

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. Background of Research

Some English Education Department students want to have a good English proficiency. To measure English proficiency, it can be done by using TOEFL (*Test of English as a Foreign Language*) or IELTS (*International English Language Testing System*). Both TOEFL and IELTS are standardized tests which are prepared by qualified institution and used widely as a requirement to continue study at university level. UIN Sultan Maulana Hasanuddin Banten is one of the universities which TOEFL is a requirement for finishing study. According to Aliponga, the reliance on TOEFL has reached such a point that most domestic universities use this standardized test as a part of graduation requirements. The authority of universities set this precondition because they believe that TOEFL is able to evaluate students' ability and skills to understand English in academic tasks.¹

As a matter of fact, based on observation which is conducted by the researcher during studying in English Education Department (further glossed by EED), there is a course which is designed in the

¹ J Aliponga "Reading journal: its benefits for extensive reading", *international Journal of Humanities and Social Science*, Vol 3 No 12 (June, 2013), 74.

EED curriculum to facilitate students to improve TOEFL score. The course is well known as Advance English. Advance English is taught in the sixth semester and it is basically TOEFL like. In other words, this course discusses some skills which are tested in the paper-based Test of TOEFL. However, there are many EED students whose TOEFL score are still poor.

There are three skills in the paper-based Test of TOEFL namely Listening, Written and Structure expression, and Reading Comprehension. Abboud and Hussein stated that Reading Comprehension is also considered as a difficult section.² Unfortunately, most EED students often encountered difficulty in reading comprehension because they assume that reading comprehension is the most difficult than any other skill in TOEFL. This reflects on students' TOEFL scores which were poor or unsatisfied. Reading Comprehension test has 50 questions, and only a few EED students answer more than 30 questions correctly.

According to the data source that researcher obtained from the archival records of students' result on Reading comprehension of TOEFL belong to Language Development Center (Pusat

² Zaidoon Abdul Razaq Abboud and Nagham Ja'far Hussein, "The Difficulties Faced by Advanced Iraqi Foreign Learners in Passing ITP TOEFL Test" within *Journal of Basrah Researches (Humanities Series) Vol. : 36, No. : 4, (2011), 110 -138.*

Pengembangan Bahasa) of UIN sultan Maulana Hasanuddin Banten, there are 63 EED students conducting TOEFL post-test in Language Development Center of UIN Sultan Maulana Hasanuddin Banten in academic year 2019/2020, 19 (30%) EED students acquired correct answer less than 20 questions of reading comprehension, 31 (49%) EED students acquired correct answer less than 30 questions of reading comprehension, and 13 (20%) students acquired correct answer less than 40 questions of reading comprehension. It can be seen that 20 correct answers are categorized low understanding, 30 correct answers are categorized medium understanding, and 40 correct answers are categorized High understanding. Hence, only 20% EED students are categorized High understanding. This is relatively small number. As a result, the researcher is interested to investigate this problem related to EED students' difficulty on reading comprehension test of TOEFL.

In term of the difficulties, the EED students' difficulties in answering the reading comprehension test derive from several reasons. In this case, based on what the researcher caught from TOEFL ITP test descriptors by ETS, from basic to medium level are not able to follow the idea level to understand detailed information and major ideas, then they only have low-frequency academic vocabulary, do not recognize comparisons and contrasts, causal relationships of paragraph, and do

not give attention to explicitly stated or implicitly stated in each sentence of paragraph.³ Again, from the explanation of the problem and from the data source above made the researcher is interested in conducting this research.

Apparently, In English Education Department, TOEFL is one of the requirements for those who want to finish their study at university. In other words, for students who want to complete their study, they should take the TOEFL Test as one of requirement. Likewise, in each semester there are several English Courses such as Structure series, Listening series, and Reading series and of course Advance English which obligates TOEFL as a test for examination in the middle test or final test. Clearly, students should have got a good score to fulfill this entire task.

Based on the main problems that are mentioned previously, the researcher wants to investigate EED students' difficulties in the Reading Comprehension Test of TOEFL. Moreover, the researcher only analyzes and interprets level difficulties on each item based on 13 skills of Reading Comprehension and difficulties that are encountered by students. Therefore, students' problems that are identified by the researcher are that firstly, EED students have been provided Advance

³ ETS, *TOEFL ITP® Test Score Descriptors*. (2014), 3.

English and Reading Course Series. However, students' reading comprehension is still low. Secondly, some EED students have a low score in the TOEFL test, especially in Reading Comprehension.

B. Focus of The Study

This research is focused on analyzing students' difficulties in reading comprehension test including which skills in reading comprehension test of TOEFL that is difficult for students and what difficulties that students encountered in reading comprehension test of TOEFL.

C. Research Questions

Based on the background of the study above, the researcher will set out the research question, they are:

1. Which skills in reading comprehension test of TOEFL are the most difficult for EED students?
2. What are the difficulties encountered by the EED students in reading comprehension test of TOEFL.

D. Objective of Research

1. To investigate which skills in reading comprehension test of TOEFL that are the most difficult for the EED students

2. To investigate what difficulties are encountered by EED students in reading comprehension test of TOEFL.

E. Significance of The Research

The results of this study hopefully are useful to provide information and input for:

1. The lectures

This way of reading comprehension test of TOEFL will help the lectures to get more information about the difficulties faced by EED students.

