CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter discussed about the background of the study, research questions, purpose, scope, and significance of the study.

1.1. Background of the Study

Assessment is a measuring achievement tool which can report the success of learning and also can improve students' learning. As cited by (Ahmad et al, 2014) stated that assessment is an integral component in any instructional context and educational setting. In higher education, it is pervasive and plays at least two key roles; one in ensuring institutional quality and accountability, and the other, in improving student learning(Ewell, 2009). Assessment could be connected by its course's Intended Learning Outcomes (ILOs) in increasing student's achievement.

Learning outcomes are indeed keys to a meaningful education, and focusing on learning outcomes is essential to inform diagnosis and improve teaching processes and student learning (Tremblay et al, 2012). In addition, measurement of learning outcomes also hold important promises for higher education faculties and leaders in providing evidence-based diagnosis tools on the strengths and weaknesses of their courses and programmes to be used as part of their quality improvement efforts. In other word, learning outcomes are used to guide students in improving their learning.

A program, which intends to directly teach a particular skill set, but has curriculum materials and assessment that does not match this goal will have limited effectiveness. Some assessment tasks have already been identified by subject matter experts as poor indicators of student performance. It is important to ensure that the curriculum, assessment and instruction in the science program are aligned (Biggs, 1996). Alignment refers to the degree of match between test content and the subject area content identified through state academic standards (Marca, 2001). Alignment can best be achieved through sound standards and assessment development activities. As standards are developed, the issue of how achievement will be measured should be a constant consideration.

The system in Higher Education (HE) in Indonesia was noted by U21 Ranking of National Higher Education Systems 2013 which has been analyzed by the students of University of Melbourne, stated that Indonesia was ranked in position fifty (Williams et al, 2013). It shows that the system in HE in Indonesia is unsatisfying and also not reached target yet in accordance with the government policy, it is *PerMen No.44 2014* about National Standard in Higher Education.

The latest news which was stated in Times Higher Education (THE), none of Indonesian university was in the prestigious list of Asian University Ranking (GIVnews, 2015). It means that the higher educations in Indonesia should improve the quality in learning process to produce better generations. Furthermore, foreign institutions of higher education started to introduce their institution to Indonesian students (Kompas, 2011). It could be a good reference to improve the quality of learning in Indonesian higher education. Based on both

realities, the main factor that can be examined to the educational improvement is assessment practices.

American Association for Higher Education (AAHE) (1992) as cited by (Kinzie et al, 2014: 14), stated that assessment works best when the programs it seeks to improve have clear and explicitly stated purposes, as well as require attention to outcomes as well as to the experiences that leads to the outcomes. The assessment should be in clear from the instructions of the course. So, the students can face the study clearly toward the assessment and learning outcome that will they get.

Unfortunately, the assessment practices which faced by students are still out of focus. Lecturers teach and practice the learning activities which are not accordance between the assessment practices and learning outcomes. Where assessment is not aligned to the intended or other desired outcomes, or where the teaching methods do not directly encourage the appropriate learning activities, students can easily 'escape' by engaging in inappropriate learning activities (Biggs & Tang, 2011). Students will confused when they face the missconception between the assessment practices and learning outcomes. It will provide a bad impact on their achievement.

1.2. Problem Identification

Based on the background above, the writer aimed to investigate the Assessment Practices (APs) which based on the alignment of Intended Learning Outcomes (ILOs) to the Assessment Tasks (Ats). And also to obtain information

on how intended learning outcomes (ILO) and assessments of the ELE-SP CMD course were aligned to support students' successful achievement of the ILOs. The instruments which implemented were a document analysis by using checklist table and also group interview.

The previous study about assessment in higher education had been conducted by Ahmar Mahboob, a graduate student of University of Sydney with his thesis entitled "Assessment in higher education: A case study of one course in Australia". He used document analysis by using checklist table, but he did not use group interview, he used survey questionnaire asked for detailed input on each of the assessment tasks used in this semester. Participation in the survey was voluntary and anonymous. It was 12 (out of 30) students completed the survey used in this study. The study found that the assessment aligned with the unit aims. It was seen that the unit coordinator was responsive of the need for constructive alignment. In order to achieve alignment, the coordinator had designed the assessment tasks to achieve the learning outcomes. In some cases, the students interview was found that the assessment was helpful to achieve their learning goals.

Additionally, knowing the alignment of assessment practices to the intended learning outcomes could help the ELESP lecturers to find out the success of learning, and also could help students to knowing their learning achievements that will motivate them. Afterwards, the title of this study was "Assessment Practices in Curriculum and Materials Development (CMD) Course: A Case Study of ELESP UNJ".

1.3. Research Questions

Based on the background of study above, the research questions which arise are:

To what extent are the assessment practices in CMD course in alignment with the course's intended learning outcomes (ILOs)?

To answer that question clearly, the writer has proposed four sub research questions as follows:

1. *What are the types of knowledge consisting in the intended learning outcomes of the CMD course?*

2. *What assessment tasks are used to assess students' achievement of the ILOs?*

3. *How can alignment between the course's ILOs and assessment tasks be described?*

4. *How do these assessment tasks support students' achievements of the ILOs?*

1.4. Purpose of the Study

This study aimed to investigate how assessment practices in CMD course were in alignment between assessment tasks (ATs) and intended learning outcomes (ILOs). And also to obtain information on how intended learning

outcomes (ILOs) and assessments of the ELE-SP CMD course were aligned to support students' achievement of the ILOs.

1.5. Scope of the Study

This study was focused on the RPKPS of Curriculum and Materials Development (CMD) course of ELESP-UNJ. Specifically, the writer focused on the Intended Learning Outcomes (ILOs) and Assessment Practices (Aps) which were conducted in Curriculum and Materials Development (CMD) course.

The students who interviewed on group interview as many as ten students, and they were grouped into three groups. The writer focused on the Assessment Practices (APs) which were conducted in Curriculum and Materials Development (CMD) course. And the data of interview was a supporting data.

1.6. Significance of the Study

From this study, the result was expected to give information about the Assessment Practices (APs) in Curriculum and Materials Development (CMD) course where the alignment of Intended Learning Outcomes (ILOs) and Assessment Tasks (ATs) could be able to support student's achievement. The target readers were lecturers, staffs, students, and also all people who were engaged and responsible in education.

For students of English Language Education Study Program (ELE-SP) in UNJ or other researchers, this study would be a profitable reference to help them for their future in planning their thesis with any subject of research which was

related to this thesis topic, and also could modify and develop this thesis topic into better design.