CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

This chapter discusses about the background of the study, problem identificaton, research questions, purposes of study, scope of the study, and significance of the study.

1.1   Background of the Study

Assessment is a cornerstone of effective teaching and learning. According to Airasian, assessment motivates students to study and help teacher determine how well students were learning new skills and knowledge (Airasian, 2012, p. 2). Good assessments not only provide a reliable and valid measure of a student's learning and understanding, but also help guide both teachers and students on a day-to-day basis. In higher education, assessment serves multiple purposes such as providing information about student learning, student progress, teaching quality, and program and institutional accountability (Boud, 2007). Assessment tasks, therefore, are designed to allow students to demonstrate their accomplishment of learning outcome. It will tell teacher how well each student meets the criteria expressed in the intended learning outcomes (Biggs, 2007, p. 57).

Assessment is linked to learning outcomes. Learning outcomes have become the benchmarking for determining institutional effectiveness. Such benchmarking not

only enables institutions and programs to know where they stand, but also allows them to identify potential best practices that they can learn from. It is measureable, observable statements of what students will be able to do at the end of a unit of learning. Before determine the learning outcome, teacher should be considered about what the outcome product students will produce. It can be done through consulting from the Bloom's Taxonomy to determine the level of learning by selecting an appropriate verb that reflects exactly what the teacher wants the students to do (Biggs, 2007, p. 57; 80).

Benjamin Samuel Bloom (1956), the founder of taxonomy of the educational learning objectives, promotes the six level of thinking. The taxonomy is the way we think and process the information that classified into Knowledge, Comprehension, Application, Analysis, Synthesis, and Evaluation. But in 2001, Anderson and Krathwohl revised the Bloom taxonomy into Remember, Understand, Apply, Analyze, Evaluate, and Create. They classify the three lower levels (Remember, Understand, and Apply) as simply recall and factual response while higher level (Analyze, Evaluate, and Create) are more complex (Brookhart, 2010). Strengthened by FitzPatrick *et al* (2015), Anderson and Krathwohl's revision of Bloom's Taxonomy is recommended as suitable level of thinking for classroom instruction to achieve an outcome or respond to an assessment task (FitzPatrick, 2015, p. 3). To sum up, learning outcome should be created based on cognitive process of thinking.

Students who develop higher-order thinking skills become life-long learners. They are capable of analyzing new situations, relating new information to what they already know, and thinking critically and creatively to solve problems (Bloxham, 2010). Bransford and Stein (1984) cited from Brookhart (2010) point out that *problem solving is the general mechanism behind all thinking, including recall, critical thinking, creative thinking, and effective communication* (Brookhart, 2010, p. 7). Even if students are supposed to be able to solve certain problems, but they must start from lower-order thinking including recall their knowledge. They have to identify it as a problem then devise a solution which means they are on higher-order thinking.

In twenty-first-century learning, people are demanded for life and career readiness (Binkley, 2010, p. 31). They are not merely on acquiring information, but on their ability to analyze, synthesize, and apply what they have learned to address new problems, design solutions, give some innovation, collaborate effectively, and communicate persuasively (Pellegrino, 2014, p. 66). As stated in *Permenristekdikti* 44 in 2015, "Bachelor who has graduated must be able to think critically, systematically, and innovatively". Supported by ACT No. 12 of 2012, Art. 18(2), the statement means that higher education should prepare their students to enter real world and creating jobs as well as developing their selves to be professional (ACT No. 12 of 2012 on Higher Education).

Globally, governments and education systems have placed a high priority on the development of skills and attributes necessary for life and work in the twenty-first-century (Masters, 2013, p. 27). However, in reality, according to National Higher Education System 2013, Indonesia was on the lowest rank from 50 countries (Williams, de Rassenfosse, Jensen, & Marginson, 2013). Strengthen by Indonesia's Higher Education System (2014) stated that *the current system is not responding to the dynamics of the labor marke*t. *The relevance of higher education will depend on an effective system* (Ministry of Education and Education, 2014, p. 34). While according to Human Development Index Report (2013) in Education sector, Indonesia is on 121 ranks from 186 countries (UNDP, 2013, p. 170). So there is a demand for higher education accountability in preparing accountable, competitive human resource to face emerging global challenge.

