CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

The practice of assessment in higher education plays an important role in shaping the quality of graduate competencies so that they are ready to face the demands of real world tasks that determine the employability potential of graduates. A portrait of the assessment practice that takes place in the study program will provide a true picture of how the study program prepares its graduates (Rowntree, 1987) and provide an information base that can be used for the purpose of improving the quality of the program (Cheng & Fox, 2017; Gerritsen-van Leeuwenkamp, Brinke, & Kester, 2017).

Furthermore, an effective educational program performance is determined not just by the assessment itself, but also by the standard of the assessment (Van der Vleuten, Sluijsmans, & Joost, 2017). A successful assessment should be aligned with intended learning outcomes in the curriculum, as well as the teaching methods. The concept is well-known as the 'constructive alignment' (Biggs J. , 2003). When there is a lack of positive coordination between curriculum goals, learning/teaching practices, and assessment, assessment's effectiveness as a driving force for learning is hindered (Biggs J. , 1996). Poor assessment quality has serious consequences for students.

Poor assessment quality can have impacts for students' learning and performance, teachers' teachings and feedback to students, as well as program and institutional responsibility. Students will have an erroneous 'picture' of what is important for them to learn and what learning performance is expected of them if the focus of content of the learning goals or intended outcomes and the assessment tasks are mismatched. This will have an impact on how they approach and manage their learning. Teachers' feedback on student learning performance will become ineffective as a result, and their

efforts to assist students in learning will never be successful. Grades assigned to student performance are also deceptive since they reflect mastery of a target competence other than the one specified in the learning objective statements. As a result, educational institutions must ensure that assessment quality is maintained well (Gerritsen-van Leeuwenkamp, Brinke, & Kester, 2017). That is, institutions are accountable for ensuring that graduates' exit competencies correlate satisfactory with the educational criteria or goals established by the institution for each educational program.

Accountability is a crucial concern in today's era of standard-based education, and quality education is in great demand. According to Havnes (2004) and Boud & Falchikov (2007), improving evaluation processes is necessary for increasing quality education. According to studies, assessment has a higher impact on student learning than teacher instruction (Boud & Falchikov, 2007; Biggs & Tang, 2011; Biggs J. , 2014). One way to attempt improvement of education quality can be started with one of the important parts in teaching and learning process which is assessment should be in alignment with the learning outcomes. This can be accomplished by, among other things, understanding how the program's assessment practices have been implemented (Stabback, 2016; Gerritsen-van Leeuwenkamp, Brinke, & Kester, 2017).

Relevant study has been conducted by Ahmar Mahboob (2008). The research is about assessment in higher education: A case study of one course in Australia. The result of the study showed that the coordinator had planned the unit aims to be aligned with the assessment because all of the assessment tasks are aligned with the unit aims. It was also stated that, in most cases, students found the assessment to be beneficial in accomplishing their learning goals because it was aligned with the unit's goals.

Another research related to this study has been conducted by Fitzpatrick et al. (2015) about Alignment of Learning Objectives and Assessments in Therapeutics Courses to Foster Higher-Order Thinking. The alignment of content and cognitive processes was found to be unsatisfactory. Overall categorical concurrence, however, was not satisfactory, as 50% of the

assessment tasks were not aligned with the course objectives. These assessment tasks were related to Care Provider and Scholar ideas, but they did not correlate with objectives in the course syllabus. Moreover, it was discovered that more than half of the objectives required higher-order thinking, but less than half of the assessment tasks did.

Moreover, the results of research from Jideani & Jideani (2012), FitzPatrick, Hawboldt, Doyle, & Genge (2015), and Kabouha & Elyas (2015) on the alignment of curricula and subject units of the study programs that are the focus of their respective research shows that the alignment between the objectives and assessment of learning in subject units still do not meet the minimum expectations. OECD/ADB (2015) also found that despite the need for urgent changes in the quality of higher education instructional facilities, relatively little attention is given to conducting empirical studies on teaching and learning processes in Indonesian higher education institutions.

The previous studies above and most articles about the alignment of learning objectives and assessments on the internet focus on either identifying the knowledge dimension or cognitive process dimension only. Based on the mandate of *Standar Proses K-13* (Permendikbud No. 22, 2016) Revised Bloom's Taxonomy theory is used as the basis for developing learning designs, in which in the theory, learning objective has two dimensions (knowledge and cognitive process dimensions). This study examines the alignment between assessment tasks with learning objectives in terms of both dimensions. So it becomes the gap of this study and the previous studies.

