

# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

### A. Background of the Study

English is very important in education especially for students, the ability to understand English as a foreign language can be measured through an English test. Tests take many forms, from informal quizzes in class to formal tests, which can be written, oral, or practical, in public exams.<sup>1</sup> Through this test, it is possible to measure the knowledge, abilities, and skills of a more dominant person. In the standardized tests, there are several kinds which are used worldwide tests such as TOEFL (Test Of English as a Foreign Language), TOEIC (Test of English for International Communication), IELTS (International English Language Testing Service), and others.

In the Indonesian setting, to determine how proficient a person is in English can be done through the TOEFL test. The TOEFL test is a proficiency test required to continue studying abroad or for a scholarship program, TOEFL test is conducted by non-native speaker students' to get a scholarship to a country with their native English

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<sup>1</sup> Gerry Shiel, Thomas Kellaghan, and Gráinne Moran, "Standardised Testing In Lower Secondary Education," in *Research Conducted on Behalf of the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment* (Dublin, 2010), 22.

language. At this time the TOEFL can also be used as a condition to get a job. So this TOEFL test has an important value to see the standard of the English test.<sup>2</sup>

In addition, the TOEFL test also is applied by most universities in Indonesia, including the State Islamic University of Sultan Maulana Hasanuddin Banten as on requirement to enroll in a paper seminar. The TOEFL test is applied to measure students' ability in English. But not a few students find it difficult to do the TOEFL, especially those who come from non-English departments.

According to research conducted by Rizkiani, several difficulties are faced by students in answering questions on the TOEFL test, one of which is reading skills. Most students experience errors because students do not understand grammar and do not master English. Students also have problems in comprehension of the reading process such as questions about the main idea, stating questions, transition questions, positioning in determining the meaning of simpler

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<sup>2</sup> Winny Nur, Ardy Sudrajat, and Elysa Ratna Astuti, "Students' Perceptions Of The Use Of Toefl Preparation Online Course On The Test Performance : The Case Of Toefl Structure And Written Expression Test," *Humaniora* 9, no. 3 (2018): 275–282, <https://doi.org/10.21512/humaniora.v9i3.4807>

words, and restating the parts which are the most difficult things faced by students.<sup>3</sup>

This difficulty is also felt by non-English Department students' in taking the TOEFL as one of the graduation requirements, especially students of the Islamic Education Department of State Islamic University Sultan Maulana Hasanuddin Banten. It was not easy for students' of the Islamic Education Department to take the TOEFL test, so in this study, researchers chose the Department of Islamic Education at State Islamic University Sultan Maulana Hasanuddin Banten as Non-English Department Students. The reason for choosing the Department of Islamic Education is because there are still many students' of the Department of Islamic Education who have difficulty in learning English and in taking the TOEFL, especially the TOEFL test in the reading section.

The reading section is tested on the TOEFL, so students' must really understand the meaning of the reading. By reading, students must be able to decipher what they read, between what they read and what they already know are interconnected, and be able to think broadly about what they have read. However, it is not easy to do, they must also

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<sup>3</sup> Rezkiyani, "The Difficulties Faced by The EFL Students in The TOEFL Test" (Makassar, Unpublish Paper of UIN Alauddin Makassar, 2019), 83.

find a way or strategy to overcome these difficulties. As has been explained, that is the reason why researcher choose the Islamic Education Department as a location of case study research. Researcher are fascinated in researching this case in terms of students' difficulties in the TOEFL test reading section in the Islamic Education Department as the object of research.

Based on the results of an interview with one of the test takers from the Department of Islamic Education, she had difficulty in learning English, even though she had learned about reading text but still found it difficult, especially in reading comprehension on the TOEFL. Students only learn about reading and the TOEFL in the first semester. While at the time of the TOEFL test she could read in its entirety but he did not really understand what was meant in the reading and this resulted in wasted time. So she couldn't answer the question.<sup>4</sup>

From the explanation above, the researcher is fascinated in investigating the problem. Then, the researcher conducted a study entitled **“Non-English Department Students’ Difficulties On Toefl Test In Reading Section (A Case Study At Islamic Education Department Of UIN SMH Banten)”**

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<sup>4</sup> Based on an Interview with Miska (pseudonym) one of the Students’ of the Islamic Education Department on September 6th, 2021.

## **B. Identification of the Problem**

Based on background of study, the students' problems in facing TOEFL especially on reading comprehension section can be identified as follows:

1. Students' find it difficult to answer the TOEFL test in the reading section, especially when answering reading questions that asked about determining topics, main ideas, reading content, word meanings, or word groups, and detailed information about reading texts.

## **C. Limitation of the Problem**

Due to the researchers has many limitations and face several obstacles in conducting this study, so this study only concern to investigate what causes students' difficulties in learning English, especially in the reading skills of the TOEFL and strategies that can be carried out by Islamic Education Department students.

## **D. Statement of the Problem**

Having limited the focus of this study, then the researcher proposes research questions as follows:

1. What the difficulties found by Non-English Department Students' at Islamic Education Department in the reading section skills on the TOEFL?

### **E. Objective of the Study**

Based on statement of the problems, the main objective of this study is to observe and investigate the difficulties faced by Non-English students in the Department of Islamic Education at State Islamic University Sultan Maulana Hasanuddin Banten in the reading section of the TOEFL Test.

### **F. Significance of the Study**

This research is expected to provide significance theoretically and practically.

Theoretically, this research can be used for students, especially non-English students such as students of Islamic Education Department in taking the TOEFL test as a reference to minimize their difficulties. The results of this study can provide useful information for lecturers of the Department of Islamic Religious Education about the abilities of their students, so that later they will know the difficulties and strategies that can be faced by students who take the TOEFL test, especially in the reading session.

