

# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background of the Study

Language learning should aim to equip students to act in a real-life situation. It will enable them to express their selves and attain tasks or activities in different natures. As an essential components in the process of teaching and learning, authentic assessment is now widely promoted as activities that consist of replicas of the real professional world. Huang and Jiang (2021) mention that authentic assessment has a potential to close the gaps among learning in school, the world of profession and everyday life context. The use of authentic assessment is expected to stimulate students to improve their language skills and communication in authentic context. It highlights more on improving students' knowledge, comprehension, and critical thinking by providing them a real-world task which is able to show significant application of their knowledge and skills. In this context, authentic assessment emphasizes what students can do with English in an authentic context rather than just evaluating their knowledge.

As it is stated by Butakor and Ceasar (2021), authentic assessment is a process which applies actual proof of students' learning, achievements, motivation, and attitudes related to instructional classroom activities. It aims to provide input on students' learning to encourage further improvement of their knowledge, comprehension, and critical thinking that could be used to imitate a real-world situation. Zaim et al., (2020) describe that authentic assessment refers to a process

that aims to report students' progress and obtain various regular information on students' learning progress and outcomes. Several scholars in authentic practices argue that in order to encourage students' improvement, it is crucial to promote the use of authentic assessment in language learning which is aligned with authentic instructions in class and target competencies (Biggs & Tang, 2007; Gulikers et al., 2007). Due to its importance, authentic assessment turns into one of the prerequisites of Merdeka Curriculum in Indonesian education. As it is explained on "*Peraturan Menteri Pendidikan, Kebudayaan, Riset, Dan Teknologi Republik Indonesia no 21 tahun 2022*", teachers are required to implement authentic assessment as one of the processes in assessing students' language skills. It is also explained that teachers are expected to implement authentic assessment which focuses more on students' performance or product in language learning.

Furthermore, the teachers need to check their performance of speaking or product in writing in a detail way. Accordingly, those all required students' skills which are mentioned in the Merdeka Curriculum or "Merdeka Belajar" could not be assessed by pencil and paper test only or others test such as mid-term exam and final assessment test. Butakor and Ceasar (2021) argue that the traditional type of assessment frequently fails to observe further types of learning and it could not optimally view students' changes of their knowledge. It is because the students are not given opportunities to apply their knowledge or understanding. Meanwhile, it is only effective to measure students' acquisition of knowledge. Thereby the need to apply authentic assessment particularly in language learning is now considered a new mode of assessment. In consequence, teachers are suggested to engage the

students with authentic assessment to better prepare students for the unexpected future world in the 21<sup>st</sup> century after leaving the school.

As the key actor in the language teaching and learning process, teachers need to be able to fully understand the concept and practice of authentic assessment. Teachers play essential role in the language learning process as assessor who are expected to assess the students well. O'Malley and Pierce in Butakor and Ceasar (2021) indicate that teachers need to have proper understanding and positive perception of authentic assessment so that it is prepared and applied effectively. Similarly, possessing clear understanding and perception of authentic assessment can steer and direct teachers' own teaching or practice. Yanti (2020) argues that teachers' perception and classroom practices are closely interconnected due to its perception is the reflection of their classroom practices. As it was revealed by Imansyah et al., (2018), teachers had good enough perception about authentic assessment meanwhile their understanding and practices seemed to be limited because there were some problems in implementing authentic assessment. This was supported by Dharma and Adiwijaya (2019) who revealed that teachers' readiness was average in planning and not ready in executing and reporting authentic assessment due 3 main reasons faced by the teachers namely insufficient of authentic assessment understanding, lack of experiences in designing authentic assessment, and lack of discussion about authentic assessment among others teachers who already joined authentic assessments' workshop.

