

# **CHAPTER I**

## **INTRODUCTION**

This chapter, the researcher presents background of study, research question, objective of the study, significance of the study, scope of the study, and previous of the study.

### **A. Background of Study**

One aim of education for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills is to develop the problem solving, critical thinking and higher order thinking skills. Higher order thinking skill basically means a thinking that is taking place in the higher levels of the hierarchy of cognitive processing. Ramos (2013) stated that the most broadly acknowledged various leveled course of action of this sort in education is the Bloom Taxonomy, viewing a continuum of thinking skills starting with knowledge-level thinking to evaluation-level of thinking.

The current trend of using standardized test is motivated by desire to improve public education. In Indonesia, the government has a policy that every student has to participate in a national examination. Through this exam, it will be determined whether a student is ready to leave the school and receive the graduation certificate. The government believes that a standardized national examination can improve the quality of education since the students and the schools will try hard to meet the demand of the

examination. However, education deals with human beings and the process of education are not like the production process in factories.

The examination is based on the accumulation of knowledge and skills mastered by the students during the process and the items of the test have been carefully framed on certain statistical considerations. Consequently, the examination measures not the whole achievement of the students. The process of education, considers human beings as unique creatures with diverse and dynamic personalities. Their achievement cannot simply be measured by a test.

There are three main subjects which are tested in national examination in Indonesia; Indonesia Language, English, and Mathematics. It will be added with other subjects based on the students' major, so that there will be four subjects tested in national examination. English is one of those subjects which play an important role in affecting the students' score. Since the passing grade of students is getting higher, all of English teachers compete to increase the students' skill of English to pass the examination.

In addition, national examination as interesting topic that never ends, because there are many pros and cons from various group. Since, the implementation of National Examination in 2005 till final national examination continued to change. The national examination has been the subject of controversy since it was first established and has a lot of negative backwash in contrary with the main goals of increasing education quality in Indonesia. It became notorious for answer key leakage, cheating, fraud, and corruption. Some argue that the exam is too demanding for students. Schools

were forced to allocate more time for preparing the students, putting a significant workload on both teachers and students.

The National Exam failure rate is usually very low. Critics argue that it does not give an accurate portrayal of the Indonesian students' real competency because of problems with cheating and other issues. The 2010 National Exam fail rate for middle and high school was unusually high. Additionally, there was an increase question difficulty and the cutoff score was raised. There were National Exam retests held in 2009 and 2010, but any further retests were discontinued the following year.

However, cheating is very rampant, because of the huge pressure to passing the exam. To deter cheating, National Exam question variation had increased for middle and high school, from one to five in 2011, and from five to 20 in 2013. Other measures are inclusion of barcode in 2013 partly to determine question variation codes and to tackle cheating. Even then, cheating still occurs.

In 2013, National Exam for high school are delayed in 11 provinces because of printing and packing confusion and errors. It was attributed to increase of question variation. Schools are forced to self-copy the question papers. Some demanded the Education and Culture Minister, [Mohammad Nuh](#), to resign.

In addition, Indonesia has changed education curriculum. This alternation is aimed to improve education quality. Because curriculum is a tool which has concept and certain purposes in order to make educational dreams

come true. Since July 2013, Indonesian Government decided to launch 2013 curriculum in some level of schools. Those are Elementary School, Junior High School, and Senior High School. There are five steps of scientific approaches in teaching and learning process; observing, questioning, exploring, associating, and communicating, those scientific approaches also related with the higher order thinking skill.

Furthermore, based on the research done by Program of International Students Assessment (PISA) in 2015, the ability of students in Indonesia at the age range of 15 years is still below average. These abilities include the ability in science, reading and mathematics. Indonesia was one that has the lowest level reading performance. It might happened because of the fact that Indonesia students are poorly trained to deal with condition that need contextual problems, reasoning, argumentation, and creativity which are the characteristic of HOTS.<sup>1</sup> Therefore, the goverment want to improve the quality of standart of students.

