

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

This chapter describes the background of the study, the research question, the purpose of the study, the scope and the significance of the study.

1.1 Background of Study

Over past decade, assessment has increased interest due to the shifting from traditional assessment to authentic assessment or modern classroom assessment (Aschbacher, 1991 and Herman et al., 1992 cited in O'Malley & Pierce, 1996, p.1; Frey & Schmitt, 2007; Tellez, 1996). Since the beginning of 21st century, teachers have employed authentic assessment for assessing skill and knowledge (Gao & Brown, 2011; O'Malley & Pierce, 1996, p.3). Authentic assessment involves students to demonstrate competencies, or combinations of knowledge, skills and attitudes that they need to apply in the context of professional life (Gulikers, Bastiaens, & Kirschner, 2004).

According to Frey (2013), authentic assessment deals with students' needs, which designed to attain real word demands. Moreover, authentic assessment should align with real world tasks, complexity, collaboration, and high order thinking (Gulikers, et al., 2006). Those views correspond with 21st century learning's criteria, which requires students to use their critical thinking, collaboration, and problem solving skills in building their critical

framework (Centre of Educational Research & Innovation and the Partnership of 21st Century Skills, 2008).

In addition, authentic assessment is part of teaching and learning, thus teachers have significant role in the classroom. Therefore, it is important for teachers to understand their perception of assessment. This is supported by Shohamy, Inbar-Lourie, and Poehner (2008) which stated that teachers' understanding of perception towards assessment is vital. Susuwele (2005) also asserted that teachers' perceptions of classroom assessment have influence on their classroom assessment practices.

In recent years, Indonesian curriculum have stipulated authentic assessment (The National Assessment Standard Policy No. 20/ 2007 & 66/2013). However, as a major problem in Indonesia, many Indonesian teachers have problems in performing assessment (Kompas.com, 2014). Indonesian Minister of Education and Culture also added that many teachers have reported that authentic assessment is difficult to conduct (Republika Online, 2014). This view caused due to the lack of teachers' understanding about authentic assessment that may affect the quality of assessment practice in the classroom. This evidence is supported by Poerwanti (2011) who stated that teachers are lack of knowledge about authentic assessment since they have not experienced any authentic assessment training. In other words, there are gaps between teaching in school and the real world and between

assessment tasks provided by teachers in the school and the situation in the work place (Finch, 2002; Achieve, 2006 and Bound, 1990 as cited in Gulikers *et al.*, 2006). It can be inferred that students do not have enough capacity to meet the world needs beyond the school because the school standard is irrelevant to the expectation.

Problems above have revealed some challenges related with authentic assessment perception, which implies needs for further discussions on authentic assessment perception. Previous studies have been revealed regarding authenticity of assessment (e.g., Gulikers *et al.*, 2006; Paragae *et al.*, 2013; Tanner, 2001; Burton, 2011) but it is still very few toward the perception. As the previous study about authentic assessment perception conducted by Gulikers *et al.* (2006) in a Vocational Education and Training, they have explored teachers and students' perception specifically on five dimensional framework of authentic assessment.

This study emphasizes on reading assessment since reading is the primary receptive skill and fundamental part of literacy in EFL classroom (Hurley and Tinajero, 2001 as cited in Jia, 2004). Frey (2013:216) also added that authentic assessment of reading is an advanced issue in teacher education. Moreover, PISA (2012) concurs that mastery reading is considered as a significant problem in the school so that Indonesian students had serious difficulty in reading skill. In terms of rank, Indonesia came in at 57th place

out of 65 countries, still eight ranks from the bottom. This proof also announced in REPUBLIKA (2014) which stated that one of the cause of literacy deficiency in Indonesia has been the low level of Indonesian teachers' perception towards the literacy itself.

From the above problems, the researcher is intended to explore teachers' perception of authentic reading assessment. In this study, authentic reading assessment refers to authentic assessment that is used to measure students' learning of reading. The researcher also limits the current study in the vocational secondary school due to the previous study conducted by Gulikers et al. (2006).

1.2 Research Questions

Based on the problems revealed, the researcher formulates questions as follows:

1. How do Vocational Secondary School EFL teachers in Central Jakarta perceive authentic reading assessment?
 - a. What do they perceive as the purpose(s) of authentic reading assessment?
 - b. What do they perceive as the criteria(s) of authentic reading assessment?

- c. What do they perceive as the method(s) of authentic reading assessment?
- d. What do they perceive as the technique(s) of authentic reading assessment?

1.3 Purpose of Study

Referring to the research questions above, the aims of this study are:

- a. To explore teachers' perception of authentic reading assessment purpose(s).
- b. To explore teachers' perception of authentic reading assessment criteria(s).
- c. To explore teachers' perception of authentic reading assessment method(s).
- d. To explore teachers' perception of authentic reading assessment technique(s).

1.4 Scope of Study

In this study, the researcher focuses on thirty EFL teachers' perception of authentic reading assessment at ten Vocational Secondary Schools in Central Jakarta. The researcher does not include the teachers' practices of authentic reading assessment.

1.5 Significance of Study

This study gives more knowledge about the concept of authentic assessment to the teachers especially Vocational Secondary schools' teachers because their students are required to have certain ability when they meet the real world of work. Furthermore, this study is expected to append input for educational government in Indonesia concerning on teachers' training towards authentic assessment in depth including their practice after receiving the training. In addition, the result of the study also can be used as reference for other students especially in English Department of UNJ who need to conduct further study about authentic reading assessment in English language classroom.