

## **Chapter One**

### **Introduction**

This chapter explains the introduction of the research. There are several points being discussed in this chapter. The first point is the background of the study. It explains the reason to investigate students' perception on the use of multiple-choice questions. The second point is the identification of the problems which is related to the multiple-choice questions. This chapter also describes the delimitation of the problems, research questions, research objectives, significance of the research, and the organization of the chapters.

### **Background of the Study**

In terms of education, either both in studying English and any other subject, reading comprehension is a fundamental base on the excellence of one's academic. It is due to the fact that reading comprehension indicates someone's complete mastery over sequentially developed concepts and principles of a subject being read. Tang et al. (2019) specifically defines reading comprehension as the ability to process a text, comprehend the meaning of the text, and integrate the text with the reader's prior knowledge and experience. Students' ability to comprehend a text is influenced by their cognitive abilities as well as their ability to organize and process the information. In a learning situation, reading comprehension needs to be tested and measured in order to evaluate students' learning outcomes and to gain useful information regarding to students' achievement.

To measure the reading comprehension, there should be an assessment. Assessment is a process of acquiring information on the objectives or goals (Kizlik, 2012). There are several written formats utilized by the teachers to assess reading comprehension skills, for instance multiple-choice questions test, short answer test, fill-in-the-blank, and essay. Among several formats used for assessment, the most prevalent format used to assess reading comprehension

by teachers in Indonesia is multiple-choice questions. It is supported by *Pusat Penilaian Pendidikan* (2019) that utilized multiple-choice questions were simplified the scoring system for the teacher. Cheung and Bucat (2002) claim multiple-choice questions as one of the most popular formats used in educational assessment. The features of a multiple-choice question include a problem and a list of possible solutions (Miller et al., 2009). The point of the items is the problem, which can be expressed as a direct question or an incomplete statement. Meanwhile, the recommended answers, which can consist of words, numbers, symbols, or phrases, are referred as the distractors. The options commonly consist of four to five in one question.

In conducting assessments, Indonesian schools follow the rules from the government. In curriculum 2013, the assessment of reading comprehension testing formats includes multiple-choice questions. This question pattern is always used specifically in summative assessments throughout Indonesia. On the other hand, the newest decree of the Indonesian Minister of Education and Culture No.1 2021 which covers the implementation of school assessment, it was stated that the assessment at the end of semester are intended to promote meaningful learning activities and are not required to assess overall material success. Although, multiple-choice questions are used to assess overall material, which contradicts to the assessment purpose that was stated above. It has also become arguable that the assessment does not include the other type of alternative test format even if multiple-choice questions determined to have flaws in assessing students reading ability.

The use of multiple-choice questions also affected the students' attitudes towards the learning process. According to Palmer (2004), the assessment method selected by the teacher affects the learning habits of the student. The effect of those assessment is called wash-back. According to Brown (2004), wash-back is the effect of assessment related to the teaching and learning before to the assessment, and it includes test preparation. Students may tend to

underestimate the assessment, which may decrease their willingness to learn the material for the assessment; on the other hand, students may feel under pressure, which may affect the outcome. Furthermore, Brown (2004) mention two types of wash-back which commonly known as wash-back direction: positive and negative. Negative wash-back refers to the negative effect on teaching and learning of a particular test. It also refers to a terrible test which the teacher or student are forced to teach or learn something they do not want to, and it is related to the material mismatch as well. Another wash-back is positive wash-back which both teachers and students have a good attitude towards the test, and they are motivated to reach the goals. Hence, it is important to acknowledge the effect of assessment that using multiple-choice questions, whether it gives positive or negative wash-back to the students.

Despite of its simplicity in the use of assessment, multiple-choice questions format is considered to have great chances for students guessing the answers instead of actually comprehending the concepts and choosing the most suitable answers. As multiple-choice is one of the most-used formats, it has to be examined for its effect in order to be approved of its success in measuring students' reading comprehension. Since the students are the test takers who are mostly affected by the test formats, it is important to explore their perception on the multiple-choice questions to know the effect of multiple-choice questions.

Additionally, the students may have expectations towards the multiple-choice questions to be more suitable for them and it can be considered to approach the appropriate assessment.

Therefore, this study intended to find out the students' perception based on their experiences on the use of multiple-choice questions and their expectations towards the multiple-choice questions to assess their reading comprehension.