Igbaria (2013) conducted the study about cognitive process in the EFL textbook of *Horizons* for 9th grade students. The researcher only focused on a content analysis of the WH-questions. Another researcher, Fitzpatrick *et al.* (2015) focused on the alignment of learning outcomes and assessment in Therapeutics courses to foster higher-order thinking. From these two previous studies, this study would be conducted about cognitive processes involved in Academic Presentation course in ELE-SP Universitas Negeri Jakarta which focused on assessment task.

From the explanation, it can be considered that there are needs for further discussion on the cognitive processes involved in assessment task. To be specific, the

needs for these studies in the field assessment practices are still very few. As claimed by Brookhart (2010) that *holding students accountable for higher-order thinking by using assignments and assessments that require intellectual work and critical thinking increases student motivation as well as achievement* (Brookhart, 2010, p. 12).

1.2   Problem Identifications

Based on the background above, learning outcomes are statements that prescribe what learners will gain as a result of learning and the assessment task is aimed to show how they will demonstrate their learning. These two elements must operate in parallel. To achieve what the *learner will know and be able to do* by the end of a course or program, the assessment task must rely on the cognitive process based on taxonomy level proposed by Anderson and Krathwohl's revision of Bloom's Taxonomy. As stated on *Permenristekdikti* no.44, 2015 on *"Standar Nasional Pendidikan Tinggi (SNPT) "*stated that the learners in university are able to solve the problem based on their field and applying logical, critical, systematic, and innovative thinking. This means that the assessment task given should make learners think critically, systematically, innovatively. In short, good assessment can support creative thinking. In order to obtain better insight of the cognitive processes involved in assessment task in Academic Presentation course of English Language Education Study Programs of UNJ, this is the reason why it is necessary look deeper the quality of the assessment practices employed in the course since there are still very few for

these field of assessment practices. As Rowntree stresses that *if we wish to discover the truth about an educational system, we must first look to its assessment* (Rowntree, 1987, p. 1).

1.3   Research Question

Based on the problems identification above, the writer formulates the research questions as follows:

How can course assessment tasks in Academic Presentation course of ELE-SP be described by the level of cognitive processes involved in them?

The question is broken down further into four sub-research question:

a. *What types of assessment tasks are employed in the course unit?*

b. *What types of cognitive processes are involved in each type of the assessment tasks?*

c. *What proportion of the assessment tasks are of Low Order Thinking (LOT) types?*

d. *What proportion of the assessment tasks are of perform High Order Thinking (HOT) types?*

1.4   Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study is to obtain a description of the assessment practices model employed in the Academic Presentation course of ELE-SP with specific

reference to the types of assessment tasks and the cognitive processes involved in each type of assessment tasks.

1.5   Scope of the Study

This study focuses on the summative assessment tasks employed in the ELE-SP UNJ Academic Presentation course. In particular, the study questions the distribution of assessment tasks by types and cognitive-processes involved in each task type. For this purpose, Course Outline or *RPKPS* of the course unit in question will be analyzed for specific description of summative assessment tasks used in the course unit. Next, description of assessment tasks will be analyzed further by means of Bloom Revised Taxonomy (BRT) Table ((Anderson, 2002) to determine the type of cognitive processes (LOT or HOT) involved in them. Interviews with ex-course participants were held to ensure validity and reliability of data.

1.6   Significance of the Study

Findings of the study provides better insights into assessment practices in Higher Education, particularly on how LOT and HOT level of cognitive processes have been integrated throughout the course unit's assessment practices with a view to support effective learning in students and maximum achievement of the ILOs. Furthermore, the findings can lead lecturers to performing reflection on their own professional practices in terms of assessment practices