

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

According to Brown (1990) assessment refers to a related series of measures used to determine a complex attribute of an individual or group of individuals. In education, assessment can be interpreted as a step in the learning process where teachers carry out a series of activities to see the extent to which their students have developed, other than that teachers can also see the weaknesses of their individual students in learning and determine which parts should be studied further. As Bennett (2011) say, Assessment for Learning (AfL) will make it easier for teachers to carry out their work in teaching, especially in individual student learning abilities, long-term learning, and mutual understanding.

Assessment is a crucial part of learning process, where teacher will find out whether the students have mastered the lessons that have been given throughout the class for the entire semester. In classes, assessment can be used to measure the knowledge of the student's course learning outcome, the result of this assessment can be used to further the development of the quality of ongoing learning process and also as a reflection of whether the knowledge being taught has been successfully conveyed to students. Assessment is the process of gathering and discussing information from multiple and diverse sources in order to develop a deep understanding of what students know, understand, and can do with their knowledge as a result of their educational experiences; the process culminates when assessment results are used to improve subsequent learning (Huba & Freed, 2000).

Knowledge that is received by the students will be heavily influenced by how the teacher teaching them. In the very start of the learning process, teacher will firstly describe what will the students learn in the class, how they learn and what is the expected outcome of their learning. As stated by Jones & Saville (2016) assert that the two key purposes of assessment are to promote learning and to measure and interpret what has been learned. This means that the teacher is the one controlling how learning takes places in the classroom, teacher should make plans on how learning process will be, making the assignments, determine the outcomes and also

making assessments to make sure the outcomes are as expected. Furthermore, even when clear learning goals are available, assessment tasks do not always address them. Consequently, students' attention may stray away from learning goals, which may hinder effective learning (Boud & Associates, 2010).

Another problem that will surely happen is the decreasing quality of the graduates. Insufficient assessment quality could eventually allow students to receive diplomas even when they have not reached the required exit level. Such situation is detrimental to the education system as a whole, because if students cannot meet the requirements, standards will be lowered, diplomas will be devaluated, and the accountability of graduates and tertiary education institutions will be diminished (Meyer, Davidson, Mckenzie, & Rees, 2010). Later on, this decreasing quality of the graduates will create another problem with the accreditation of the educational institution involved. The institution will receive a lower accreditation and less people will want to enroll to the said institution.

For a context about how important assessment is, let's take Curriculum 2013 as an example. Curriculum 2013 aims to increase not only competency, but also soft skills and knowledge for the students (Aeini, 2019). In the previous curriculum, the most favored skill is selective memorizing which would be really useful in test. The weakness in this skill is the difficulty in developing skills and also knowledge learned in real life. For example, one of the contributions of SMK graduates to unemployment in Indonesia is due to the lower special skills or soft skills of SMK graduates compared to SMA graduates.

The graduates of SMK have skills needed to pass the school but not the skills needed in real life situation. Choosing the correct assessment will challenge the students to expand their knowledge and trying to apply their skills not only to the area that is specified in their school, but also in real life.

Over three decades ago in the nineties, university or college was only for the rich, gifted or privileged. Only small amounts of people can attend it, the requirements to get into one was also higher than it is today. Prior to 1990, higher education in most other countries had been a privilege for the economically and intellectually elite: only 10% to 15% of the college-going age population was

enrolled. In the next three decades, this percentage increased to 50 percent and higher in Europe and beyond (Banta & Palomba, 2015). With the development of the higher education system as it is now, universities are no longer something rare and only upper-middle class can access. However, with the existing facilities, the university is facing a new challenge, which is the decline in public trust in university graduates. Assessment could be a solution in this problem, with an assessment/evaluation, universities can prove that they are a qualified educational institution and their graduates are people who are experts in their fields. In addition, the tension between assessment for improvement and assessment to address accountability demands is as palpable in Europe and elsewhere as it is in the United States (Harvey & Williams, 2010).

From the explanation above, this research could say that the exploration of the students' perception of assessment tasks is very important because assessment is a tool to see whether a student has achieved the intended knowledge, skills, and competences. Assessment can also determine the trust of the public towards an institution. There should be a more specialized case study to discuss about the perception of students regarding assessment practices in terms of supporting their effective learning. Naturally, this kind of case study should be conducted regularly every few years to make sure that the current Course Learning Outcome (CLO) is still relevant and achieved by the students. Not all lecturers have opportunities to think differently or deeply about the potential of assessment to contribute meaningfully to students' learning on their courses and beyond their courses (Clarence, Quinn, & Vorster, 2015). Some of the teachers are even still using the same assessment method for years even though that the Course Learning Outcome (CLO) have changed several times.

