ANALYZING DIFFICULTY LEVEL OF SUBJECTIVE TEST USED BY AN ENGLISH TEACHER

Desrin Lebagi, Nadrun, Darmawan

Abstract

This research is aimed at analyzing the difficulty level of subjective test made by an English teacher of SMA Negeri 1 Pendolo used in mid semester. The research used descriptive analysis. The population of this research was the Tenth grade students’ answer sheets. The sample of this research was selected through a cluster random sampling. As the result, students answer sheet in class A became the sample of this research. The instruments were in-depth interview and documentation. The respondent was an English teacher of SMA Negeri 1 Pendolo. The documents were the students’ answer sheet of subjective test in mid semester. The researcher found that the test items made by the teacher could be qualified in good test. There were 24 test items classified in several categories; there were 13 items classified in medium category, 6 items in easy category, 4 items in difficulty category and one item in the most difficult category. In conclusion, the test used by the teacher in mid semester can be categorized in good test in term of level of difficulty because most of items were in medium category.

Keywords: difficulty level; subjective test.

INTRODUCTION

English as foreign language has been taught in Indonesia for some decades. Some methods in English language teaching are applied in teaching-learning activities in the classroom. The methods that are still used such as Reading Method, Total Physical Response, Grammar Translation Method and Audio-lingual Method. All the methods above are provided to help the teacher in conducting the teaching process which is expected to be effective.

Procedure of evaluation constitutes an educational component which is indeed inherent in the instructional process. In this case, to realize its importance upon the whole instructional process, the government established it in Undang-Undang No. 2 Tahun 1989 in Ramlah (2004:1) about Sistem Pendidikan Nasional (National Education System) which states that evaluation needs to be conducted at learning activities and students’ result progression. This implies that evaluation should be at minimum and be an integral part of teaching process. Evaluation is very important in learning process. There are some
following tasks that should be done by a professional teacher, such as, planning, programming, organizing, actuating, controlling and evaluating.

Thoha (2003) pointed out that evaluation is needed after teaching the students. It means that evaluation is an important component that should be conducted by the teacher in the classroom after teaching and leaning activities. Testing is a form to evaluate students’ achievement that should be conducted by the teacher in the classroom. Without doing an evaluation, it is difficult to know students’ needs in learning English, and which methods are effective to be used in teaching English. Achievement in language teaching can be shown through students’ good grade in test. The test can be objective test and subjective test.

There are several kinds of tests that are conducted in school such as, formative test, summative test, mid test and final test. Formative test is a test given to the students to monitor their progress in learning progress and provide feedback for the students. It is conducted at the end of teaching and learning activities in the class. Summative test is given at the end of a unit which is intended to provide information for the teacher about student’s progress. Subjective test is one of effective test that applied in those test. Furthermore, mid test is a test that is administered in measuring students’ achievement in the middle of semester. Last, final test is a kind of test that is given at the end of semester.

As an important instrument to measure the students’ learning achievement, the test should be constructed to measure students achievement based on teaching objectives. Since test has important role in knowing the students’ achievement in learning, test should be prepared well. Suryabrata in Pabutungan (2009:2) points out, “a good test should has high validity and reliability, also appropriate difficulty level and discrimination value.”

Reffering to the description above, the researcher conducted the research untitled "Analyzing difficulty level of subjective test used by an English teacher of SMA Negeri 1 Pendolo”. The subjective test was the test that used by the teacher in measuring students’ achievement in mid test. The researcher would like to find out the difficulty level of the test used bu the teacher in mid test. The research was conducted at SMA Negeri 1 Pendolo. The researcher took SMA Negeri 1 Pendolo as the object of the research because this school still used subjective test in measuring students’ achievement especially in the Tenth Grade. She wanted to know that the English teacher in this school constructed good subjective test or not. Since the students of SMA Negeri 1 Pendolo find difficulty in subjective test, the problem statement was formulated in the following question: what is the difficulty level of subjective administered by an English teacher of SMA Negeri 1 Pendolo?
METHODOLOGY

In this study, the researcher applied descriptive analysis in analyzing the level of difficulty in subjective test designed by English teacher. Population is a group of individuals of the same species occupying a particular geographic area. Gay (1996:112) defines, “Population is the group of interest to the researcher, the group to which she or he would like the result of the study to be general”. The researcher took the students’ answer sheets of the Tenth grade students at SMA Negeri 1 Pendolo as the population of this research. It consists of three parallel classes, 10 A, 10 B and 10 C. The sample was taken from the population. Through the sample, we can describe the condition of population. Gay (1996:111) defines, “Sampling is the process of selecting a number of individuals for a study in such a way that individuals represent the larger group from which they were selected”. In this way, the researcher prepared three pieces of paper and printed the name of each class on some pieces of paper. Then all papers were folded and put in a small box. After that, the researcher shook them in a few seconds. Finally, the sample of this research was students’ answer sheet in Class A.

