

## **Chapter Two**

### **Literature Review**

In this chapter, the researcher puts theories about junior high school student's strategies to prepare the English national examination. The theories come from some journals taken by the researcher to support this research. This chapter also includes review of related study and conceptual framework.

### **Assessment**

In this explanation, the researcher describes the definition of assessment. Besides the definitions, the researcher also explains the importance of assessment. In the last explanation, the researcher explains the strategy in managing assessment.

Assessment is a broad term defined as a process for obtaining information that is used for making decisions about students; curricula, programs, and schools and educational policy. According to Ioannou-Georgiou (2003), assessment as a general term which includes all methods used to gather information about children's knowledge, ability, understanding, attitudes, and motivation. In addition, Hall and Sheehy (2010) said that assessment means different things in different contexts but it declares that it always bounds up with attitudes, values, beliefs and sometimes prejudices. It can be said that assessment is not only assess knowledge and performance, but it is also used to assess attitudes and motivation as well.

Having diverse assessment options will help teacher keeping their strategies and students' motivation. Chappuis and Stiggins (2002) mentioned that assessment is the one of ideas in which learners should be part of the assessment process. In an article written by Chappuis and Stiggins

(2002), three key components of assessment for learning are discussed. The first one is students involve assessment. Students are not passive in the assessment process, but they are engaged in developing the assessment, determining what a good performance entails, and learning to score through models provided by the teacher. The second one is effective teacher feedback. Teachers are the models for students to learn something important in their performance. Thus, feedback should be clear, descriptive, and illustrated for students. Students need guidance in giving their peers feedback as well as in evaluating themselves. This goal is grounded in the teacher modeling effective feedback. The last one is skills of self-assessment. This matter should lead to self-directed learning which requires learners to evaluate themselves. This skill is not easy to be mastered and it requires guidance from the teacher. Students should be asked to think about their goals, their current ability, and how to work from one to the other. Feedback and self-assessment are critical parts of this process.

Assessment programs aim to provide a balanced, fair evaluation of each student. There are some reasons why there is assessment in education. Lucas (2008) mentioned that assessment is an integral part of instruction, as it determines whether or not the goals of education are being met. Assessment affects decisions about grades, placement, advancement, instructional needs, curriculum, and in some cases, and funding. It also can be said that assessment is a key component of learning because it helps students to learn. When students are able to see how they are doing in a class, they are able to determine whether or not they understand course material.

Besides assessment, there is a test. A test is like assessment intended to measure students' knowledge and skill. According to Brown (2004), test is a method of measuring a person's ability, knowledge, or performance in a given domain. In addition, Arikunto (2013) stated that test is an instrument that is used to measure a condition by the certain rule (cited in Sugianto (2016).

A test may be administered verbally, on paper, on a computer, or in a predetermined area that requires a test taker to demonstrate or perform a set of skills.

Test also has some types. According to O'Malley (2015), there are four different types of testing. The first one is diagnostic testing. This testing is like to “diagnose” what students know and do not know. This test happens at the start of new phase of education such as when the students start learning a new unit. Formative testing is the second type of testing. This type is used to gauge students learning during the lesson. This type of test is used throughout a lecture and designed to give students the opportunity to demonstrate that the students have understood the material. This type of test happens in ongoing manner, and students performance on formative testing tends to get better as a lesson progresses. The next one is benchmark testing which is used to check whether or not students have mastered unit of content. The last type of testing is summative testing. This test is used as a checkpoint at the end of the year of course to assess how many content students learn overall.

In addition, Ezekiel (2012) mentioned that many different types of test exist and each has a different purpose and style. Diagnostic tests are used to diagnose how much the students know and what the students know. Placement tests are used to place students in the appropriate class or level. Proficiency tests are used to check learners' levels in relation to general standards. They provide a broad picture of knowledge and ability.

From the explanations above, it can be said that assessment is a process of obtaining information that is used to make decisions about students, curriculum, programs, schools, and education policies. In addition, if the assessment is focused, it is a general term that includes all methods used to gather information about children's knowledge, abilities, understanding, attitudes, and motivation. Assessment is intended to measure students' knowledge and skills.

