Chapter 1 Thesis

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, the researcher mainly deliberates background of the study, statement of problem, objective of the study, significance of the study, scope and limitation of the study, product designed and operational definition.

1.1 Background of the Study

Assessments are more prevalent for assessing the learning of students in educational fields where the outcome of such an evaluation can identify the future pathways available and for teachers the results are frequently investigated by examination boards or utilized in further benchmarking studies. They may be used to determine progress or to take decisions on student certification (Crisp & Palmer, 2007). They are also used to identify the strengths and weaknesses of students and to provide teachers with feedback on their educational activities, which are expected to reflect students' ability to answer questions or questions. It is assumed that knowledge and abilities are the main competences in education, as an effort made by teachers to transmit science, knowledge and value to others intentionally and well planned.

Teachers play an important role in the learning activity in every single activity covering: learning planning, implementation and evaluation (Rusmiana, 2015, p. 1). In a learning system, evaluation is one of the important elements for distinguishing the effectiveness of learning through testing. Testing means an effort to measure the student's results in the teaching process, which teachers

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should be able to arrange a good test and analyze a test. Then, the accuracy and carefulness of teachers in the preparation and performance of the tests can have an important impact on the improvement of teaching quality particularly in giving the student's decision to test and teach those that are effectively insupportable for working in either field without constantly being interested in the other (Putri, 2015, p. 1). Without testing it is argued that it is impossible to evaluate and measure the learning results if the lessons must be tested.

In learning, the test is an evaluation tool which plays an essential part in measuring the teaching training process, i.e., the student's ability to measure and the efficiency of the learning process. Furthermore, it is argued that "recognizing that evaluation in school is very important, teachers must know the quality of a good test or good testing criteria (Arikunto, 2005)." In addition, testing as an instrument used by teachers to measure student learning results can identify to what extent the goals of learning from student test results can be achieved. The tests will therefore have to be arranged effectively and correctly and represent all learning materials. The way the test questions are formulated and formulated to form an examination can be argumentized; and the procedure for measuring, analyzing and reporting the results; all of this has an impact on the conclusions drawn from the performance of the individuals and groups tested.

As a technique or procedure used to carry out the measurement activity in which the student must conduct many questions or assignments, the test is useful not only for the teachers, but also for the students. For teachers, it gives

some information as to whether the material is taught to fulfill the objective. It can also be used to measure the progress of students whether they are learning success or failure. Thus, teachers can improve and improve both learning materials and teaching materials. The test provides students with information about their progress and determines what to expect in a test, but they must study accordingly. Therefore, the test could motivate students to learn.

Harrison as quoted by Hayatunnisa (2003, p. 7) classifies test to the need of the test and the use of the result of the test into four types namely: (a) Proficiency Test, (b) Achievement Test, (c) Diagnostic Test, and (d) Placement Test. The proficiency test aims to evaluate the language knowledge of people in relation to their future language use, which does not depend on what they had previously learned in a given course because it concerns the students' current knowledge of their future needs. Then the achievement test is carried out to assess the language of the test users in relation to a given curriculum or material that the test users have studied in one course. In the meantime, the diagnostic test is used to detect the strength and weakness of the test person in the particular language component and to attempt to explain why certain problems arise and what treatment can be given. Finally, the placement test aims at shortening new students into groups so that they are able to start a course at approximately the same level as the other students.

The arrangement of the test is a very important process, because teachers can obtain information based on the test. Thus, a good test is important to evaluate how much students understand the material and how much they pay

attention to any material provided by the teacher in the learning process (Putri, 2015). The teachers need to be able to formulate a good test to assess whether, among others, the instrument used according to the desired is used. The teachers can identify students who have mastered the material taught in order to improve the test by revising or disposing of ineffective tests. One of the testing instruments is test items that identify either a good or a bad test from various aspects, such as validity, reliability, indexing difficulty and discriminating power, which can be viewed. The most important characteristics of a student performance test are the reliability and validity of their content (Bichi, 2015). To make the test reliable and valid, a systematic selection of test items is necessary in relation to the subject matter and the level of problem. Furthermore, the reliability of the test depends on the grading consistency and discrimination of students at various levels of performance. The quality and effectiveness of a test therefore depends on each item. To determine the quality of each item, the item analysis is performed after the preliminary test on the samples selected is administered and scoring.

The item analysis is a process for analyzing the student responses to the different test items in order to assess the quality and quality of the test as a whole, enabling teachers to increase their testing skills, identify specific fields of content which need to be emphasized or clarified and improve other classroom practices (Bichi, 2015, p. 1655). Item analyzes will be especially valued in developing items that will again be used in later tests, but can also be used in a single test administration to eliminate ambiguous or misleading items.

Furthermore, item analysis is valuable for enhanced instructors in test design and the identification of specific areas of content that require greater emphasis or clarity. For each raw score, separate item analyzes may be requested. In addition, the test under analysis collects items that measure a single subject area or underlying skill. The quality of the test in its entirety is assessed by evaluating its "internal consistencies" and by comparing the item responses of the students with their overall test results.

