

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter unveils the background, questions, purposes, significance, scope, conceptual framework, and previous study of the research.

A. Background

Assessment becomes one of the essential things in the teaching-learning process. Brown (1990) defines assessment as a connected series of measurements used to determine a complicated attribute of an individual or group. This entails collecting and analyzing data regarding student achievement of learning objectives. Assessments are used to measure and assess students' learning abilities, strengths, and weaknesses possessed by students. The teacher can use the results of this evaluation as material for future learning. Whereas assessment is vital to evaluate the student's learning progress, the teacher assesses literacy knowledge to be considered for a good evaluation process. Teachers require sufficient assessment literacy to evaluate students properly (Popham, 2006).

Richard Stiggins was the first to use the term "assessment literacy." He points out that proficient teachers know what they evaluate, why they assess it, how they evaluate it, what potential issues exist, and how to overcome them (Stiggins, 1995). The capability and knowledge of the teacher can influence their evaluation of learning. Assessment literacy is the capacity of educators to comprehend the principles of a reliable assessment (Popham, 2004). According to Paterno (2001), educators must know the fundamentals of good assessment practice, including terminology, creating and applying assessment procedures and strategies, and a thorough understanding of quality assessment standards.

Moreover, Fulcher (2012) explained three essential elements of language assessment literacy. The first is knowledge and ability to design, maintain and develop the classroom-based test. The second is knowledge of testing procedures and understanding the guiding and supporting principles and concepts. In addition,

the last competency is integrating knowledge, skills, processes, principles, and concepts into philosophical frameworks to evaluate the function and effects of testing on society, institutions, and individuals and to comprehend why practices have evolved as they have.

In teaching a second language, proficiency in language assessment literacy is essential (Scarino, 2013). Falsgraf (2005) agrees that it is essential because it supports teachers in comprehending, evaluating, and using information about student performance to enhance instruction. Furthermore, according to Mertler (2002), teachers' assessment literacy strongly influences the relationship between assessment quality and student accomplishment.

In English language teaching, there are four skills must be taught, listening, speaking, reading and writing. The most challenging skill is writing (Durga & Rao, 2018). Writing certainly also requires assessment to evaluate student writing which will used to improve students' writing abilities (Dolin & Evans, 2018). Concurrently, testing writing ability is vital for determining the growth of students and enhancing their writing skills. In other words, language teachers must consider the forms of writing and design assessment tasks and procedures based on the aim and objectives of the assessment.

The necessity of teachers getting adequate language proficiency has been highlighted by studies of teachers' Language Assessment Literacy. However, the findings in several studies found that in Indonesia, teacher assessment practices are ineffective. In the related study, Marhaeni et al. (2018) show that Indonesian EFL teachers' evaluation techniques, particularly in Bali, may be categorized as moderate. Second, Rad (2019) conveyed that higher assessment literacy among teachers leads to improved assessment practices and a more structured course plan. Third, Luthfiyyah et al. (2020) showed that secondary EFL teachers exhibit limited assessment literacy. It also showed that a variety of variables affected how teachers evaluated literacy.

In the preliminary survey conducted by the researcher, several teachers found that they usually used existing rubrics from any sources, such as books and the internet. Based on teachers' considerations using the existing rubric is more efficient because they do not need to waste time to make their rubric. Thus, the teachers are more likely to use the existing rubric than make their rubric.

Given the above findings and urgency, there are few studies on teachers' language assessment literacy, but more research still needs to discuss it, especially in Indonesia. It is necessary to study teachers' assessment literacy to evaluate EFL teachers' literacy in Indonesia. Considering the significance of Language Assessment Knowledge for EFL teachers, this study will determine the language assessment literacy of English teachers concerning writing skills.

B. Research Questions

Regarding the English Teachers Language Assessment Literacy in Writing Assessment, there are several research questions such as below:

1. How is the Language Assessment Literacy of EFL teachers concerning writing assessment?
2. How the teachers' assessment literacies are reflected in assessing writing applied by the English teachers?

C. Research Purposes

Related to the questions above, the purpose of this study is:

1. To figure out the language assessment literacy of the English teachers concerning writing assessment.
2. To find out the teachers' assessment literacies reflected in assessing writing applied by English teachers.

D. Research Significances

The research would be helpful practically and theoretically. Those research significances are explained as follows:

1. Theoretically

This research is expected to make a valuable contribution to education, especially for English Teachers LAL in writing assessment, and it may support or verify the previous research.

2. Practically

This research helps teachers to know about assessment literacy related to the information gained from this study. In addition, this study is expected to make teachers more aware of assessment, particularly in writing assessment.

E. Research Scope

This study is targeted to explore the Language Assessment Literacy of EFL teachers in one aspect. The focus is on writing assessments. The limitation of the study is participated by two English teachers in SMP Triyasa Bandung.

F. Theoretical Framework

Assessment is an essential thing that can help the teaching and learning activity. Assessment is a long-term method of gathering data during the learning process. Assessment entails the gathering of information and the interpretation of data received from students to determine learning outcomes and the achievement of students (Brown, 2004). Teachers will learn about students' abilities by assessing their work and bringing their knowledge to the test. Assessment serves various purposes, including knowledge about students' learning and development, teaching excellence, and program accountability (Opre, 2015).

