

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Problem

In the domain of education, specifically in the context of English as a foreign language, students, especially junior high school students are expected to be able to communicate both orally and in writing. By mastering the four language skills, namely listening, speaking, reading and writing, one can communicate. This is also the case in the English learning process, where listening and reading are considered receptive skills and writing and speaking are considered productive skills. Often people are considered proficient in a language only by mastering speaking. Writing also requires mastery. For example, to reply to a discussion on social media, we must read carefully and write correctly in order to give the right answer.

In Indonesia, English is not a language native to the country, making it challenging to understand. As a result, English as a foreign language has gained significant importance in educational institutions. Haider (2012) suggests that the writer's academic background and personal interest contribute to their exploration of various psychological, linguistic, and cognitive phenomena related to English. Vocabulary is the most important component in learning English as it is used in speaking, listening, reading and writing. A

learner who has sufficient vocabulary will speak fluently and clearly, and write with ease. Therefore, to improve our knowledge, we must increase our

vocabulary a lot. Beside that, pronunciation is no less important in learning English, because it can help students avoid mistakes when speaking or reading. By learning pronunciation students will know how to pronounce a word correctly. Beside that, students are also required to be able to understand grammar, the use of grammar is very important. Learning grammar can increase knowledge in writing, speaking, and interpreting English correctly even though its use is not for daily activities.

Good education will be positively correlated with the quality of human resources. The educational components used still need to be improved until now, especially related to the learning outcome evaluation system. According to UU No. 20 Year 2005, the evaluation of education involves activities that aim to control, verify, and determine the quality of different educational components across various educational levels, tracks, and types. This is considered a crucial aspect of educational responsibility. According to Suharsimi (2013), evaluation is a systematic process of gathering data in order to assess the degree to which educational goals have been achieved, both in terms of what has been accomplished and how it has been accomplished. In the process of making decisions about what to evaluate, evaluation can be used as a benchmark. Measurement, as defined by Arikunto and Jabar (2004), involves the comparison of a specific case with established quantitative criteria. On the other hand, assessment involves making judgments or decisions regarding the quality or attributes of something, such as determining whether it is good or poor, healthy or sick, clever or stupid, high or low, and so forth (Djaali and Mulyiono, 2008).

Student learning outcomes assessment, as described by Sridadi (2007), refers to the systematic collection of comprehensive and ongoing information about the learning process and outcomes achieved by students during teaching and learning activities. This assessment serves as a foundation for determining the subsequent steps in the educational process. Whereas, according to McNamara (2000), testing or assessment is seen as a process of gathering evidence to conclude individual performance. The purpose of educational testing and assessment is to measure students' knowledge and abilities. Tests are one of the common techniques for conducting assessments.

As stated by Suharsimi (2013), a test is a method used to assess or evaluate something based on predetermined procedures and criteria. On the other hand, a non-test is a method employed to measure aspects related to the affective domain, such as attitudes, interests, talents, and motivations. Non-test methods may involve the use of questionnaires, interviews, observations, and other techniques (Sudijono, 2011). Tests are the most common evaluation tool, although there are two types of measuring instruments for evaluation activities. The test in question is a test made by the teacher. Because the test results will be used to make decisions, the results must reflect the actual situation. Errors can affect how well learning outcomes are assessed. Questions are considered good if they meet requirements such as eligibility, difficulty level, differentiating power, answer distribution pattern, and the relationship or correlation between each part of the question and the total score. Tests must also be objective, valid, and reliable. To determine this, an assessment activity involving item section analysis is needed to

gather information about tests that meet the requirements of being a viable item. Tests are considered effective measurement tools when they fulfill specific criteria, including validity, reliability, practicality, objectivity, and cost-effectiveness. These criteria determine the quality and utility of the test in accurately assessing the intended constructs or abilities (Suharsimi, 2013). Tests that have met several requirements will be used as a tool to measure student learning abilities.

In the process of learning English as a foreign language in Indonesia. It is still a scourge for some students in Indonesia. Most think English is difficult. The assumption that learning English is difficult makes some students feel reluctant to improve their English skills. This may be due to the students' previous minimal knowledge of English and the striking differences from English and Indonesia, especially in the pronunciation of the vocabulary and sentences patterns they use. Actually students have the ability or potential to develop or improve their mastery of English but they tend to be passive and less motivated to progress. The researcher has made observation at SMP Negeri 1 Bunguran Utara and conducted interviews with the English teacher. Researcher received a lot of information about students' difficulties in carrying out the English learning process. Besides students, teacher also experience difficulties in teaching English to the students, because each student has their own ability to understand and absorb lessons well, especially in English lesson. Does researcher also ask about whether the seventh grade have difficulty in final English test?

As a result of the observation conducted on the seventh grade students at SMP Negeri 1 Bunguran Utara, the researcher found that some of the problems faced by the students were related to the English final exam. According to information provided by the English teacher, students were less excited when the English lesson started. This will have an impact on students' English test results at the end of the semester. These problems are: (1) students have limited vocabulary, (2) students got difficult to understand the final exam questions, (3) students got difficult to understand grammar/tenses, (4) students lacked of practice in doing test items, (5) students got difficult to distinguish text types, (6) students got difficult to understand of the complex and very long sentences than shorter sentences.

Based on the above background, the researcher would like to conduct a study on “7th Grade Students' Abilities of a Final English Test: Rasch Model Analysis”.

1.2 Identification of the Problem

Based on the background above, the problem can be identified as follows:

1. The students had insufficient command of vocabulary;
2. The students got difficult to understand the final exam questions;
3. The students got difficult to understand grammar/tenses;
4. The students lacked of practice in doing test items;
5. The students got difficult to distinguish text types; and

6. The students got difficult to understand of the complex and very long sentences than shorter sentences.

1.3 Limitation of the Problems

Based on the identified issues, the limitations of this research problem are as follows, the researcher limit the problem to focus the research on a specific topic. This research focuses on the ability of students at SMP Negeri 1 Bunguran Utara, especially seventh-grade students in answering multiple choice questions in English subjects, which will be reviewed in terms of the level of validity, reliability, and item difficulty of the items in the questions.

1.4 Research Question

Based on the identification and limitations mentioned earlier, the researcher has formulated the following question: How is the students' ability in final English test at the seventh grade of SMP Negeri 1 Bunguran Utara ?

1.5 Purpose of the Research

The objective of this study, as derived from the research question, is to analyze students' ability in final English test at the seventh grade of SMP Negeri 1 Bunguran Utara.

1.6 The Significant of the Study

The anticipated outcomes of this study are expected to yield the following advantages:

1. For student: evaluation results can be used to measure students' ability to understand the material.
2. For teacher: the results can be used by teachers to determine students' ability to understand the material.
3. For test maker: the findings of this study can serve as a valuable resource to enhance the construction of tests and exams.
4. For writer: the writer can enhance their skills in developing test items through the findings of this study.

1.7 Definition of the Key Term

To ensure clarity and avoid confusion regarding the concepts used in the research, it is essential to provide clear definitions for key terms throughout the research process. The following terms require explicit definitions:

- 1) Student ability is a process carried out by students to obtain abilities in accordance with the assessment criteria, namely space, time and energy. In this study, to determine the ability of students will be tested using the final test on English subjects.
- 2) Final test is an evaluation activity that is carried out regularly in every school. The aim is to measure how well students understand the lessons that have been taught by the teacher.

- 3) Rasch model is a measurement model to analyze data in the form of numbers. In this study, the Rasch model was used to analyze the results of students' abilities on the English final test.