The instruments were documentation and in-depth interview with an English teacher of SMA Negeri 1 Pendolo. The desired data were collected by using the following procedures: 1) the researcher visited and asked permission to the English teacher as well as Head Master of the school. 2) Asked permission to the one of English teacher of SMA Negeri 1 Pendolo as an interviewee. 3) Distributed interview questions to the teacher. 4) Collected the test results of the students. 5) Listed the students who responded either correct or incorrect item in the table. 6) Applied the procedures of item analysis as follow:

1. Arranging all 30 test papers in order from the highest score to the lowest score.
2. Identifying an upper group and a lower group separately by selecting one fourth of the paper with the highest scores for the upper criterion group, and call this upper group, and four papers with the lowest scores for the lower criterion group, and call this the lower group. These two groups of papers will be used to perform the item analysis.
3. For each item, the researcher counted the number of students in the upper group who selected each alternative. Make the same count for the lower group.
4. Recording the count on a copy of a test or on a separate sheet.
5. Estimating item difficulty by determining the percentage of students who answer the item correctly. In this step, the researcher will apply procedures as follows:

   ➢ Summing the number of students in the upper and lower group.
Summing the number of students who selected the correct answer.

Dividing the first sum into the second one and multiply by 100.

The formula for computing item difficulty is as follows:

\[ P = \frac{R}{T} \times 100 \]

In which:
- \( P \) = the percentage who answer the item correctly.
- \( R \) = the number who answer the item correctly.
- \( T \) = the total number who answer the item.

(Tinambunan, 1988:138)

With some criteria as follows:

- \( > 0.10 \) = the most difficult
- \( 0.10 - 0.30 \) = difficult
- \( 0.31 - 0.70 \) = moderate
- \( 0.71 - 0.89 \) = easy
- \( 0.90 - 1.00 \) = the easiest

(Djiwandono, 2008:219)

**FINDINGS**

The data obtained by submitting students’ answer sheet in doing English subjective test administered in the Mid Semester academic year 2013 and interviewing an English teacher that provided the test. The researcher analyzed the data to get information about the quality of subjective test in term of difficulty level.

The researcher analyzed each test item as follow:
Table 1:
The students’ scores

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No</th>
<th>Initials</th>
<th>Scores</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Dev</td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Irm</td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Fer</td>
<td>89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Rah</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Ais</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Sil</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Bes</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Rth</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Sel</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Fen</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Sus</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Ek</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Arl</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Nur</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Vina</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Gd</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Ang</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Hen</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Yos</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2:
The students’ High scores

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No</th>
<th>Initials</th>
<th>Scores</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Ang</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Dev</td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Irm</td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Fer</td>
<td>89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Rah</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Ais</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Sil</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Bes</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Rth</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Sel</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Hen</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 3:
The students’ low scores

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No</th>
<th>Initials</th>
<th>Scores</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Fen</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Sus</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Ek</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Arl</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Nur</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Vin</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Gd</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Yos</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Based on the tabulating data above, the test items were analyzed to determine the difficulty level in each item as follows:

1. The question number 1 instructed the students to change the sentence from direct speech into indirect speech affirmative.
   a. I like the new bag.
   b. I am studying now.
   c. I went to Pendolo last month.

   **Point a:** \( P = \frac{15}{19} \times 100 = 78.94\% \)
   
   By looking at the criteria, this item can be categorized as *easy* category.

   **Point b:** \( P = \frac{13}{19} \times 100 = 68.42\% \)
   
   By looking at the criteria, this item can be classified as *moderate* category.

   **Point c:** \( P = \frac{13}{19} \times 100 = 68.42\% \)
   
   By looking at the criteria, this item can be classified as *moderate* category.