Practically, this research is expected to contribute; For lecturers or teachers, researchers hope that this research can provide information and input in learning and interaction in English classes. For researcher,

researcher hope that this research can provide new knowledge for researchers themselves about the difficulties of non-English students in the TOEFL test, especially in the reading section. Researcher hope to provide information and this research can be carried out by researcher as one of the requirements to obtain a bachelor's degree in English Education, Faculty of Education and Teacher Training, Sultan Maulana Hasanuddin State Islamic University Banten. For others, the researcher hopes that this research can be useful as a reference guide for further researchers who have difficulty in the non-English TOEFL test, especially in the reading section.

### **G. Definitions of Operational**

There are several definitions of operations that are presented to keep away from misapprehension some of the terms or ideas in this study:

#### **1. Reading Difficulty**

In this study, reading difficulties refer to the difficulties or problems faced by non-English students in performing reading skills on the TOEFL test. In general, reading difficulties are problems in reading activities that result in insufficient reading proficiency.

## 2. Non-English Department Students' (NEDS)

In this study, non-English department students referred to Islamic Education Department Students who took the TOEFL test as one of the requirements for graduation. Defines non-English department students as students who have certain specializations that are not English both literally and educationally

## 3. TOEFL Test

The TOEFL test is one of the proficiency tests that must be followed by final students by all majors at UIN Sultan Maulana Hasanuddin Banten, as a requirement to take part in the Munaqosah trial.

## **H. Previous of Study**

There are several previous studies related to students' difficulties in the TOEFL, in this section the researcher takes several previous studies as references that are reviewed in this study:

Diandra Eka Putri (2020) with the title "An Analysis Of The Difficulties Encountered By English Department Students In Passing The TOEFL Test", The results of this study are to show and find out the difficulties of students majoring in English education in passing the TOEFL test and their strategies in dealing with them. The study used



quantitative methods to investigate the difficulties of students passing the TOEFL test. This research also used an instrument in the form of a questionnaire consisting of 10 questions. The results of the study, showed that students agreed that the most difficult test in the TOEFL test was reading comprehension, and students strongly agreed that the time allocation in the TOEFL test was not enough for them; which means they have difficulty managing their time.

The second previous study, Rezkiani (2019) in her research, “The Difficulties Faced By The Efl Students In The Toefl Test ( A Case Study at English and Literature Departement )”, in this study the methods used are qualitative and quantitative methods. Meanwhile, for data collection, researchers used instruments in the form of TOEFL scores, questionnaires, and interviews. In this case, the researcher identified the difficulties faced by students majoring in the English and Literature Department in the TOEFL test. The research does not only examine one aspect but focuses more on the difficulty of the TOEFL test. The results obtained from this study indicate that the language of the students of the Department of letters has a fairly good level of TOEFL scores. In the TOEFL test for English literature students, there are difficult points such as clustering, redundancy, simplified form,

level of presentation, incomplete application of rules, determining main ideas, placing references, reasoning, and detailed information. In overcoming these difficulties, the researcher found a solution that focuses on the second speaker, avoids similar sounds, and makes it a habit to listen in English before taking the TOEFL (Listening Comprehension) test, look for the subject and verb first, pay attention to tense, tense mode (structure and written expression). , and don't read entire paragraphs and find the keyword reading the first sentence and the last sentence of each paragraph.

At the other research, Risa Asrida and Fitrawati (2019) "The Difficulties Of English Department Students At Padang State University In Answering The Reading Section Of TOEFL", this study aims to find out students' difficulties in answering reading questions from the TOEFL test. The method used is descriptive research, with a reading sub-test as the instrument. In this study, English students at Padang State University found difficulties in 5 topics that were considered the most difficult, including the main idea, transition question, determining the tone of the passage, stated detail question, and context to determine the meaning of simple words. To overcome this, the authors suggest that English majors practice more and take

exams carefully. lecturers also in English must explain in full the TOEFL reading material.

From the previous research above, the similarities of this study were analyzed with the same object, namely the difficulty in the TOEFL test. The difference from the first and second studies previously focused on subjects from English Department Students and English foreign language students, previous studies not only examined one aspect but focused more on the difficulty level of the TOEFL test, while the researcher examined difficulties only in the reading session. . The method used is a mixture of qualitative and quantitative, while the researcher only uses qualitative methods. The next difference in the last previous study also took subjects from English students or English foreign language students, while the research taken by the researcher came from non-English students, namely Islamic Education Department Students. The method used is descriptive research.

The purpose of this study was to determine the difficulties experienced by non-English students, especially students of Islamic religious education, in order to know the right strategy to minimize these difficulties. Because it is possible that the TOEFL test is needed, not only as a graduation requirement but also for other things.

## **I. Organization of Writing**

This research is organized into three chapters, each chapter has several points to explain the chapter itself. The researcher arranges the points as follows:

**Chapter I Introduction**, this chapter contains the background of the study, identification of the problem, limitation of the problem, statement of the problem, objective of the study, significance of the study, definition of operational, previous of study, and organization of writing.

**Chapter II Theoretical Framework**, this chapter consists of theorists from several experts that we have conducted research related to this research.

**Chapter III Research Methodology**, contains research methods, place and time of research, participants and samples, data collection techniques, and data analysis techniques.

**Chapter IV Findings and Discussion**, this chapter describes the analysis of research results.

**Chapter V Closing**, this chapter consists of conclusions and suggestions based on the research topic.