

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. Rationale

Education is an actual thing in all time. Education must be improved and struggled in order to have a balance with demands of time. So, it is needed some efforts of innovation in education to improve its quality.

Various effort of improvement on educational system and its peripheral in Indonesia are non-stopped done, as a result of it, some educational regulations emerge to equip and to complete the irrelevant regulation with requirement today.¹

In order to improve Indonesian quality of education, the government has executed various policies. Some fundamentals step are taken from the policies are the extension and generalization opportunity to obtaining education, conservancy and improvement of educational quality that is relevant with the development.

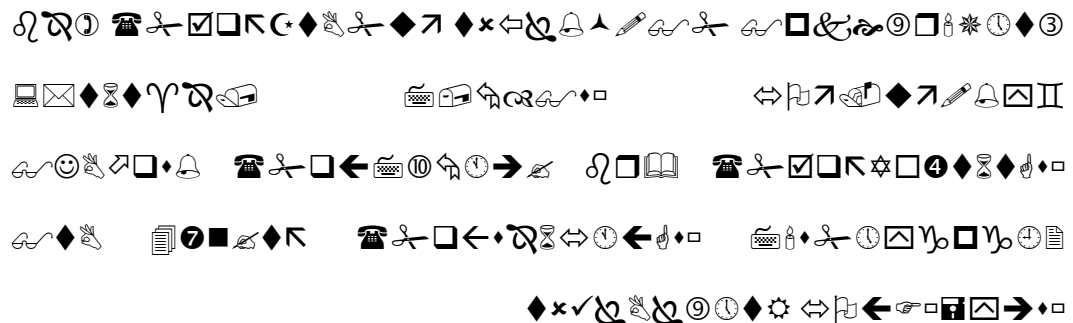
According to these policies, school as a place of instructional activity has a very important role in improving the quality of education. Some efforts to improve the quality of education are the providing the various facility of education and practice, whose aim is to improve the teaching and education situation.

¹Moh Uzer Usman & Lilis Stiawati, *Upaya Optimalisasi Kegiatan Belajar Mengajar*, (Bandung: PT. Remaja Rosdakarya, 1993), p. 1.

The success of instruction is not only seen from the result of learning reached by the students, but also from its process. Basically the result of learning is an effect of a learning process. It means that the optimal result of learning of the students is based on students' learning process and the teacher's teaching process.² The teaching-learning process is a system. It consist of some components that each other interconnected and interacted in achieving the target. One of those component is evaluation.³

Broadly meaning, evaluation is a process of planning, obtaining and providing the information needed very much to make the alternatives decision. Every activity of evaluation or assessment is a process that is intentionally planned to get the information of the data, to make decision.⁴

Evaluating of thing is also started in the Holy Quran. Allah SWT in surah Al-Hujarat verse 6 says:



²Nana Sudjana, *Penilaian Hasil Proses Belajar Mengajar*, (Bandung: PT Remaja Rosdakarya, 2001), p. 65.

³ Moh Uzer Usman & Lilis Stiawati, *op. cit.*, p. 135.

⁴ Ngalim Purwanto, *Prinsip-Prinsip dan Teknik Evaluasi Pengajaran*, (Bandung: PT Remaja Rosdakarya, 1990), p. 3-4.

The verse above teaches people to examine and evaluate something accurately before they take a decision, since the result of evaluation and examination will be used as a main consideration to do the next step.

Daryanto in his book expresses that the main goal of evaluation in teaching-learning process is to get the accurate information about attainment of the instructional target by the students.⁵

One of the most effective way to improve the teaching –learning process is by evaluating the result of learning test which is obtained from the teaching-learning process itself.⁶ In addition the success or failure of teaching learning process can be known by conducting an evaluation for students learning result.

Evaluation of instruction generally includes (1) the assessment of progress made by the students toward the intermediate and terminal goals and (2) a judgment regarding the efficacy of materials and methodology. The result of this evaluation should reveal strengths or weaknesses in individuals students, weakness in instruction, and even weakness in the test instrument.⁷

⁵ Daryanto, *Evaluasi Pendidikan*, (Jakarta: Rineka Cipta, 1999), p. 11.