2. The question number 2 instructed the students to make the sentences by using when and while.
   a. Deni cry. Lita sleep.
   b. The students were fighting. The student was studying.
   c. The pupils learn English. The teacher teach.
Point a: \( P = \frac{R}{T} \times 100 = \frac{0}{19} \times 100 = 0 \%
= \frac{0}{100} = 0 \)

By looking at the criteria, this item can be classified as very difficult category. This item must be revised even omitted. It is too difficult for the students.

Point b: \( P = \frac{R}{T} \times 100 = \frac{15}{19} \times 100 = 78.94 \%
= \frac{78.94}{100} = 0.78 \)

By looking at the criteria, this item can be categorized as easy category.

Point c: \( P = \frac{R}{T} \times 100 = \frac{10}{19} \times 100 = 52.63 \%
= \frac{52.63}{100} = 0.52 \)

By looking at the criteria, this item is categorized as moderate category.

3. The question number three instructed the students to change the sentences from Bahasa Indonesia into English. After changing the sentences, these sentences should be changed into positive, negative and interrogative sentences.

   a. SayadanibunyaDenibekerjabersama-sama di kantorsetiaphari.

   b. IbunyaWawanbiasanyasibukdikantor.

Point a(+): \( P = \frac{R}{T} \times 100 = \frac{14}{19} \times 100 = 73.68 \%
= \frac{73.68}{100} = 0.73 \)

By looking at the criteria, this item is classified as easy category.

Point a(-): \( P = \frac{R}{T} \times 100 = \frac{8}{19} \times 100 = 42.10 \%
= \frac{42.10}{100} = 0.42 \)

By looking at the criteria, this item is classified as moderate category.

Point a(?): \( P = \frac{R}{T} \times 100 = \frac{13}{19} \times 100 = 68.42 \%
= \frac{68.42}{100} = 0.68 \)

By looking at the criteria, this item is classified as moderate category.

Point b(+): \( P = \frac{R}{T} \times 100 = \frac{14}{19} \times 100 = 73.68 \%
= \frac{73.68}{100} = 0.73 \)

By looking at the criteria, this item is classified as easy category.

Point b(-): \( P = \frac{R}{T} \times 100 = \frac{15}{19} \times 100 = 78.94 \% \)
By looking at the criteria, this item is classified as easy category.

Point b(?): \[ P = \frac{R}{T} \times 100 = \frac{15}{19} \times 100 = 78.94\% \]

\[ = \frac{78.94}{100} = 0.78 \]

By looking at the criteria, this item is classified as easy category.

4. The question number four instructed the students to make the sentences by using “must and have to”. After making the sentences, the sentences should be changed into negative, positive and interrogative sentences.

   a. Ibukuharusmemasaksetiaphari.
   b. Saudaralaki-lakikuharussarapansetiappagi.
   c. Budi danWatiharusistrahatmalamini.
   d. Deniharusispergisekarang.

Point a(+): \[ P = \frac{R}{T} \times 100 = \frac{13}{19} \times 100 = 68.42\% \]

\[ = \frac{68.42}{100} = 0.68 \]

By looking at the criteria, this item is classified as moderate category.

Point a(-): \[ P = \frac{R}{T} \times 100 = \frac{12}{19} \times 100 = 63.15\% \]

\[ = \frac{63.15}{100} = 0.63 \]

By looking at the criteria, this item is classified as moderate category.

Point a(?): \[ P = \frac{R}{T} \times 100 = \frac{11}{19} \times 100 = 57.89\% \]

\[ = \frac{57.89}{100} = 0.57 \]

By looking at the criteria, this item is classified as moderate category.

Point b(+): \[ P = \frac{R}{T} \times 100 = \frac{12}{19} \times 100 = 63.15\% \]

\[ = \frac{63.15}{100} = 0.63 \]

By looking at the criteria, this item is classified as moderate category.

Point b(-): \[ P = \frac{R}{T} \times 100 = \frac{13}{19} \times 100 = 68.42\% \]

\[ = \frac{68.42}{100} = 0.68 \]

By looking at the criteria, this item is classified as moderate category.

Point b(?): \[ P = \frac{R}{T} \times 100 = \frac{8}{19} \times 100 = 42.10\% \]
= \frac{42.10}{100} = 0.42

By looking at the criteria, this item is classified as moderate category.