Therefore, it can be concluded that assessment is important. It can determine whether or not students have learned what they need to learn or to level or degrees to which students have learned the material. It can also be said that test is to measure learning progress and achievement and to evaluate the effectiveness of educational programs. Tests may also be used to measure students' progress toward stated improvement goals or to determine student placement in programs.

### **National Final Examination for English Subject**

Indonesia has a test that is carried out simultaneously to determine students graduation. The test is generally known as the national examination or in Indonesia known as *Ujian Nasional*. In line with that Febrina (2012) mentioned that, the national examination is a test to determine whether students can pass and continue to higher education. National examinations for junior high school in Indonesia cover four subjects; those are science, social, mathematics, and language divided into Indonesian Language and English. There will be 10% of essay questions for Mathematics National Examination, and there is no essay question for other three subjects. There is no essay question for language examination, because the students can get difficulty in answering essay question. There are several things that make it difficult for students to solve the problem of English. According to Tisa (2018), it takes such a long time to read text in exam. In reading comprehension, the question contains long text. The students will read the text repeatedly because they do not understand the content. The students also do not understand the text structure. If students do not understand the structure of the text, students will get difficulty in answering several types of question. For example, a question that requires students to arrange sentences or paragraphs.

### **Students' Strategies to Prepare National Examination**

Before discussing the strategies used by the students in facing national examination, there are some difficulties faced by the students to prepare their examination. Sometimes, the difficulties faced by the students in preparing examination is in developing their fundamental skill such as time management, reading for comprehension, note taking and coping with anxiety. The strategies which can be used by the students to prepare national examination are presented as follows:

**Managing study time.** Preparing for exams is not easy for most students. It needs time and hard work. On the other hand, it is the cause of a lot of stress and anxiety. Sometimes, exam has unclear or ambiguous questions or instructions. According to Ardy (2016), there are some other reasons that students experience difficulties in preparing for exams are related to constraints on time, lack of preparation of appropriate kinds, and misplaced focus on the course material.

The key to accept and deal with this national exam is time management. According to University of Tasmania (2016), many ways can be done to manage time well by students. This arrangement can help them to be more optimal. Use a blank weekly planner to organize the study period available to them. Another thing, set realistic limits on the number of studies the students can do and allow regular breaks for rest and relaxation. Also specify a specific work segment for each review time. This breaks down large tasks into smaller components and gives students small goals to achieve. Taking more difficult tasks with easier ones and combining different learning activities in each session will prevent students from getting too fast and bored. Another thing that can be done by the students according to University of New England (2007), they need to find at least one extra hour a day for each subject. When students will face the exam, they must think realistically. Students may not require themselves to study more than six hours on one day. Students also may not plan to study any subject for more than one hour.

In addition, students can try to describe all their daily activities, then they can examine carefully any free time that can be filled with learning activities. Ardy (2016) mentioned that to facilitate the arrangement of study time, students can also make learning packages based on topics and material. In this case, students are not only expected to focus on the deepening of the material without being interspersed with practice questions. Many students already understand the material presented, but when they meet a simple and slightly different question, they have difficulty. So, every material given they are not only taught to understand but the teacher must provide simple sample questions as well. Ardy(2016) also added that students must focus on completing learning packages with weekly targets. After students are able to make learning packages, students really know the scope of activities that will be done. Students can also imagine their activities will be like: it can be a deepening of the material, making summaries or mind-maps, practicing questions, or trying out independently. By making a learning package, students can also estimate approximately how long it will take to complete the learning package. It could be 60 minutes, 90 minutes, or 120 minutes; it is up to the students' capacity and free time. After dissecting the list of activities to be carried out, the next step is plotting these activities into a weekly target. In the process of organizing activities, do not place a commitment on 'time', but put a commitment to 'activity'.

**Motivating themselves.** Other thing that the students can do is motivate themselves in learning. According to Sherratt(2013), students can motivate themselves with positive consequences to prepare their exam. They can try to think about what benefits they will get if they prepare the exam properly, they can look at the positive results of what will happen and try to build these up in their mind.

Students also can motivate themselves by taking a break and giving reward to themselves. According to Kenneth(2018), students will definitely feel tired and do not have more motivation when they study every day to face them exam. Students can set clear targets to achieve every day. After the target is reached, students can provide rewards for pleasing themselves.