Additionally, in Merdeka Curriculum, authentic assessment refers to a process which reflects on real-world activities or problems. Zaim (2017) argues that

in Merdeka Curriculum, teachers are expected to encourage students to think critically, have interpersonal skills, right attitude, knowledge, and psychomotor skills related to the need of the life. As it is mentioned by Sihombing et al., (2021) and Prahani et al., (2020), the concept of “Merdeka Belajar” is a response to the needs of education’s system in the era of industrial revolution 4.0 which requires students to have critical thinking, problem solving skills, and be creative and innovative. Moreover, it is also mentioned that authentic assessment concerns not only assessing students’ knowledge but also emphasizing on what students can do with their knowledge. This could be assumed that authentic assessment is also strongly appropriate to be applied by the teachers in improving students’ speaking and writing skills.

According to Galata (2021), speaking and writing are categorized into productive skill because students need to produce the language. Productive skills are essential because through writing and speaking, the teachers can observe the evidence of the language acquisition. Teachers will have more evidences of the students’ progress in language learning if they could produce the language in both written or spoken language (Galata, 2021). Similarly, in the language learning setting, those two skills are used as the evidence to check how capable are the students learning the language. Then, being able to master productive skills can be explained as the creation of practical things needed in all aspects. Speaking and writing can be mentioned as the skills that can be assigned as students’ performance which are more visible to be observed. Thus, for assessing students’ productive

skills, authentic assessment is a precise method to measure students' abilities and skills.

Consequently, teachers' perception of authentic assessment is an essential point that should be considered in the classroom practice as it reflects on how they implement the authentic assessment in their teaching practice. For this reason, a study concerning authentic assessment is still valuable and crucial to be explored since it is supposed to be applied in Indonesia educational curriculum based on Merdeka curriculum. However, in order to have in-depth exploration of authentic assessment, its planning and implementation also needed to be explored not only teachers' perception. As one of the senior high schools in Denpasar regency, SMAN 1 Denpasar implemented Merdeka Curriculum. Based on the preliminary observation, some points of view were found about authentic assessment for assessing students' productive skills. It was found the teachers implemented authentic assessment in Merdeka Curriculum. It was also revealed that among 4 language skills, they just frequently assessed two skills namely speaking and writing skill or known as productive skills. Moreover, the teachers have applied authentic assessment since Education Unit Level Curriculum; however, it has not been implemented ideally in assessing students' productive skills as the way to show students' performance and product in language learning. This was supported by some of them who stated that authentic assessment did not run effectively because of the complexity and time.

Moreover, it was also due to the condition after Covid-19 Pandemic which caused a condition of the learning loss. Therefore, the application of Merdeka

Curriculum has been started to be applied as a response to recondition the learning and to improve the existing system (*Kebijakan Pemerintah Terkait Kurikulum Merdeka*, 2023). Additionally, in new paradigm of learning and due to the changes of new curriculum, it also affects the system of assessment. Merdeka Curriculum carries out the assessment which is directed at an ongoing assessment such as authentic assessment (Pantiwati et al., 2023). As consequence, the teachers at SMAN 1 Denpasar applied authentic assessment as a response of the points in Merdeka Curriculum. However, since the implementation of Merdeka Curriculum was conducting gradually, then it was only applied for the students in 10<sup>th</sup> grade. Therefore, the teachers who were teaching students in 10<sup>th</sup> grade, have been starting to maximize and focus on the application of authentic assessment for assessing students' language skills particularly productive skills. Then, one thing that cannot be disconnected was in the realm of assessment. Teachers were expected to conduct assessment authentically and innovatively since Merdeka Curriculum provides opportunities for them to obtain freedom to teach and assess students' learning outcomes. Furthermore, several previous studies, Mardjuki (2018), Atmarizon and Efendi (2019), Rukmini and Saputri (2017) identified the authentic assessment for assessing students' language skills in K13 Curriculum which focused on the assessment for 3 assessment aspects such as attitude, cognitive, and skills. Meanwhile, according to Susanti et al., (2023), the assessment in Merdeka Curriculum focuses on the authentic assessment particularly in the project of strengthen the students' profile of Pancasila.

Related to this issue, this study was conducted to explore teachers' perception of authentic assessment and its practices, including planning and implementation for assessing productive skills of 10<sup>th</sup> grade senior high school students in Merdeka Curriculum.