Point c(+) : \[ P = \frac{R}{T} \times 100 = \frac{9}{19} \times 100 = 47.36\% \]

= \frac{47.36}{100} = 0.47

By looking at the criteria, this item is classified as moderate category.

Point c(-) : \[ P = \frac{R}{T} \times 100 = \frac{9}{19} \times 100 = 47.36\% \]

= \frac{47.36}{100} = 0.47

By looking at the criteria, this item is classified as moderate category.

Point c(?) : \[ P = \frac{R}{T} \times 100 = \frac{5}{19} \times 100 = 26.31\% \]

= \frac{26.31}{100} = 0.26

By looking at the criteria, this item is classified as difficult category.

Point d(+) : \[ P = \frac{R}{T} \times 100 = \frac{5}{19} \times 100 = 26.31\% \]

= \frac{26.31}{100} = 0.26

By looking at the criteria, this item is classified as difficult category.

Point d(-) : \[ P = \frac{R}{T} \times 100 = \frac{4}{19} \times 100 = 21.05\% \]

= \frac{21.05}{100} = 0.21

By looking at the criteria, this item is classified as difficult category.

Point d(?) : \[ P = \frac{R}{T} \times 100 = \frac{3}{19} \times 100 = 15.78\% \]

= \frac{15.78}{100} = 0.15

By looking at the criteria, this item is classified as difficult category.

In obtaining the data, the researcher distributed 10 questions to the teacher. The questions and the answers are written in the table below:
### Table 4: Result of Interview

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No</th>
<th>Questions</th>
<th>Answers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>What do you think about subjective test and objective test?</td>
<td>Both of them are good, but subjective test is appropriate to know how far the students achieve the material by looking at their writing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>jective test. In subjective they can explore what in their mind. Whether or not they understand the material taught. Besides, the teacher not only can measure their achievement in the material, but also know students’ previous knowledge.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Which one is effective to measure students’ achievement subjective or objective test? Why?</td>
<td>Both of them are effective to be used, but for beginner students with their different school background, it very recommended to apply subjective test. In subjective they can explore what in their mind. Whether or not they understand the material taught. Besides, the teacher not only can measure their achievement in the material, but also know students’ previous knowledge.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>How do you construct a subjective test for the students?</td>
<td>The teacher constructs a subjective test based on the material he taught. He arranged the item from the easiest item until the most difficult item.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>How long that you need in constructing a test?</td>
<td>It was not take a long time for the teacher to provide the test for the students. He only needed about 2 hours to provide the test.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>How do you put level of difficulty in constructing a subjective test?</td>
<td>The teacher put the level of difficulty in words selection. Sometime, he used strange words for the students.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Why should level of difficulty need to put in a test?</td>
<td>He said that, “difficulty level needs to put in a test, subjective test or objective test because difficulty level is one of term to show how qualify the test itself.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>What is your problem in testing students’ achievement?</td>
<td>In doing the test, sometime the time was over, but still many blank sheets left.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>How did you solve it?</td>
<td>He would give additional time. If the students could not use the time well, of course it must be influence their score. So that, the teacher would suggest additional assignment to cover up students’ score.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>What is the advantage of subjective test?</td>
<td>The teacher argued that subjective test is easy to construct. Besides, the result will inform him how far students comprehend the material taught. It can reduce guessing in</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
10. What is the disadvantage of subjective test? Subjective test is difficult to score. It needs many time to score students answer sheet.

11. Why subjective test only given to the Tenth grade? The teacher argued that subjective test only give to Tenth grade rather than Eleventh and Twelve grades because it is the agreement in teachers’ meeting. Furthermore, objective test given to the Eleventh and Twelve grades because they are prepared to National Examination.

12. In evaluating comprehension, do you use your own test (teacher made test) or the test is taken from the book? The teacher pointed out that in conducting evaluation, he used his own test, but sometime If he find some items in the book related to the material that will be tested, then he take them as the parts of his test.

13. Referring to difficulty level, do you know any formula in computing the level of difficulty in each item of your test? Referring to the formula in computing level of difficulty, the teacher pointed out that he does not have any formula.

14. How do you know that your own test is easy or difficult? The teacher pointed out that in concerning the quality of the test by looking at students’ score. If an item can be answered by 50% students, then he can conclude that the item is good. If the items can be answered by the most students, the he can conclude that the item is easy.