Since 2016, the Ministry of Education and Culture of which Indonesia revised 2013 curriculum which called as 2013 curriculum revised edition. In this curriculum, the students are needed to think deeply in other to develop their cognitive competence by practicing in solving some problems or questions in higher other thinking skill or commonly as HOTS. In 2013 curriculum for SMP/MTs stated that Higher OrderThinking Skill (HOTS) is the ability of

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<sup>1</sup> M.Z Fanani, "Strategy Pengembangan Soal-Higher-Order Thinking Skills (HOTS) dalam kurikulum 2013", *Eduudeena Journal of Islam Religious Education*, Vol 2 No. 1 (2018), 57-76.

students how they can convey one concept to another, how to process and how to apply information. And they have to be able to see the connection of the different information, use information for problem solving, examining idea and information critically.<sup>2</sup>

The government, through the Ministry of Education has begun applying International Standard, namely Higher Order Thinking Skill (HOTS). The development of learning which oriented to Higher Order Thinking Skill (HOTS) questions, a program developed as an effort to improve the quality of learning and the quality of graduates<sup>3</sup>. HOTS is required by an individual to meet the challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.<sup>4</sup> And Critical thinking skill or HOTS has been identified as fundamental skill that needed in learning process.<sup>5</sup> Therefore, they can deal with global economic growth and fast development of technology in the world. The government has conveyed a policy related to a number of HOTS questions in National Examination that is not to change the proportion of HOTS questions in 2019 National Examination with the deal questions between 10% till 15%. This is also supported by the statement of the head of East Java LPMP, Bambang Agus Susetyo, who said in the Socialization of the implementation of the National Examination which held by Provincial Education

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<sup>2</sup> Ministry of Education and Culture , *Curriculum 2013 SMA/ Madrasah Aliyah* (Jakarta: Dinas Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan, 2014).

<sup>3</sup> Yoki Ariana, dkk., "Thinking Skills Questions in English National Exam For Senior High School in The 2013-2014 Academic Year", (Thesis, English Education Departement Graduate School Mandala Catholic University, Surabaya, 2015).

<sup>4</sup> H. Tan Shin Yen., & Siti Hajar, "Effective Teaching of Higher-Order Thinking (Hot) in Education", *The Online Journal of Distance Education and E-Learning (TOJDEL)*, Vol. 3 No. 2 (2015), 41–47.

<sup>5</sup> Siti Zahroh, *Intregating of Higher Order Thinking Skill (HOTS) to increase Students' Productive Skill*. Malang: Universitas Islam Malang, 2019.

Office, East Java at the Novotel Surabaya Hotel, Tuesday (29/1/2019), that the integration of HOTS questions in the 2019 National Examination (NE) ranged 10-15 %.<sup>6</sup> Thus, the standard of National Examination questions is not different from the previous years. Moreover, he said that since the implementation of HOTS questions at the National Examination (NE), there has been indeed an influence on the result in the last score of students achievement has decreased.

Since the HOTS questions was integrated in the National Examination, many students of Senior High school or Junior High School complained and felt difficult to complete Computer Based Test (UNBK) or Pencil and Paper Based Test (UNKP) of National Examination. They felt that material of National examination that done was different with the material given. Eventhough, the government intended to raise the standart of students ability by inserting the HOTS questions to the National Examination. Due to this condition, not only students but also teachers have to fight hard to get the best result.

In English National Examination, the skill tested consist of listening, reading comprehension and writing in multiple-choice format. These tests may train learners to practice all levels of cognitive skills and are the base of the whole learning process. But, in UNKP the skill tested consist of reading comprehension and writing in multiple-choice format. In Bloom's Taxonomy revised edition stated that thinking skill that are ordered from simple to

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<sup>6</sup>“Soal HOTS, Tetap Mewarnai UN 2019”, *Lpmp Jatim Online*, <http://lpmpjatim.kemendikbud.go.id/site/detail/post /Soal HOTS,Tetap Mewarnai UN 2019>, diakses tanggal 30 Januari 2021.

complex or from concrete to abstract mental processing abilities. There are six levels of cognitive domains which are remember (C1), understand (C2), apply (C3), analyse (C4), evaluate (C5), and create (C6).