The items analysis utilizes statistics and the expert assessment to evaluate tests based on the quality of individual items, sets of items and entire sets of items and the relation of each item with other items. It investigates the performance of individual items either in connection with some external criteria or with the rest of the test items and is used to improve item quality and test quality (Thompson & Levitov, 1985). "The purpose of the object analysis is to identify, firstly, the lack of test items and secondly to define the areas in which students have or have not mastered," according to Suruchi & Rana, (2014). Furthermore, item analysis measures the efficacy of the individual test items with regard to their level of difficulty and their capacity to discriminate between high and poor performers in a test. The item analysis is assumed to help select the best test items by preserving the good and by rejecting poor test items, and shows the need to review and adapt the items in a test.

[1] Tests have different goals, functions, and decisions made on the basis of the results. The placement test as a main discussion of this research, the [1] purpose of placement tests, as its name implies, is to assess students' level of language

ability in order to place them to an appropriate class that meets their needs (Choe, 2010, p. 4). In addition, it is argued placement tests have received relatively little attention in language testing research which have been concerned with re-evaluating and validating tests as an instrument for classifying students in an efficient way. The placement test is a practice that many colleges and universities use to assess college readiness and determine which classes a student should initially take. This research is going to examine a placement test given at STKIP PGRI Sidoarjo to the students of Batch 5 Master of English Education (S2-MPBI) and includes statistical descriptions of the results of item analysis, and a brief discussion of the test's validity. They are chosen regarding they did the placement test as one of the requirements in taking master degree program at STKIP PGRI Sidoarjo.

In order to fill the requirement of master degree program at STKIP PGRI Sidoarjo, since 2017, Students of Master of English Education (S2-MPBI) have been compulsory to take placement test before joining the class. There are many types of the placement test given. One of them is TOEFL Test which is designed to measure the English language proficiency of people whose native language is not English (IBT, 2017). TOEFL Test is commonly used as placement test in a university, especially in English Department Program. There are two types of TOEFL Test, namely Computer Based (CB) TOEFL Test and Paper Based (PB) TOEFL Test consisting of four sections including listening section, structure section, reading section, and writing section. In this study, the TOEFL that is used for placement test is PB TOEFL test contains of three sections namely:

listening section, structure and written expression section, and reading comprehension section. In line with Liskinasih & Lutviana (2016, p. 174), There are some considerations in using TOEFL test as placement test: (1) TOEFL test is one of standardize tests that is ready to use so the lecturer could save time and effective, (2) TOEFL test is constructed in multiple choice item test format so that it is easy for the lecturer to score the students' language competence, and (3) TOEFL test uses standardize scoring method so that the lecturer does not need to construct criteria for scoring.

Placement tests have the purpose of assigning students a specific level of language ability within the curriculum they wish to be incorporated to (Brown, 1994; Hughs, 2003; Harmer, 2007; in Gonzalez, 2011, p. 5). It is common for students to include placement tests as part of their degree taken. However, tests should be created related to institution's specific needs (Hughs, 2003). In other words, testing is a feature of language teaching that may best work if it is set to fulfill a specific context and the test takers' needs. According to the Educational Testing Service (2017), placement tests carry advantages such as increase student learning with their integration to their corresponding proficiency level, reduce student and faculty frustration and growth student preservation. Specific test principles should be concerned for to assure test success such as validity, reliability and practicality (Gonzalez, 2011).

Furthermore, the test items of placement test conducted by STKIP PGRI Sidoarjo is adapted from the Preparation Course for the TOEFL Test by Debora Phillips (2003). All of the items of the TOEFL-like Test is Multiple Choice

Question (MCQ) contaning: (1) Listening Section is 40 items; (2) Structure and Written Expression is 40 items; and (3) Reading Comprehension is 50 items. MCQs, whether in the format of "true/false" or "single bestanswer", are expressly designed to assess knowledge. They have the advantage of sampling broad domains of knowledge efficiently and hence reliably (Norman, 1995; in Christian & Dave, 2017, p. 1877). This one characteristic of MCQs is adequate to ensure that its edge in reliability more than perceived failings in validity. Concerns have been argued most MCQs tend to measure factual recall and recognition of isolated facts. But if the MCQs are carefully prepared and made, the single best answer MCQs may also test higher-order thinking skills which remain a useful assessment instrument, despite some limitations and objections (Christian & Dave, 2017).

Lecturer, as a preparator of the TOEFL-like test and test items, should construct a good test conducted so that the test will be valid and reliable regarding testing is aimed to determine the achievement of the objective of education. Test that is made by the lecturers' team, it is still to be questioned to the validity and reliability. Understanding this fact, the lecturers should analyze the test so that the teacher will determine the quality of the test. By analyzing the TOEFL-like test items, the lecturer will determine which items can be used or which items should be revised or even being rejected for further tests being held. In addition, students are able to measure their ability in mastering the materials during the test.