15. What did you do if you find some items that could not be answered by the students? If the teacher finds some items that could not be answered by the students, he will explain more the material. It means that they still confused about those materials.

16. Referring to the test given to the students in the mid test, what do you think about the quality of the test in term of difficulty level? The teacher stated that by looking at their scores, he can conclude that his test is good. Since the most students got high score.

Beside collecting students’ answer sheet and interviewing the teacher, the researcher asked four students about their problem in doing the test. The first student argued that there were too many items in the test. Even though there were only four numbers in the test, but each number have several parts. The second student said that she found many new words in
the test. Student 3 said, “The time is not enough to cover all items.” Student 4 argued that she got confused in the using of *do, does, did, have to* and *has to*.

**DISCUSSION**

The analysis of the students’ answer sheets above show that from 24 items there are 13 items (54%) which are categorized in moderate category, 6 (25 %) items are categorized in easy category, 4 (16%) items are categorized in difficult category, and there is only 1 item (4 %) which is categorized in the most difficult category. Arikunto (2012) defined that test can be concerned as a good and satisfactory test if the test is not too easy and not too difficult for the students. It means that, the test that is used to measure students’ achievement should not too easy and not too difficult for students. Ebel (1986) pointed out that the recommendation is frequently made that they include only those test items with midrange level of difficulty between 40 and 70 percent. Therefore, the test used by the teacher in mid test can be categorized in good test because the most items are in moderate category and the percentage is in midrange of 40 and 70 percent.

Beside collecting and analyzing students’ answer sheets, the researcher also interviewed an English teacher of SMA Negrei 1 Pendolo. In SMA Negeri 1 Pendolo subjective test was only given to the tenth grade students. It based on the agreement in teachers meeting. Besides, objective test was given to the eleventh and twelfth grades because they were prepared to face National Examination. They should be familiar with that type of test. In testing the students the teacher did not only use his own test, but also took it from test book.

Related to the analysis of test quality especially in term of level of difficulty, the teacher stated that he does not have any formula to analyze his test. He concerned his test quality only based on students’ score in doing the test. If the test can be answered by a half of students in that class, then he concluded that his test was good. The teacher concerned that his test in mid test was good because most students got high score in mid test.

After scoring students’ answer sheet, the teacher got information that there are some items in his own test that could not be answered by the students. Therefore, the teacher re-explained the material in order to make the students understand that material. Since evaluation conducted does not only measure students’ achievement in learning activities, but also be a tool to see how successful the teacher teaching in the class.

Having the fact of test quality in term of difficulty level analysis in a test, two researchers of previous researches conducted the research to analyze the difficulty level in a
test. Ramlah (2004) conducted the research that was aimed at analyzing the difficulty level, the distractor and the discrimination value in a test. Furthermore, Pabutungan (2009) also conducted the research that was aimed at analyzing the difficulty level in a test. Both previous researches above were aimed at analyzing the difficulty level in objective test. Similar to those researches, in this current research the researcher also conducted the research to analyze the difficulty level in a test, but the test that was analyzed was subjective test.

**CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION**

Based on the result and discussion, the researcher concludes that the test made by an English teacher of SMA Negeri 1 Pendolo can be classified in good test because the most items in the test can be answered by a half of students in the class. From 24 items there are 13 items which are categorized in medium category, 6 items are categorized in easy category, 4 items are categorized in difficult category, and there is only 01 item which is categorized in the most difficult category.

Referring to the importance of Language Testing especially the difficulty level in a test, the researcher would like to offer some earnest ideas or suggestions to the teacher, students at Teacher Training and Education Faculty, and Education and Culture Department (Depdikbud). First, a good teacher does not only design and distribute the test, but also needs to know how good their own test is. After getting and scoring the students’ answer sheet, he or she may know the quality of the test by applying some criteria of difficulty level. Then in designing a test, the test should not contain too many items. The test should be appropriate with the available of time. The test should not be too easy and not too difficult. Second, Students who are studying at Tadulako University especially in Teacher Training and Education Faculty must pay more attention to the subject of language testing. Last but not least, in doing training program for the teacher (Program Pelatihan Guru guru), the Education Department should not only increase how the teacher provide the material, how to teach in the classroom, and how to conduct an evaluation, but also need to give more information how to analyze the quality of their own test.

**REFERENCES**