2. EED Students

This way of reading comprehension test of TOEFL will help the students to recognize their difficulties and get more information about difficulties in reading comprehension test of TOEFL.

F. Key Terms

1. TOEFL (Test of English As a Foreign Language)

TOEFL is standard test of English proficiency which are prepared by qualified institution for a requirement to continue study at university level

2. EED (English Education Department Students)

This term refers to the students who study in English Education Department in UIN Sultan Maulana Hasanuddin Banten

3. Reading comprehension difficulties

This term refers to the trouble or the problem that students encounter in reading comprehension test of TOEFL.

G. Previous Studies

There are some previous studies which have been conducted by other researchers concerning to TOEFL, the following are a follow:

1) **An Analysis of The Difficulties Encountered by Non-English Department Students In the TOEFL Test of Listening Section.**⁴

It is A Case Study at Arabic Education Department IAIN SMH Banten conducted by Liyeni Pratiwi in the academic year 2017. The problem of this study is that there are difficulties in listening test of TOEFL for Arabic Education department students as non-English students in UIN Sultan Maulana Hasanuddin Banten. The result of this data can be seen from students' final test of TOEFL in listening section. The researcher calculated that there are 60 % students whose category low understanding and 40% students are very low understanding

⁴ Liyeni Pratiwi, *An Analysis Of The Difficulties Encountered By Non-English Department Student's In TOEFL Test Of Listening Section*, (Serang: IAIN SMH Banten, 2017)

The similarity between the previous Pratiwi's research and this research is analyzing the TOEFL test and using a case study (qualitative research) as method of this study. Conversely, the differences of both are that the former uses non-English students as the subject of the research and analyzes the listening section of the TOEFL test and the latter uses EED students as the subject of the research and analyze the reading comprehension test of TOEFL.

2) The study about The Difficulties Faced by Advanced Iraqi Foreign Learners in Passing ITP TOEFL Test.⁵

This study is conducted by Zaidoon Abdul Razaq Abboud and Nagham Ja'far Hussein in 2011. The problem this study is that there are difficulties for Advanced Iraqi Foreign Learners in Passing ITP (Institutional Testing Program) TOEFL Test in all section of the TOEFL. The result of this study is that from three sections in the TOEFL ITP test, Listening is the most difficult section in the TOEFL ITP test for Advanced Iraqi Foreign Learners with the percentage Listening 57%, Structure and Written Expression 32% and Reading Comprehension 22%.

⁵ Zaidoon Abdul Razaq Abboud and Nagham Ja'far Hussein, "The Difficulties Faced by Advanced Iraqi Foreign Learners in Passing ITP TOEFL Test" within *Journal of Basrah Researches (Humanities Series) Vol. : 36, No. : 4, (2011). pp. 110 -138*

The similarity between the Abboud and Hussein research and this research is analyzing the TOEFL test. On the other hand, the differences between these studies are the former analyses all sections in the TOEFL and compares which sections in TOEFL ITP are the most difficult whereas this research is not.

3) **The Study about EFL Students' Strategies Dealing with Common Difficulties in TOEFL Reading Comprehension Section.**⁶

This is a quantitative study conducted by Iskandar Abdul Samad and et all from Syiah Kuala University which investigates the undergraduate students' difficulties and their strategies in completing TOEFL reading comprehension test. The problem of this research is that there are difficulties faced by English Education Department Students in Syiah Kuala University. The result of this study is that firstly, the first most difficult skill is implied question. The second the first most difficult skill is stated detail. The third the first most difficult skill is vocabulary question of determining meaning using context. Secondly, the strategies that students often used are students have purpose in mind and focus in reading, guess

⁶ Iskandar Abdul Samad, Miftahul Jannah and Siti Sarah Fitriani, "EFL Students' Strategies Dealing with Common Difficulties In TOEFL Reading Comprehension Section" within *International Journal of Language Education*, Vol. 1 No. 1, (March 2017)

the meaning through activating the background of the knowledge make literal translation, read detail to answer question and use context clues to understand the meaning of difficult words.

The similarity between Iskandar's research and this research is analyzing which skills as the most difficult in Reading Comprehension test in TOEFL. However, the differences is that Iskandar's research analyzing the strategies that are used by students whereas this research analyze what type of difficulties that students encountered in TOEFL reading.

H. Organization of the Writing

To make this research easy to be understood, the researcher divides this research into five chapters:

Chapter I is Introduction. In this chapter the research puts some points: background of the research, the statement of the problem, the objective of the research, and the significant of the study, focus of the research, and organization of the writing.

Chapter II is a Theoretical Frameworks. It consists of definition of TOEFL, definition of reading comprehension, the types of TOEFL PBT test, skills in the TOEFL, difficulties in the TOEFL.

Chapter III is the Research Methodology. It consists of the method of the research, the unit of analysis, the instrument of the research, the approach to analyses the data

Chapter IV is Results and Discussion. It contains the results of the data from archival records, questionnaire and interview and also the discussion.

Chapter V presents Conclusions and Suggestions. It contains the conclusion of the research and suggestion for the lectures, EED students, and further researcher.