Besides that, the students can also try something new, such as the way they learn something. They can use new method based on their perspective to understand the material that they will learn. Oxford Royale Academy(2017) mentioned that students should not feel that they have a limited method to learning something. Students can learn new and interesting information to improve their understanding and their exam scores. Students can search look for the most interesting topics. Then, they can find a simple method that can be tried or a different method of learning at school. This can further motivate students to understand the material in their own way.

**Creating a study group.** Forming study groups can bring a number of benefits to students. One of which is get a lot of information. Especially before the final exam, group learning becomes an alternative for the students to be able to learn and understand the material together. According to Susanti(2015), the group will give access to get information. Students may often skip classes so the material given by the teacher is not all stored. By having study group, students can get that information and maximize their learning.

Susanti (2015) also mentioned that having study groups, cooperation will begin. Learning alone might make the students feel difficult to determine the concept of learning. By having group learning, students will be able to fight together to be able to understand the material being studied. In addition, Susanti (2015) also mentioned that in study groups, everything can be discussed. Sometimes, if students learn by themselves, students will forget about the amount of

material to be learned. However, in group learning, students will be able to discuss all the material and find solutions to difficulties that might be encountered. Students can also practice with each other. In group learning, students will be able to practice each other answering and understanding material. Their friends can also teach about the knowledge they have. Students can also take advantage of group learning to relax. Group learning will reduce students' stress levels, because they can use the time to talk to each other and prepare for the exam together.

**Practicing.** The best way to prepare for an exam is to practice what students need to do in the exam. Although, the revision of notes and theory is clearly important, the students must be able to apply the theory to practical way, because it is tested. According to University of Tasmania (2016), students can try to gather with their fellow and take turns being "examiners" and "checking". This will test their knowledge and understanding of the material and skills. It is better to clarify in advance about what students are doing and not knowing and what they can and cannot do, rather than finding this for the first time in an actual test. Only by testing themselves and identifying gaps, students will know what to do. In addition, Silverman (2018) mentioned that students can practice as much as possible. The students can try to replicate as much as possible the conditions of the exam situation. They can find or make-up practice questions that are the type that will be on exam.

**Strengthening basic abilities.** Another thing that can be done by the students in preparing the national examination is by strengthening basic abilities. In this case, it will emphasize the skills seen during the English language test. Most people know that in English national exam for Junior High School, there are two very dominant skills, namely reading and listening. Both of these skills are called dominant skills for students because when students face a national exam they are only faced with reading questions and listening questions given through



audio, then students will circle the correct answer on the answer sheets that have been provided. Usually listening questions are done early or it can be said that listening questions are the first part of the national exam. In the second part students will read the questions to the last number and then circle the correct answers. In both of these skills, students must pay attention to grammar too, because in these two skills it is closely related to grammar. According to Safiera (2018), grammar is what is meant by linguistic elements in the grid above. To be able to work on the *Ujian Nasional* (UN) questions properly, students need to understand grammar. Safiera (2018) also mentioned that in English national examination, students do not only need to master the grammar, but they also need to master the vocabulary at a higher level. Since students are more tested by reading, students must read as much as possible. They can read comics, novels, or newspapers, or whatever, which is in English to make their brains get accustomed to read English. Besides that, they can start browsing the internet with keywords using English too. However, that is not enough. Safiera also mentioned that to make students get used to reading, students must know a number of things: do students understand the essence of what is being said, is there a difficult sentence, etc. Try experimenting with many text themes.

Safiera (2018) also added that usually in the listening section of English exam there would be short conversations (formal or informal) and monologues. Usually what is asked for in the English listening exam is the essence and specific information of what is being discussed, how we respond to conversations, look for images that match the conversation. Core questions such as asking topics, main ideas, general descriptions, or conclusions. That specific question is like what A said to B, where they are going, etc. The level of difficulty in structure and vocabulary will be lower compared to the reading section in the *Ujian Nasional* or UN. Although the level of difficulty is not structurally high, students still need to practice listening. This listening exercise

can facilitate students during the exam. The more intense they practice, the better their listening skills will be. They will be able to listen to questions well and they will not be nervous or shocked when they get exam questions. The listening exercise can be started from watching English films without subtitles. If students want a challenge, they can start listening to English news. In addition, students can try the exercises by looking at examples of listening sections or English language listening comprehension on YouTube. There are so many videos on YouTube and students can quickly adjust to the style of language and the types of questions about listening.

