

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of The Study

In teaching and learning process, the teacher needs to know the students' ability in mastering the materials given. The teacher also needs to discover which parts of materials that the students find their strengths and weaknesses. To find out those things, the teacher can design the assessment for the students, as Linn and Miller (2005 : 26) state that assessment is a general term that includes the full range of procedures used to gain information about student learning (observations, ratings of performances or projects, paper-and-pencil tests) and the formation of value judgments concerning learning progress.

From the explanation above, it can be inferred that the term "assessment" involves kinds of forms for the teacher to gain information of the students' learning ability. One example of assessment is test, as Brown (2004 : 4) explains that tests are a subset of assessment; they are certainly not the only form of assessment that a teacher can make. Moreover, Heaton (1975 : 11) states that the term *test* refers to a set of items. Therefore, as a part of assessment, test usually contains the test items in form of the questions. Beside gaining information of students' ability, questions also play a vital role to develop students' thinking skill, as Limbach and Waugh (2010 : 4) state that questioning techniques can be used to foster the thinking ability of students. Therefore, the test should involve the questions as the test items that develop students' thinking. Bloom, Engelhart,

Furst, Hill, and Krathwohl, as cited in Edwards and Briers (2000: 3) describe six levels of cognition, that is, levels of thinking often referred to as Bloom's Taxonomy. Therefore, teachers need to provide the tests that develop students thinking.

Bloom's taxonomy can be defined as a classification of thinking that is ordered by the level of complexity. The original taxonomy was published by Benjamin S Bloom in 1956. In this taxonomy, Bloom divided six thinking categories in cognitive domain: *knowledge, comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation*. However, in 1990's, Bloom's Taxonomy had been revised into two dimensions, *cognitive dimension* and *knowledge dimension*. Cognitive dimension includes *remembering, understanding, applying, analyzing, evaluating, and creating*. Knowledge dimension includes *factual knowledge, conceptual procedural, procedural knowledge, and metacognitive knowledge*.

In cognitive dimension, the highest three levels of Revised Bloom's Taxonomy (RBT) should be applied in higher education because these levels can lead the students to have high order way of thinking, as Limbach and Waugh (2010 : 3-4) state that the progressive levels of Bloom's Revised Taxonomy include *Remembering, Understanding, Applying, Analyzing, Evaluating, and Creating*. Students who interact in the upper three levels are practicing higher level thinking.

High level thinking or high order thinking is categorized as critical thinking that the students are expected to develop it in higher education level. Teaching students "how to think" is the important goal in this level. Moreover, Cottrel

(2005: 8) explains that students are expected to develop critical thinking skills so that they can dig deeper below the surface of the subjects they are studying and engage in critical dialogue with its main theories and arguments. The application of critical thinking in the classroom can make the students become more active by analyzing and evaluating the information, and also proposing their own ideas or alternatives. Therefore, the students can actively involve their higher order of thinking.

Based on the explanation above, the problem is the students in higher education level are not supposed to develop their critical thinking as high order thinking, as Mabrouk (2001) states that most incoming college students lack both knowledge and experience with critical thinking skills. Usually this ability does not improve in college, as few courses neither teach nor promote such skills. Therefore, she tried to foster students' critical thinking by referring to cognitive domain of Bloom's Taxonomy.

This study intends to discover whether or not the courses in higher education apply critical thinking which is also categorized as high-order-thinking by referring to the highest three levels in cognitive dimension of Revised Bloom's Taxonomy. The courses that are studied are Literature courses. The choice of these courses due to Literature courses are the main courses in English Language and Literature Study Program (ELLSP) of English Department in Universitas Negeri Jakarta (UNJ). Also, in Literature courses the students need to apply their critical thinking, as Jaffar (2004 : 15) states that students of literature are expected to think critically.

To find the application of the use of high order thinking in the class, the tests administered by the teacher to test students in the previous semester were analyzed according to cognitive dimension of Revised Bloom's Taxonomy. This can also provide the information about the percentage of the application of the cognitive level of Revised Bloom's Taxonomy from the test items given by the teacher. This study also analyzed the test items according to knowledge dimension of Revised Bloom's Taxonomy.

1.2 Research Questions

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

1. How do the test items of Literature courses comprise the RBT cognitive dimension and critical thinking theory?
2. How are the test items of Literature courses viewed in terms of the RBT knowledge dimension?

1.3 Objectives of The Study

This study attempts:

1. To discover how the test items of Literature courses comprise the RBT cognitive dimension and critical thinking theory
2. To find out how the tests of Literature courses are viewed in terms of RBT knowledge dimension
3. To give a scientific information about the tests of Literature courses of English Department and their relevance to RBT and critical thinking theory.

1.4 Limitation of The Study

The study analyzed the test items used in the tests of Literature courses in English Department of UNJ from semester 088 until 093. These courses are divided into five periods of curriculum: in 2006/2007 (Survey of English Literature), in 2007/2008 (English Literature 1, English Literature 2, Survey of English Literature), in 2008/2009 (History of English Literature, Literature 1, Literature 2), in 2009/2010 (History of English Literature, Literature 1), in 2010/2011 (History of English Literature).

This study focused on the analysis of the test items of Literature courses and their relevance to Revised Bloom's Taxonomy and critical thinking. It did not judge the quality of information of tests. It focused on the tests of Literature courses, not the classroom activities. It was conducted through document analysis. Therefore, the further research concerning the relevancy of Revised Bloom's Taxonomy and critical thinking in classroom activities may be conducted.

1.5 Significance of The Study

The result of the study is expected to give information about the tests of Literature courses and their relevance to Revised Bloom's Taxonomy and critical thinking. It is also expected to be a contribution for the improvement of the tests of Literature courses in English Department, especially in giving the tests which develop students' critical thinking. This study is also expected to enrich the study about test in English Department of Universitas Negeri Jakarta.