1.2 Problem Identification

Based on the background above, it finds some problems considering the assessment practices. OECD/ADB (2015) found that, despite the need for urgent changes in the quality of higher education instructional facilities, relatively little attention is given to conducting empirical studies on teaching and learning processes in Indonesian higher education institutions. Teachers must conduct a successful assessment because it is one of the most critical aspects of the teaching learning process. Furthermore, the assessment should

be in line with the learning objectives. Learning results and assessment are the best ways to achieve alignment. Teachers will set up the learning activity after the results have been established, and then use tests that meet the standards to guide students in achieving the intended learning outcomes.

Misaligned assessment to intended learning outcomes (ILOs), of course, can have an effect on the consistency of assessment tasks in the classroom and students' learning outcomes. When there is a lack of positive coordination between curriculum goals, learning/teaching practices, and assessment, assessment's effectiveness as a driving force for learning is hindered (Biggs J. , 1996). This is why it is important to investigate the consistency of the course's assessment tasks in greater depth. Despite the need for urgent changes in the standard of higher education instructional programs, assessment receives little attention. As an effect, it's likely that our higher education places less emphasis on assessment quality.

Analyzing assessment tasks assigned to students is a necessary step to begin the journey towards understanding assessment practices in a program. Observing the extent to which assessment tasks and intended learning outcomes are aligned in the courses of the English language education study program of the Universitas Negeri Jakarta becomes a strategy that can be used to determine the extent to which the quality of education in a study program is. This activity will provide very valuable information to be used as a database in seeking to improve the quality of education. This study used a simple random sampling system to determine the two courses to investigate. According to Taherdoost (2016) random sample means that every case of the population has an equal probability of inclusion in sample.

English Phonetics and Phonology (EPP) is one of the core subjects in ELE-SP UNJ. It discusses the production and structures of English phonemes, that further promotes students' improvement of English pronunciation. Upon the end of the course, students should be able to speak in English meaningfully and to review and employ research in the field of English phonetics and phonology as a form of reflection of knowledge and understanding of the English phonetics and phonology.

English Morphology and Syntax (EMS) is one of compulsory courses in ELE-SP UNJ. It explores around the English word order and internal structure, in other words, English phrase and clause structures. By the end of the course, students are expected to have the ability to reflect their knowledge and understanding on the internal structure of English words and English clause structure by performing the analysis of English phrase and clause structures.

1.3 Purpose of the Study

This study aims at investigating the extent to which assessment tasks (ATs) and intended learning outcomes (ILOs) in EPP and EMS courses of ELE-SP are well aligned, specifically to investigate how is the alignment between the courses' assessment tasks (ATs) and intended learning outcomes (ILOs) in terms of their knowledge dimension, as well as to investigate how is the alignment between the courses' assessment tasks (ATs) and intended learning outcomes (ILOs) in terms of their cognitive process dimension.

1.4 Research Questions

Based on the background of the study above, the research questions can be stated as follow:

1. To what extent assessment tasks (ATs) and intended learning outcomes (ILOs) in English Phonetics & Phonology (EPP) and English Morphology & Syntax (EMS) courses of ELE-SP are well aligned?

    1.1 How is the alignment between the courses' assessment tasks (ATs) and intended learning outcomes (ILOs) in terms of their knowledge dimension?

    1.2 How is the alignment between the courses' assessment tasks (ATs) and intended learning outcomes (ILOs) in terms of their cognitive process dimension?

1.5 Scope of the Study

Assessment tasks in this study refer to "course assignments" for which certain marking and grading are applied and affect student success in the respective course. On the other hand, intended learning outcomes in this study refer to those indicators of achievement of the course labeled as CPMK (Capaian Pembelajaran Mata Kuliah), also known as CLO. Both information on specification of ATs and ILOs for the courses in question of this study is extracted from the official RPS (Rencana Pembelajaran Semester) document published by ELESP UNJ and represents the complete course outline of each respective course.

This study concentrates on how the assessment practices are used in the ELESP Universitas Negeri Jakarta. To be more specific, the study analyzes the extent to which the focus of content in ATs in a course matches or agrees with that of the respective course ILOs in English Phonetics & Phonology (EPP) and English Morphology & Syntax (EMS) courses. In this study, 'Content' refers to Anderson & Krathwohl's (2001) revision of the Bloom's Taxonomy (1956), popular by the term RBT, in which it is understood as the 'value' of 'knowledge' and 'cognitive process' dimensions embedded as a 'whole' (Sulastini, 2020) in each respective tasks and learning outcomes in questions.

1.6 Significance of the Study

It is expected that the findings of this study will provide essential data that may be used as a database in the quest to improve English Language Education Study Program of UNJ educational quality. This study is also expected to be a good suggestion and feedback to the coordinators or lecturers to be more aware in designing the course outline and utilizing assessment tasks in their teaching-planning and practices. At last, this study can also act as an additional reference for other researchers that study the similar discipline.