⁶ Ngalim Purwanto, *op. cit.*, p. 118.

⁷ Marry Finnochiarro and Sydney Sako, *Foreign Language Testing*, (New York: Regents Publishing Company, 1983), p. 35.

English is one of language in the world. For Indonesians English is a foreign language that has been taught and learned from Elementary School until University level.

English has been taught and learned because of some reasons. Firstly, English is an international language. Secondly, English is scientific of language. Thirdly, English is business language. Fourthly, English user is the biggest in all over the world.

Two linguistic activities are associated with both speech and writing: an encoding and decoding process. *Speaking* and *writing* themselves are the encoding process whereby we communicate our ideas, thoughts, or feelings through one or other form of language; and *listening* and *reading* are the parallel decoding processes by which we “understand” either or spoken or a written.⁸

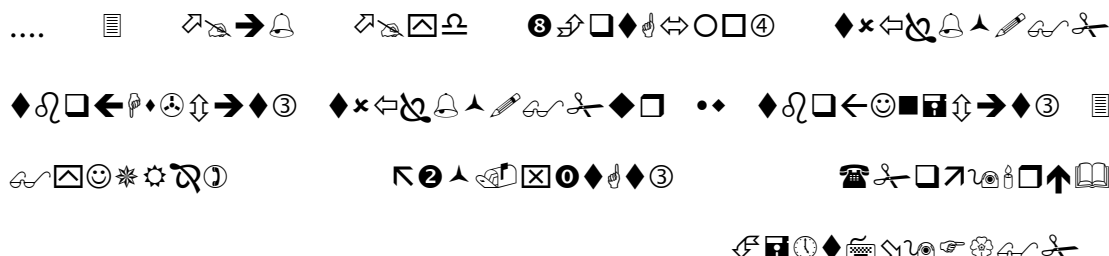
It can be conclude that language includes four skills. Those are listening, speaking, reading and writing.

Learners’ success in mastering those four skills in communicative competence should be measured by doing an evaluation, especially a test. Ralph Tyler defined evaluation as a process of collecting data to determine how far, in which matter and part, that the education goals have been attained.⁹

⁸ David P. Harris, *Testing English as a Second Language*, (New York: Mc Graw-Hill Book Company, 1969), p. 9.

⁹ Suharsimi Arikunto, *Dasar-dasar Evaluasi Pendidikan*, (Jakarta: Bumi Aksara, 1999), p. 3.

Allah SWT in the Holy Quran surah Az-Zumar verse 9 says:



From that verse can be known that Allah discriminates humans between who have knowledge and who do not.¹⁰ In term of education, this matter should be carried out through an evaluation which one of its purpose is to discriminate between the students who master the materials and who do not.

According to the test function as a measurement tool of students' learning development, a test is differentiated into six, they are 1) selection/ entrance test, 2) pre-test, 3) post test, 4) diagnostic test 5) formative test, and 6) summative test.¹¹

The purpose of summative test is to know the result of teaching totally, especially in improvement of students' language ability, as real sign of attainment of its teaching purpose.¹²

¹⁰ Ali Yusuf, *The Holy Quran: Translation and Commentary*, (Maryland, USA: Arnana Corp, 1989), p. 1183.

¹¹ Anas Sudijono, *Pengantar Evaluasi Pendidikan*, (Jakarta: Raja Grafindo Persada, 1966), p. 68.

¹² M. Soenardi Djiwandono, *Tes Bahasa Dalam Pengajaran*, (Bandung: ITB Bandung, 1996), p. 20.

After the test have been done, teacher should analyze the test items to know about the weakness and strength of the test. So that teacher will know which item in good quality and bad quality.

Analysis item test is the study about test questions in order to get a set question that has good quality. There are two kinds of analysis item test, analysis of the difficulty level and analysis of the discriminating power beside validity and reliability.¹³

English is one of the examined subject of school. Junior High School “SMIP 1946” Banjarmasin also takes English as compulsory subject in the school. So it must be tested to the students at the end of semester as summative test. Many students assume that English is difficult. It causes them often to get a low score. A low score is a reflection of the weakness of learning. Probably it is causes they do not understand the materials, and they could not answer test correctly.

