

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND

The Indonesian Senior High Schools have, for so many years, been administering English Summative-Test at the end of each semester. The English Summative Test for the even semester is administered before the end of the school year with the main purpose to measure the students' achievements of the English materials taught in the class for assigning their grades. Those whose extent of achievement pass the minimum passing level will be assigned to a higher grade. The English Summative Test can, therefore, be considered a measure of the extent of student's achievement in their English subject.

In short, it is essential that the English Summative Test should really evaluate what has been taught at the class as it has been arranged in the syllabus.

The importance of using the syllabus as the basis of test planning and item construction is also emphasized by Alan Davies who says that:

".....achievement tests are entirely dependent on the syllabus and that therefore, discussion of them must take the syllabus into account, otherwise such discussion is a trivial consideration of testing techniques."1

In addition to the statement above, there are principles to follow in constructing the items, especially of an objective test. These principles must be followed as closely as possible as it will enhance test reliability which is a prior condition to test validity.

The 1988-1989 Final English Summative Test for the first grade students of SMA Dapena I is in the form of both objective items, i.e. multiple choice items with five options, and subjective items based on the reading passages. Furthermore, this English Summative Test is a classroom test which is planned, constructed, administered and scored by one teacher, that is the English instructor of the class himself.

Harries describes this type of classroom test 2 as follows:

1) J.P.B. Allen and Allan Davis, Testing and Experimental Methods, Oxford University Press, Lowe and Bridone Printers Ltd., Great Britain, 1978, pp.69-70.

2) David P. Harries, Testing English as a Second Language, Georgetown University: Mc. Graw Hill Book Co., 1969, p.1.

"Classroom tests are generally prepared, administered and scored by one teacher. In this situation, test objectives can be based directly on course objectives and test content derived from specific course content. Inasmuch as instructor, writer and evaluator are all the same test individual, the students know pretty much what is expected of them....what is likely to be covered by the test questions and what kind of standards are likely to be applied in the scoring and interpretation of the results."

In this case, the test maker knows well enough about his students competence and learning progress. It may give the tendency to construct a test merely consisting of topics suitable to the students' abilities and ignoring the other topics.

On account of these facts, this analytical study was undertaken to find out whether the 1988-1989 Final English Summative Test for the first-grade students of SMA Dapena I as a measuring instrument has fulfilled the criteria of a test construction.

1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Based on important requirements needed in constructing a good test, the major problem of this study is stated as follows: "How valid is the construction of the 1988 - 1989 Final English Summative Test for the first-grade students of SMA Dapena I as a

measuring instrument of the students' English achievement?"

In attempt to find the answers to the question, the major problem is broken down into the following minor problems:

1. To what extent do the learning outcomes and content coverage of the English Summative Test meet the materials in the syllabus?
2. To what extent do the objective items of the Final English Summative Test meet the principles of constructing multiple-choice items?
3. To what extent do the subjective items of the Final English Summative Test meet the principles of constructing essay items?

1.3 OBJECTIVES

Based on the previously stated problems, this proposed study is meant:

1. to find the extent of the learning outcomes and the content coverage of the English summative test.
2. to find the extent of the objective items of the English Summative Test which meet the principles of constructing multiple choice items.
3. to find the extent of the subjective items of

the English Summative Test which meet the principles of constructing essay items.

1.4 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The result obtained from this study are expected to give emphasis to the importance of careful planning in constructing a valid test.

It is also expected the result this will stimulate the SMA English test-item constructors to give more consideration to the nature of language testing and to the criteria of a good test-item construction.

1.5 ASSUMPTIONS

It has long been assumed that all English teachers have the knowledge and ability to construct good language testing items since they are accustomed to this.

There has also been an assumption that all the language tests made for the students are reliable. Still, many questions about the way of the construction, the validity and the reliability exist many times.

1.6 SCOPE AND LIMITATION

This analytical study was limited to the 1988-1989 English Summative Test for the second semester students of SMA Dapena I. It was also limited to the analysis of the learning outcome, content coverage and item construction of the test items.

The study of the learning outcome and the content analysis was mainly based on the syllabus.

This study covers the analysis of the construction of the structure, reading comprehension, vocabulary and conversation items. The item construction was analysed mainly based on the principles of constructing multiple choice items and essay items.

1.7 THEORITICAL FRAMEWORK

This study was based on some theories and principles. The language testing theory states the nature and the function of a good language testing in a language teaching-learning. A good test, especially an achievement test, requires content validity as the most important characteristic. A careful test planning with a table of specification is, therefore, the key to effective achievement testing. The next step is to construct the test items based on the rules of item

construction as closely as possible. In this case, the rules of constructing objective and subjective test items are given great consideration.

1.8 DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS

In order to avoid misinterpretation, it is essential that the terms are defined as following:

1. Summative Test: an achievement test administered to the students at the end of the semester, to measure the students' mastery of a particular teaching-learning material.
2. Achievement Test: a formal test which has been designed to show mastery of a particular syllabus, e.g. end-of-year-test, school-leaving test.
3. Objective Test: a test of which questions are asked in such a way that there is only one predetermined and correct answer. It is objective in terms of scoring.
4. Subjective Test: a test which gives freedom of response to the students.
5. Multiple-Choice Item: an objective item which contains a stem, one correct option and three or four distractors and the students should choose only one best answer.

6. Validity: the extent to which it measures what it is supposed to measure and nothing else.
7. Content validity: kind of validity which depends on a careful analysis of the language being tested and of the particular course objectives.
8. Learning Outcomes: intellectual outcomes in the cognitive domain which are divided into six classes, they are knowledge, comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis and evaluation.
9. Content Analysis: It is an analysis of test items to determine whether each of the items really test the intended learning outcome, whether the subject matter is appropriately selected to test the learning outcome, and whether the item as a whole represent adequate sampling of learning outcomes and contents.