In this research, the researcher conducted the research on the items analysis of TOEFL-like Test as the placement test which is administered to Batch 5 students of Master of English Education at STKIP PGRI Sidoarjo because of several reasons, namely: (1) The evaluation of test items in test has been administered to the students even though it has not been analyzed in terms of difficulty and discrimination power.; (2) In educational field, especially in Master degree level within teaching learning process, evaluation is carried out every term. If placement test' administrators do not pay attention in selecting the items, the validity and the reliability of each test will be less guaranteed. For this reason, every test constructor must be careful in constructing the test items, so that the result will meet the desired goal.; (3) By applying item analysis, lecturers can indicate which items may be reliable and valid and can make decision properly whether the test has a good quality or not. Thus, this research is very significant to conduct with the aim of designing items analysis of TOEFL-like test and knowing how a good placement test being conducted and also this kind of research has not been conducted yet by other researchers at STKIP PGRI Sidoarjo. As a result, the researcher decided to take the title *"Developing Items Analysis of TOEFL-Like Placement Test at STKIP PGRI Sidoarjo"*.

1.2 Statements of the Problem

Based on that issue explained on the background of the research, the researcher decides the formulated problem namely:

1.2.1   How is the product of Items Analysis of TOEFL-like placement test at STKIP PGRI Sidoarjo designed?

1.2.2   How is the quality of the test items in the TOEFL-like placement test done by STKIP PGRI Sidoarjo?

1.3 Objectives of the Study

Related to the formulated problem, this research aims to:

1.3.1   To what extend will the product of Items Analysis of TOEFL-like test at STKIP PGRI Sidoarjo designed.

1.3.2   To describe the quality of the test items in the TOEFL-like placement test done by STKIP PGRI Sidoarjo.

1.4 Significances of the Study

The main purpose of this research was to describe the quality of the test items in the placement test carried out by STKIP PGRI Sidoarjo. This is not, however, the only reason the researcher conducted this research. The importance of the research is also addressed:

1.4.1   Lecturers of STKIP PGRI Sidoarjo as the team of Test Creators

This research will provide a clear description of the criteria for a good test regarding validity, reliability, discriminatory power, level of difficulty, and the quality of the placement test conducted by lecturers as a feedback. Having known the results of this study, they will all

develop and improve their techniques in the further delivery of the placement test. The preparation for future placement tests can thus be more effective in improving the ability of the students to achieve good results.

1.4.2 Students

The students who take the placement test improve their performance by clearly understanding the results and analysis of items. The students are also expected to have other meaningful references to the placement test.

1.4.3 Other Researchers

The researcher hopes that this study can be used as a reference to enrich further studies on the analysis of the placement test items or other subjects related to current research.

1.4.4 Institution

The results of the research can be used to make the regulations on the efficacy of TOEFL-like tests a placement test for further tests held by the institution. The institution can effectively prepare and perform the placement tests.

1.5 Scopes and Limitations

After identifying the problems, this study focused only on the items' analysis designed of the TOEFL-like Test as a placement test to the Batch 5 students of Master of English Education (S2-MPBI) at STKIP PGRI Sidoarjo as the subjects of this research. This research was limited to the subjects only on those students who had done on their placement test. Then, this research focused only on the examining of validity, reliability, index difficulty and discriminating power as a criterion of a good test towards the test' items of the TOEFL-like Test as the placement test at STKIP PGRI Sidoarjo as the field test of the product designed.

1.6 Product Designed

This research will be conducted focusing on item analysis provides a way of measuring the quality of questions in seeing how appropriate they are for the students and how well they measure their ability and it provides objective evidence of the test held. Furthermore, to meet the quality of the TOEFL-like test conducted by STKIP PGRI Sidoarjo in Master of English Education program, the researcher will conduct the research in order to create the product of items analysis of the TOEFL-like test as the placement test held by STKIP PGRI Sidoarjo.

1.7 Operational Definition

        In order to avoid misunderstanding the term being used in this research, the researcher explains the discussion of Items Analysis of the Placement Test at STKIP PGRI Sidoarjo.

1.7.1   Item analysis is a way examining a test item, uses statistics and judgment to evaluate tests based on the quality of individual items, item sets, and entire sets of items, as well as the relationship of each item to other items covering validity, reliability, index difficulty and discriminating power.

1.7.2   TOEFL-like Test a standard English proficiency test held by STKIP PGRI Sidoarjo consisting Listening Section, Structure and Written Expression, and Reading Comprehension in which the 140 items are adapted from the Preparation Course for the TOEFL Test by Debora Phillips.

1.7.3   Placement Test is a test required and given to students entering an educational institution of STKIP PGRI Sidoarjo at master degree of Master of English Education (S2-MPBI) to determine students' proficiency in English.

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