### **Review of Related Study**

In conducting this research, the researcher reviewed three previous studies related to this research. The researcher took two examples that have the same characteristics as this study. The first is the research done by Fiktorius (2013) that carry out an investigation with the main purpose of answering the question: To what extent is this test valid and reliable, the role, importance, and problem of the authenticity of the English National Examination. In addition, Fiktorius (2013) focused on content validity, reliability of test scores, and analysis of items from 50 items of MCQ (Multiple Choice Questions) in the 2012/2013 academic year. Fiktorius (2013) also said that this study was not to criticize the test designer but it was done to provide feedback on the quality of test items from the local context. In other side, this study was conducted to provide up-to-date information in the field of language testing. In addition, this research collects qualitative evidence and quantitative data from test scores, analyzes them, and attempts to interpret quantitative analysis.

The difference between the research conducted by Fiktorius (2013) and this research is quite clear. Fiktorius (2013) wants to see the validity and reliability of a question tested in the national examination. But in this study, the researcher focused on the strategies that students

make or create to pass the national exam itself. The similarity seen in both of these studies is in terms of the method used; both adopted quantitative method. This study used interviews as instruments while Fiktorius(2013) applied qualitative evidence and quantitative data from test scores. In addition, Fiktorius also analyzed them and interpreted quantitative analysis.

Secondly, the researcher reviewed a research conducted by Sugianto (2016). The purpose of Sugianto's (2016) study is to analyze the English National Final Examination for Junior High School. Validity and reliability are the two kinds of characteristics of a good test which are concerned. This study was analyzed by using the descriptive method. Content validity was analyzed by comparing the materials in the syllabus to the items of the test, and construct validity was analyzed by comparing the indicators in the syllabus to the items of the test. Additionally, the reliability was analyzed by using Kuder-Richardson Formula (KR20). The result of the study shows that the English National Final Examination for Junior High School was valid and reliable. The content validity shows 100% valid, and the construct validity shows 100% valid. While the reliability shows coefficient 0.89, and it is reliable. Hence, the English National Final Examination for Junior High School has fulfilled the characteristics of a good test.

The difference between Sugianto's(2016) study and this study is the research conducted by Sugianto explains the validity of a test that is tested for students. This study used the same method namely descriptive, but the data analyzed is different. For content validity, Sugianto(2016) analyzed it by comparing the materials in the syllabus to the items of the test, and construct validity was analyzed by comparing the indicators in the syllabus to the items of the test. For this research, the researcher only wanted to know students' strategies to prepare the national examination and how do the students implement the strategies. This study also

used descriptive method, but for the data obtained the researcher used interview and coding to analyze the data.

Third, research conducted by Sukyadi and Mardiani (2011). The research is titled *The Washback Effect of the English National Examination (ENE) on English Teachers' Classroom Teaching and Students' Learning*. This study discusses the effects of washback, both positive and negative. The existence of this national exam has been accompanied by heated debate and controversy. For the pros who believe that national exams can improve secondary education standards, while the cons argue that it will create unnecessary injustice and anxiety among students. This study attempts to explore the washback effect of the English National Examination in the context of Indonesian secondary education, involving three secondary schools that are categorized based on their national examination achievements. In this study, researchers used a qualitative method with three instruments at once, namely observation, interview and questionnaire.

The results showed that English teachers and students from the schools involved had different perceptions about the English national exam. The English National Examination has an impact on teacher teaching in aspects of: activity or time management, teaching materials, teaching content, teaching methods, teaching strategies, ways of assessing, and on students' feelings and attitudes. The English national exam also influences student learning in classrooms where teachers teach primarily to test, practice tests and develop test taking strategies.

The difference between Sukyadi and Mardiani (2011) research with this research is that Sukyadi and Mardiani (2011) discuss the effects of national exams felt by teachers and students, while this research focuses on strategies and implementing strategies that students have in facing national exams. Indeed, both of these studies discuss national examinations, but in a different

light. In addition, the similarities of the two studies are both using qualitative methods with interviews as instruments. However, research conducted by Sukyadi and Mardiani (2011) uses more than one instrument, besides interviews Sukyadi and Mardiani (2011) also uses observation and questionnaires.