The regulation stated that the aspect of knowledge is acquired by activities of Remembering, Understanding, Applying, Analysing, Evaluating and Creating. Because of this policy, the assesment education in Indonesia, especially National Examination, are encouraged to be based on the concept of using HOTS. So far, the implementation of National Examination in Indonesia still causes controversial. It is often seen unnecessary as standardized test in the entire country.

In addition, Marzano and Kendall (2007) stated that Bloom's Taxonomy has been a practical basis for assessment) thus helps teachers to match their exam questions with syllabus and learning objectives. The Bloom's Taxonomy's cognitive domains are arranged from simple to complex. They include six levels of knowledge, comprehension and application in the Lower Order Thinking Skills (LOTS). Analysis, synthesis and evaluation are placed under the HOTS that ranged from concrete to abstract mental processing abilities. The present study, therefore, was carried out to evaluate the HOTS items utilized in the English examination questions.

Additionally, Ahmad conducted the research with analyze which levels of the Barrett taxonomy were more reflected in ENE items of 2013/2014 academic year and whether the proportions of items among the twenty test

packages in the ENE assessing students' Lower Order Thinking Skills (LOTS) and Higher Order Thinking Skills (HOTS) are consistent.<sup>7</sup>

However, Randip Kaur Valdev Singh and Azianura Hani Shaari conducted the research and focus to identify the use of HOTS items in selected English reading comprehension examinations for Standard 6 students in Malaysia. Their research aims to enhance students' cognitive skills and abilities in learning. Having a higher-order thinking ability at the earliest stage of formal education (primary and elementary levels) is essential in order to meet the growing demand for highly intelligent and professional workers in the future.<sup>8</sup>

Moreover, teaching and training students to have the higher order thinking skill is important in the four basic language skill because in the activity the students need to answer the questions at all levels of thinking. The four basic language skills are listening, reading, writing, and speaking. Moreover, Harmer states that even the reading skill is hard for individuals who utilize English as their mother language as a result of the complex skill in reading skill.<sup>9</sup>

However, in 2020, Indonesia scraps national examination due to Covid-19. The government and House of Representatives have agreed to cancel the

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<sup>7</sup> Ummu Lathifah Ahmad, "Senior High School English National Examination and Thinking Skills", *Beyond Words*, Vol. 4 No. 2 (2016), 168 – 190.

<sup>8</sup> Randip Kaur Valdev Singh and Azianura Hani Shaari, "The analysis of Higher-Order Thinking skills in English reading comprehension tests in Malaysia", *GEOGRAFIA Online TM Malaysian Journal of Society and Space*, 12-26. <https://doi.org/10.17576/geo-2019-1501-02>.

<sup>9</sup> Jeremy Harmer, *The Practice of English Language Teaching* (New York: Longman, 1996), 191.



national exam for elementary, junior high and high school students amid the novel coronavirus pandemic. Syaiful Huda, chairman of House Commission X overseeing education, told the press on Monday night that the decision was made in a teleconference between the lawmakers and Education and Culture Minister Nadiem Makarim on Monday “The spread of the COVID-19 is expected to occur until April, so it is impossible for us to force students to gather for the national exam under the threat of the pandemic. Therefore, we agreed that the national exam will not be administered,” the National Awakening Party (PKB) politician said.

Syaiful added that there were several options the government and lawmakers were looking at to replace the national exam, one of which was to use assessments based on cumulative grades on report cards from three years of study for high school and junior high students, as well as six years of study for elementary students.

There is also the option of implementing an online national exam. “We do not want to gather students in school buildings,” he said. Nadiem previously planned to abolish the national exam and replace it with a very different kind of educational assessment for 2021. However, lawmakers were against the idea. Nadiem in December 2019 explained that the minimum competency assessment referred to a test that would mainly evaluate students’ literacy and numerical competence.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>10</sup>“Indonesia Scraps National Exams Due To Covid-19”, *The Jakarta Post Online*, <https://www.thejakartapost.com/news/2020/03/24/indonesia-scraps-national-exams-due-to-covid-19.html>, diakses tanggal 30 Januari 2021.

