academic year,
3. to describe the authenticity of assessment used by the lecturers in reading class of English for Specific Purpose in Informatics Technology Program of Universitas Surakarta on 2018/2019 academic year, and
4. to describe the problems faced by lecturers in applying authentic assessment in reading class of English for Specific Purpose in Informatics Technology Program of Universitas Surakarta on 2018/2019 academic year.

E. Significance of the Study

The result of the research is expected to contribute in the progress of teaching learning English both of theoretically and practically.

1. Theoretical Benefit
 - a. The findings of the research are expected to be a part of the body of knowledge in teaching learning English especially about authentic assessment.
 - b. The findings of the study can bring the findings of the current problems found in applying authentic assessment in English teaching learning process.

2. Practical Benefit

a. For the Lecturers or Teachers

The results of this research can give the information about the authenticity of assessments used in reading class so that the teachers or lecturers can apply the appropriate types of assessment for assessing their students' reading ability.

b. For the Students

The research can give additional information for the students about the kinds of assessment in reading ability so that it helps them to develop their reading ability.

c. For the Other Researchers

The research information can be utilized by other researchers as the review for the previous work in their study.

F. Thesis Organization

Thesis organization is purposed to make the readers understand easily towards the content of this research. It is divided 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 literature review that consists of previous study, underlying theories, and theoretical framework.

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 of English for Specific Purpose in Informatics Technology Program of Universitas Surakarta on 2018/2019 academic year.

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