1.2 Problem Identification

English Language Education Study Programme or in short ELESPP is one of many study programmes in The State University of Jakarta (UNJ). ELESPP-UNJ vision is to become a study programme that is prominent in English language education discipline, as well as pushing Indonesian people forward, democratic and prosperous under the Pancasila principles in the globalization era.

Public Speaking (PS) is a 3 sks course in the ELESP-UNJ. This course aims to enable students to understand and also apply the principles of public speech. The students will learn about the framework of a speech, starting from the opening, content and closing. In the end of this course, students are required to make a formal speech and present it in front of the examiner in order to pass the course.

In the English for Interpersonal and Transactional Communication (EITC), when students finished the course, they are expected to be able to produce various types of interpersonal texts and transactional texts to carry out social functions with clear goals, cohesively and coherent, with appropriate and acceptable lexicogrammatical elements, all in accordance with the context of the situation, based on good mental and social attitudes and utilizing technology information and communication.

The last evaluation of the assessment practices was conducted in 2016 (Oktavia, 2016; Fajriyanti, 2016; Purba, 2016; Yasmin, 2016), which is increasing the urgency for the writer to conduct a study to fill the gap.

To conclude, the purpose of this research is to find out the students' perceptions of the assessments in these two courses and also the implications for their learning. Furthermore, this research is expected to provide insight into students' perceptions of the assessment tasks carried out in Public Speaking (PS) and English for Interpersonal and Transactional Communication (EITC) course of the ELESP-UNJ, which can be used to further the development of curriculum and education quality of ELESP-UNJ or even further in another similar study programme in Indonesia.

1.3 Research Question

Based on the background of the study stated above, the research question formulated as follows:

1. *How do students perceive Assessment Tasks (ATs) in Public Speaking (PS) and English for Interpersonal and Transactional Communication (EITC) courses?*

To answer the question clearly, This research divided the main question into three sub-research questions, which are:

- 1.1 Do ATs give students clear information on what is important to learn for the course?
- 1.2 Do ATs require students to perform what they have learned in class activities?
- 1.3 Do ATs give students clear information on the performance they are supposed to demonstrate?

1.4 Purpose of The Study

The main purpose of this study is acquiring students' perception of the Assessment Tasks (ATs) of Public Speaking (PS) and English for Interpersonal and Transactional Communication (EITC) course such as if the students are able to perform what they have learned in class activities and get a clear information about the course.

1.5 Scope of The Study

This research focuses on students' perception of the Assessment Tasks (ATs) of Public Speaking (PS) and English for Interpersonal and Transactional Communication (EITC) course in ELESP-UNJ.

There are two reasons why this research chose these two courses, the first is because the two courses are the courses that are related to the 6C of the 21st century, which is "communication". This communication is needed by teachers in teaching their students (Karim, Safran, Shuib, & Hamzah, 2020). The second reason is for an easy access to start the research, the writer can easily obtain documents for these two courses from ELESP-UNJ.

The Assessment Tasks (ATs) are referring to every assignments given by the teacher to the students. The results of this assessment task are then combined to be the students' final results. The assessment tasks details are taken from the RPS (Rencana Pembelajaran Semester) published by ELESP-UNJ.

The participants involved in this research are the students of the English Language Education Study Programme ELESP-UNJ who have accomplished the course units explored in this study, Public Speaking (PS) and English for Interpersonal and Transactional Communication (EITC).

1.6 Significance of The Study

It is expected that this study could produce a result that can be used by English Language and Education Study Program of UNJ in order to develop the existing learning systems and also in planning future learning systems for its students, this study also expected to help lecturers support the students to achieve the Course Learning Outcomes (CLO) in their respective courses. On top of that, this study hopefully can provide a good suggestions and feedbacks to the lecturers to pay more attention to Assessment Tasks (ATs) and its relevance to the material provided in the course when designing RPKPS/lesson plans or syllabus. At last, this study can also act as a source material for other researchers who happen to be researching the same field.