### **Identification of the Problems**

Assessment is an essential part in teaching and learning process. Students take an assessment after getting the material from the teacher in order to measure their competence.

As summarized by Pearson and Hamm (2005), reading comprehension was shown to have many components that appeared based on the formats used to present the reading material and how the individual was asked to demonstrate their understanding of the material that was read in an early study. To assess reading comprehension skills, there are several varieties of the test format and the most common format is multiple-choice question.

The use of multiple-choice questions increases the students' tendency to guess the correct answer for the questions. It can affect the outcome of the assessment which may result in negative wash-back, as it gives a negative attitude from the students. However, the outcome of the assessment may raise the doubt on their ability to comprehend the material.

Additionally, the practicality of multiple-choice questions has been questioned since the time-consuming factor becomes a concern since students completed the assessments longer of schedule. A total questions, the length of questions, and stems may be affect the students' attitudes toward the multiple-choice questions. It is possibly happening because of several factors, for instance, the students did not read the question and answer it by guessing.

It becomes the questions regarding to the practical use in the classroom and the purpose of assessment which should be heard from students' perception. Therefore, it is important to investigate the reliable multiple-choice questions to assess reading comprehension skills specifically from the students' perception.

### **Delimitation of the Problem**

This study focused on the use of multiple-choice questions in the assessment. There are two types of assessment; they are formative and summative. This study only focused on the students' perception on the multiple-choice questions in assessing their summative assessment and their expectations towards the multiple-choice questions. The summative assessment in this study is the English assessment that occurs at the end of a course to assess students' understanding of the regular material. In other words, the assessment chosen is the

final semester assessment. The summative assessment using multiple-choice questions is important to investigate since its scores are taken for evaluating school reports. Therefore, this research focused on the multiple-choice questions that have been applied to assess students' reading comprehension skills in Class XII. This research was limited to be conducted in one of senior high schools at East Belitung and the research was conducted using a qualitative research approach.

### **Research Questions**

This research has the following research questions:

1. How do the students perceive the multiple-choice questions in assessing their reading comprehension?
2. What is the students' expectation towards the multiple-choice questions to assess reading comprehension?

### **Objectives of the Research**

Based on the research questions, this research has the following objectives:

1. To investigate the students' perception on the multiple-choice questions in assessing reading comprehension.
2. To find out the students' expectation towards the multiple-choice questions to assess reading comprehension.

### **Significance of the Research**

This research aims to be useful for some parties, including teachers, pre-service teachers, and other researchers.

For teachers, this research may provide some new information and facts about the reality of multiple-choice questions used to assess reading comprehension. Furthermore, this study can be beneficial for teachers as an evaluation on their assessment in order to generate a

complete picture where development is needed and related to the manifestation of the gap between such skill and the practice of the multiple-choice questions.

For pre-service teachers, this research may give useful information for their future teaching experience, especially in preparing assessments as part of the teaching and learning process. The findings of this study may impact the pre-service teachers' choices and considerations to build suitable development of educational evaluation format in assessing students' reading comprehension skills.

For other researchers, this research findings would add some information about the use of Multiple-Choice questions for reading comprehension assessment. It could be useful to other researchers who want to look at multiple-choice questions in a wider population. Furthermore, other researchers can utilize the findings of this research as a theoretical overview for the future research on the same topic and being encouraged to conduct similar studies in the future.

### **Organization of the Chapters**

This research contains five chapters. Chapter one discusses the background of the research, identification of the research, delimitation of the problem, research questions, objectives of the research, significance of the research, and organization of the research. Chapter two discusses students' perception on how the students perceive the multiple-choice questions in assessing their reading comprehension and their expectations towards the multiple-choice questions. The purpose of this chapter is to support the researcher's arguments related to the multiple-choice questions and reading comprehension. Several expert statements provided in this chapter are designed to convince the readers toward the explanation appeared in this research.

Chapter three explains the methodology of this research. It discusses about research design as well as the setting and participants. Then, there is the data collection technique that

looks into the process of gathering information and data analysis that describes the steps involved in examining the data. Chapter four discusses the findings and discussion of the findings. There are five findings in this research which answered the first research questions and two findings which answered the second research questions. The last, there are two parts in chapter five. The first part is conclusion. It summarizes the research. The second part is recommendation. It provides recommendation to various parties, including teachers, pre-service teachers, and other researchers, especially in order to accomplish a better research in the future.