## **1.2 Problems Identification**

The use of authentic assessment is necessary to be applied in English language learning since it allows the students to apply their knowledge in authentic classroom activities and prepare them to be ready in facing problems in real-life situation and future career life. This is also supported by the new curriculum in Indonesia namely Merdeka Curriculum or it is known as “Merdeka Belajar” as the response of the education' challenges in digital era and a learning loss experienced after the Covid-19 Pandemic. Consequently, it is suggested that the teachers engage with the authentic assessment which becomes one of the concerns in Merdeka Curriculum. Furthermore, teachers are expected to have clear understanding of authentic assessment so that they can assess the students well and assist the students to improve their language skills. Besides, the clear and positive perception of authentic assessment is also important due to it is able to direct them into its implementation. Therefore, teachers' planning and implementation of authentic assessment are also essential parts which should be considered by the teacher so that it can be implemented effectively and meaningfully to the students. Preliminary observation showed that 2 teachers at SMAN 1 Denpasar were actively implementing authentic assessment for assessing students' productive skills. However, teachers' perceptions about authentic assessment and the planning and

the implementation of authentic assessment have not identified yet. One of the aspects of the success of the curriculum can be noticed through the result of assessment activities in learning. One of the assessments which can be seen is authentic assessment. It can be displayed through teachers' perception, the preparation or planning, and also the implementation. Thus, this study arises to investigate English teachers' perception of authentic assessment for assessing students' productive skills and how authentic assessment were planned and implemented.

### **1.3 Research Questions**

Based on the background of the study, the research questions are stated as follows

1. How do the English teachers at SMAN 1 Denpasar perceive the authentic assessment practices for assessing students' productive skills in Merdeka Curriculum?
2. How do English teachers at SMAN 1 Denpasar plan authentic assessment for assessing students' productive skills in Merdeka Curriculum?
3. How do English teachers at SMAN 1 Denpasar implement authentic assessment for assessing students' productive skills in Merdeka Curriculum?



#### **1.4 Purposes of the Study**

Based on the statements of the problem, the purpose of the study can be stated as follow

1. To describe English teachers' perceptions at SMAN 1 Denpasar about authentic assessment for assessing students' productive skills in Merdeka Curriculum.
2. To describe how the English teachers at SMAN 1 Denpasar plan authentic assessment for assessing students' productive skills in Merdeka Curriculum.
3. To describe how the English teachers at SMAN 1 Denpasar implement authentic assessment for assessing students' productive skills in Merdeka Curriculum.

#### **1.5 Significances of the Study**

The significance of the study is viewed from two perspectives such as theoretical significance and practical significance

##### **1.5.1 Theoretical Significance**

This study is expected to contribute to theoretical understanding of authentic assessment particularly in the implementation of Merdeka Curriculum and teachers' understanding about authentic assessment particularly about teachers' perception, planning, and implementation of authentic assessment in senior high school. The result of this study provided some insights about the planning and implementation of authentic assessment for assessing students' writing and speaking skills. The result can be utilized as a source, reference or reflection by the teachers or the stakeholders to conduct an effective authentic assessment. Thus, it

can explore the theoretical frameworks and pedagogical knowledge needed for teachers to design and implement authentic assessment practices effectively and promote their professional development.

### **1.5.2 Practical Significance**

a. For Teacher

The result of this study is expected to be a meaningful and helpful for teachers in senior high school in planning and implementing authentic assessment in English language teaching. This is also expected can be a way to improve quality of teaching and assessment process in the language learning.

b. For Stakeholders

The result of this study is expected to be a reference for curriculum specialists or education researchers to inform the development of curriculum and guide the design of instructional materials, teaching modules, and assessments that promote the development of students' productive skills, writing and speaking skill.

c. For Other Researchers

This study is expected to provide a contribution for further studies with different or modified interest or areas. The other researchers can investigate teachers' perception and practices in authentic assessment which provide insights to teachers' professional development needs, challenges, effective strategies of authentic assessment in diverse educational settings