Furthermore, the assessment data was required to decide actions for students, either as individuals or in groups. The assessment is used to determine learning progress and teacher expectations during learning. According to Brown (2004), evaluations can occur at any moment. A competent teacher continually evaluates either planned or unplanned student responses and performance. Assessment is more than just delivering an exam and measuring the outcome. The assessment must adhere to the proper process, and the validity and reliability must be trusted.

Furthermore, teachers' understanding of the assessment is called teachers' language assessment literacy, shortened to LAL.

Language assessment literacy (LAL) is gaining increasing importance in language teaching and is essential to language teachers' professional competence (Popham, 2009). LAL is widely understood to be a collection of competencies, understanding of employing assessment methodologies, and applying applicable instruments at a sufficient time that allows a person to comprehend, develop language tests, and examine test data (Inbar-Lourie, 2008). Fulcher (2012) said that LAL refers to a language teacher's knowledge base, a measurement tool for the teacher's academic performance in the classroom. In other words, it is the capacity to construct both.

Teachers genuinely proficient in language assessment are able to create and manage successful assessment activities, evaluate student grades accurately, construct suitable lesson plans, and make informed educational choices. Following Inbar-Lourie (2008), an individual who is literate in language assessment can ask and answer critical questions about the purpose of the assessment, the suitability of the tool being used, the testing circumstances, and the application of the outcome of the assessment.

According to Fulcher (2012), assessment literacy can be divided into three categories. The first set of competencies includes the knowledge, skills, and abilities necessary to design, develop, maintain, or evaluate large-scale classroom-based tests. The second set of competencies provides familiarity with test processes and awareness of the principles and concepts that guide and underpin practice, such as ethics and codes of practice. The last one is the capability to contextualize knowledge, skills, processes, principles, and concepts to understand why practices have evolved in the way they have and to evaluate the role and impact of testing on society, institutions, and individuals. This ability is necessary to understand why practices have evolved in the way they have.

Regarding those previous definitions, the definition of Language Assessment Literacy is the teacher's knowledge in assessing language assessment applying the methodologies, theories, and instruments regarding language assessment principles. The language assessment principles become grounded in language assessment.

Concerning the skill of writing, since it is an essential thing of learning a second language as well as a foreign language and possesses its characteristics and rules, the instruction of writing and the development of writing abilities is an absolute necessity (Brown, 2004). Concurrently, testing writing ability is vital for determining the growth of students and enhancing their writing skills. In other words, language teachers must consider the forms of writing and design assessment tasks and procedures based on the aim and objectives of the assessment. Regarding writing assessment, Weigle (2007) recommends that teachers of a second language acquire writing assessment skills, such as designing, implementing, and evaluating writing assignments. She adds that teachers must recognize good assessment and understand its applications in the classroom, as well as comprehend both formative and summative evaluation, the components of a good paper, the highly contextualized concept of good writing, and the use of data obtained from externally mandated tests.

G. Previous Studies

The first study was conducted by Marhaeni et al. (2020), who researched Uncovering the Assessment Literacy of Elementary Teachers in Singaraja, Bali. The study aimed to determine the teacher assessment literacy of elementary school teachers in Buleleng Regency. It was a descriptive study with a sample of 144 elementary school teachers. This study focused on teachers' language assessment literacy in four aspects of skills. The study found that implementing the assessment in the classroom by the English teachers in Bali still needs to be revised and according to the procedure. They need to understand better the assessment based on the curriculum used. It is necessary to hold training in this matter.

The second research discussed the influence of EFL instructors' assessment literacy on their assessment efficiency (Rad, 2019). The study explored the perceptions and practices of Iranian EFL teachers about assessment. A literacy questionnaire was distributed to thirty Iranian EFL speakers as part of an assessment. The study employed qualitative and quantitative methods, and the results suggested that the assessment literacy of EFL teachers had a meaningful effect on classroom assessment efficiency. Teachers with a high level of assessment literacy have a prepared lesson plan and are aware of the strengths and limitations of their students. This study recommends that policymakers encourage language teachers to be assessment literate.

The third study was conducted by Luthfiyyah et al. (2020) about EFL teachers' assessment literacy and assessment methods. This study adopts a descriptive quantitative approach that analyzes EFL secondary teachers' assessment literacy and assessment practice. The data were acquired through an online survey and semi-structured interviews. Forty-eight respondents fulfilled an online questionnaire containing 32 items adapted from the Teachers Assessment Literacy Questionnaire (TALQ). The data suggest that EFL secondary instructors often have a moderate assessment literacy level. Individual assessment literacy, institutional and national policies, and sociocultural factors influence the participants' views of assessment, assessment methods, and assessment practice obstacles. It reveals that assessment literacy is not a single variable influencing teachers' assessment procedures.

However, from all the previous studies above, there were significant differences with this study. All the previous studies discussed teachers' language assessment in four aspects, speaking, writing, listening, and reading. None of the studies addressed teachers' language assessment literacy in writing assessment. Hence, the researcher used this as a gap in this research.