From what has explained above, the writer is interested to do a research in analyzing the English items of the summative test at Junior High School “SMIP 1946” Banjarmasin, in order to know the effectiveness of the items through determining its difficulty level and its discriminating power. So the writer want to do a research entitled “ **An Analysis of the Difficulty Level and the Discriminating Power of English Test Items of the First Semester**

¹³ Nana Sudjana, *op. cit.*, p. 135.

Examination at the Second Year Students of Junior High School “SMIP 1946” Banjarmasin Academic Year 2008/2009.

To avoid the confusion in understanding the title, the writers requires explaining some term used in this thesis as follow.

1. Analysis is the study of something by examining its parts and their relationship.¹⁴ The item analysis is information tells you if the item is too easy or too hard, how well it discriminated between high and low scoring groups on the test and whether all of the alternatives functioned as intended.¹⁵

2. Difficulty level

The difficulty is the state or quality of being difficult, the trouble or effort that something involves.¹⁶ The difficulty level of item determines how difficult or easy the test items or all test that hold.¹⁷

3. Discriminating power

The discrimination index of an item indicates the extent to which the item discriminates between the testees, separating the more able testees from the less able. The index of discrimination tells us whether those students who

¹⁴ As Hornby, *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary of Current English*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), Ed. 5, p. 38.

¹⁵ Ian Forsyth, et.al., *Evaluating a course*, (London: Kogan Page, 1999), p. 83.

¹⁶ As Hornby, *op .cit.*, p. 322.

¹⁷ M. Soenardi Djiwandono, *op. cit.*, p.140.

performed well on the whole test tended to do well or badly on each item in the test.¹⁸

B. Formulation of The Problems

Based on the background of study above, in this research there are some problems to be studied. The problems are formulated as follows.

1. How is the difficulty level of English test items of the first semester examination given to the second year students of Junior High School “SMIP 1946” Banjarmasin academic year 2008/2009?
2. How is the discriminating power of English test items of the first semester examination given to the second year students of Junior High School “SMIP 1946” Banjarmasin academic year 2008/2009?

C. The Reason for Choosing the Title

There are some reasons that make the writer to choose this title, they are:

1. As an information for English teacher about quality of test.
2. Analyzing the test is the activity that can assist to improve the quality of a test.
3. A good test is the item that should have its difficulty level which is not very high and not very low.
4. The difficulty level of the test is one of matter which must be considered by the teacher in executing instructional evaluation.

¹⁸ *Ibid*, p. 173-174.

5. One of the test purpose is to discriminate the students who master the materials and who do not.

D. Research Purpose

Based on the problems above, the purposes of this research can be set as follows:

- a. To know and determine how is the difficulty level of English test items of the first semester examination given to the second year students of Junior High School “SMIP 1946” Banjarmasin academic year 2008/2009.
- b. To know and determine how is the discriminating power of English test items of the first semester examination given to the second year students of Junior High School ‘SMIP 1946’ Banjarmasin academic year 2008/2009.

E. Research Significance

This research has contributions:

1. As an information to the item constructor about the quality and weakness of the test items in the effort of improving the quality of the test.
2. As an input for the writer himrself to enrich knowledge about educational evaluation.
3. As a consideration for the next research in the same object but different point of view.

F. Organization of Writing

This research divided into five chapters follows:

Chapter one contains introduction, which is consist of rationale, formulation of the problems, the reason for choosing the title, research purpose, research significant, and organization of writing.

Chapter two contains theoretical review, which is consist of definition of test, English materials to test, some purpose of language test, kinds of test, characteristic of a good test, and difficulty level and discriminating power of test items.

Chapter three contains method of research , which is consist of subject and object of the research, data and source of data, techniques of data collecting, techniques of data processing and analysis, design measurement, and research procedure.

Chapter four contains report of the research result, which is consist of description of the research location, data presentation, and data analysis.

Chapter five contains closure, which is consist of conclusion and suggestion.