

## **CHAPTER 1**

### **INTRODUCTION**

#### **1.1 Background of the Study**

National Exam is a measurement and competence assessment activity of learners nationally in elementary until senior high school. The purposes of National Exam are organized to measure the achievement of competency learners (students) nationally on certain subjects as well as to map the level of student achievement at the school and district levels. National Exam in Senior High School is a determining factor of students to continue in college. The main subjects examined are Indonesian language, math and English. For additional subjects Science program are: chemistry, biology, physics, while in social studies programs are: economics, geography, anthropology. In language programs are: Indonesian literature, history, and Japanese language. From the six subjects above, English is one of the selection subjects which tested in the National Exam.

Some of students assumed that National exam is something to frighten. National exam is determining factor head for high level. National Exam needs many preparations especially for English subject which one of prior subject to be tested in National exam. In fact, there are many student find difficulty to do English test, such as: understanding the meaning of

the content, less vocabulary, and grammar. So that, it was needed exceptional strategy to be successful to do English test in National Exam.

Cohen and Upton in Abidin (2007), suggest that test-taking strategies are processes which respondents have selected and which they are realize. It means that searching process of accurate strategy which is used to take national exam successfully. What strategy they have will penetrate and applied in national exam. So, they will be sure that this strategy can accompany them to pass an exam by having high score. There are many kinds of strategies, but the students should choose one of or several of them which is used to support national exam as a way to help them to do their test well.

School was trying to prepare their students in national exam and it is started long time before and almost national exam done, such as: *learning course* and try out. *Learning course* is used to discuss several subjects which are tested in national exam and it is done every day after learning process. Program of *learning course* was completed with exercise of national exam questions, try out about the lesson which will be tested, discussion about prediction of national exam question in prior years and strategy to answer question from easy and difficult level with a limitation of time to do the test. Try out is carried out independently or coordinated by the institution which has an orientation on the success of national exam. Meanwhile, the discussion about prediction of national examination

question in prior years is to understand more type, style and level of the difficulty of the test.

English test taking strategy is used by researcher for decades in the world. According to Wenxia Zhang who worked with participants of Chinese EFL learners' use of affective strategies to help them reduce the anxieties and stress. She was found teacher can encourage EFL learners to use effective English test taking strategies. It was started by raising students' awareness of the English test taking strategies they have already been using that students understand the strategy better.

The present study examined the usage of the strategy by senior high school students for National Exam. The researcher wants to know the strategy which is used by senior high school students for National Exam. Students need strategy to pass the exam, especially national exam. Strategy is a detailed plan for achieving success in National Exam.

## **1.2 Problem Statement**

Based on those statements above, in this study the writer aimed to answer the following research question:

1. What are the English test taking strategies used by SMA N 1 Sidayu students in National Exam?
2. How are the English test taking strategies used by SMA N 1 Sidayu students in National Exam?

### **1.3 Objective of the Study**

According to the problem statement above, the objectives of the study are:

1. To know what are English test taking strategies used by SMA N 1 Sidayu students in National Exam.
2. To know how are English test taking strategies used by SMA N 1 Sidayu students in National Exam.

### **1.4 Significance of the Study**

#### **1.4.1 Theoretical Significance**

This research have related to research before which is study about test taking strategy. The result of the research before said that the participants had a medium use of English test taking strategy. Like their counterparts in other EFL learning situations (LAN & Oxford & Ehrman) in Zhang (2008), these learners resorted to frequent use of compensation strategies to cope with the challenges found in the EFL testing situation. On the positive side, they were using some effective strategies to help them to reduce stress during the test.

#### **1.4.2 Practical Significance**

The result of this study can contribute some benefits to students and teachers. Here are the benefits:

### 1) School

This study is important to be done because it will give positive effect especially for school as the alternative to prepare national exam in school.

### 2) Students

This study can show other students about the strategy which can they use when national exam comes. So, other students can apply this strategy to be success in national exam.

### 3) English Teacher

This study is expected to motivate teachers, so they can affect other students to be success to use strategy to pass a national exam.

## **1.5 Scope and Limitation of the study**

In this study, the researcher scopes the study to test taking strategy itself. Test taking strategies as a ways to help students to do well in their tests. It is including of preparation before and during the National exam, such as: try out and *learning course*. It is considered important for the students to pass a national exam and what the strategy they use to get success in their exam. There will be six classification of the strategy; memory strategy, cognitive strategy, metacognitive strategy, affective strategy, social strategy and compensation strategy which will be researched. The researcher choose subject of the graduate students from SMA Negeri 1 Sidayu, 2012 period for Language program.

## 1.6 Definition of Key Words

Keywords are words or phrases that describe content. The keywords in this study are:

- **Test taking Strategy** is a detailed plan for achieving success in a test that require preparation before and when the test is being. The exact strategy is affecting to the result of National exam. It is include of an effort which is done by school, teacher and the students.
  
- **National Exam** is a test which is carried out for students in the last grade and should have achieved target of score by government. If the students are not be able to reach standard of score which established by government, so the language program students cannot carry on higher level.