However, related to some of the research that has been done, it can be concluded that the Higher Order Thinking Skills on the English National Examination questions are still low. This shows that the quality of the national exams is still low. In this study the researcher believes that an analysis of the higher order thinking skill in the English examination is important because the statement of each question that manages HOTS characteristics must have a stimulus, measure critical thinking skills and measure creative thinking skills. This can be improving the quality of education. Therefore it is necessary to research whether the English National Examination questions for the 2013-2019 academic years can stimulate students to think at higher levels.

In this study, the researcher conducted the research because the test has not been analysed by the teacher, this research will be very useful in helping the teachers to know the quality of the test. By considering the explanation above, the writer interested in conducting a research with the title: **“AN ANALYSIS OF HIGHER-ORDER THINKING SKILLS (HOTS) QUESTIONS IN ENGLISH NATIONAL EXAMINATION IN JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL”**.

## **B. Research Problem**

Based on the background of study, the general question of this study are:

1. To what extent do the questions in English National Examination for Junior High School in 2013-2019 academic year meet perspective of Higher Order Thinking Skills (HOTS)?

2. What are types of thinking skill appeared in English national examination items in 2013 – 2019 academic year?
3. Are there any differences in the development of HOTS questions on English National Examination items in Junior High School level in 2013-2019?

### **C. Objective of the Study**

Based on the problem above, the aim of this study is:

1. To know to what extent do the questions in English National Examination for Junior High School in 2013-2019 academic year meet perspective of Higher Order Thinking Skills (HOTS).
2. To know the type of thinking skill appeared in English national examination items in 2013 – 2019 academic years?
3. To know the differences in the development of HOTS questions on English National Examination items in Junior High School level in 2013-2019.

### **D. Significance of the Study**

By conducting this research, the researcher hopes that this research can provide some advantages as follows:

- a. For The Researcher

To develop and implement the knowledge that has been gained during the learning of test item analysis to know about the quality of the test

which is made, thus that it can be used as a preparation tool which can be used in the world of work in the field of education.

b. For Other Researchers

This research is expected to be used as a material to conduct further research. Moreover, it can be used for the development of the test item analysis on other subjects.

c. For The Teachers

The results of this study are expected to be an inspire for teachers to conduct an overall test item analysis that can be obtain a good quality of questions and able to give a valid result of student's learning outcome. Moreover, the result of the current study also provided information to the teachers about the difficulties faced by the students in facing the national examination and English learning in general.

## **E. Definition of the Key Terms**

The researcher classifies the term are used in this study as follows:

a. HOTS in Bloom's Taxonomy Revised Edition

There are three domains of objectives that are useful for assessing students' behavior in the teaching and learning process. Those three domains are cognitive, affective, and psychomotor. Cognitive domain is familiar with the teachers' knowledge since it is the most regularly instructed and evaluated for achieving the educational objectives. The

higher order thinking skill in Bloom's Taxonomy looks like analyze, evaluate, create and those all need students' critical thinking.

b. English National Examination

English National Examination is a standard evaluation system of primary and secondary education in [Indonesia](#) and the equation of quality of education levels among the areas that are conducted by the Center for Educational Assessment of the [Ministry of Education and Culture](#). Through this exam, it will be determined whether a student is ready to leave the school and receive the graduation certificate.

c. Language testing

Language testing is assessing and measuring activity that is given to a person's language competence and performance or testing language ability. It is an evaluation of an individual's language proficiency. It is also a set techniques, procedures and items that change an instrument of some sort that requires performance or activity on the part of the test-taker.

## **F. The Scope and Limitation**

The scope of this study deals with the types of thinking skill of English national examination in Junior High School in 2013-2019 academic year. The limit of this study focuses proportion of HOTS questions in English national examination in Junior High School in 2013 – 2019 academic year.