

Chapter One

Introduction

This chapter presents the introduction to the research being conducted. This chapter contains five sections. The first section is the background of the study which explains the reasons why the researcher is interested in investigating the topic. The second part discusses statement of the problem, that points out the issues that are being observed. The third section presents the delimitation of the study followed by the research question and the purpose of the research. Finally, this chapter is ended with the significances of the research.

Background of the Study

English is considered as a foreign language in Indonesia. In this country, English is mostly used in certain context such as education and professional careers. In daily activity, most Indonesians use native language. Since 1994, English started to be taught in elementary school level to university level. ability to use English is needed especially in speaking and writing English language in order to measure the English ability and proficiency of students, a language test such as TOEFL is necessary.

TOEFL stands for test of English as a Foreign Language. In the context of Indonesia, TOEFL is used to get scholarships and study abroad as well as considered as one of the graduation or job requirements. It is reasonable that the TOEFL test is required for scholarship programs as it describes the ability of the applicants on whether or not they are able to follow the learning and teaching process abroad. In

Indonesian universities, TOEFL is required for graduation as academic purpose. Having a good score of TOEFL also can be an added value when applying for a job. By providing the TOEFL test result TOEFL, the company can know how capable a person in specific skill such as speaking.

The TOEFL test is used to evaluate the English proficiency of foreign language learners. TOEFL has three kinds of tests. Nehe and Nurhayati (2016) mention three kinds of TOEFL namely Paper Based-Test (PBT), Computer Based-Test (CBT), and Internet Based-Test (IBT). In a private university in Yogyakarta, it provides the TOEFL test for students who want to measure their English skill. The type of the TOEFL test used here is Paper Based-Test (PBT). Paper Based Test (PBT) consists of three parts including listening comprehension, structure and written expression, and reading comprehension.

In English Language Education Department of the Private University in Yogyakarta, TOEFL is one of the graduation requirements. Based on thesis writing guideline of ELED UMY, the passing grade for the TOEFL test is 500. Based on the TOEFL test result obtained by the ELED students, it was found that the lowest score is in the reading comprehension section. The data show that listening comprehension has the average of 45,66%, structure and written expression around 43,3%, and reading comprehension around 42,16%. The data indicates that the students have more errors in reading comprehension as opposed to listening and structure and written expression sections. Based on the result of score TOEFL test, the researcher found on the official website of the English Language Education Department

Achieving a high score in TOEFL is not easy. Based on a research found by Mufidah (2014), the big problem encountered in the TOEFL test is in reading comprehension. It means reading comprehension is a difficult part. Samad, Jannah, and Fitriani (2017) argue that the hard part found in the TOEFL test is reading comprehension section including identifying implied detail questions correctly, identifying stated detail questions correctly, determining meanings of difficult words by using context, identifying main idea questions correctly, and determining meanings from word parts.

After taking the TOEFL test, the experience during the test was shared with classmates. It turned out that the main challenge was mostly found in reading comprehension section. It was considered difficult due to the students' lack of understanding of the text as well as limited vocabulary mastery. In addition, time constraint was also a problem, according to the students. The total time given for the reading section that consists of 50 questions is 55 minutes and is considered insufficient. The time constraint is difficult to understand the text. Usually, in doing reading section in TOEFL test out of the time. It makes the answer is missed or the test taker answer question with a guessing.

For this reason, the reseacher is interest in investigating challenges faced by students in the TOEFL reading comprehension test in a Private University in Yogyakarta.

Statement of the problem

In this study, the researcher tries to find out challenges faced by students in doing the TOEFL reading comprehension test. There are thirteen skills that are tested in reading comprehension like main idea, recognizing the organization of ideas, stated detail question, unstated detail, pronoun referents, implied detail question, transition question, definition from structural clues, determine meaning from words parts, meaning for difficult words, simple words, specific information, and the tone, purpose, or tone (Philips, 2003). In addition, a major of students face challenges in this section, specifically. The researcher's and her colleagues' experience in taking TOEFL, particularly the reading section, demotivates them. Lack of time makes students doubt the answer they choose which can be time-consuming. It would be even longer when students are not familiar with the vocabularies shown in the passages. According to Gorelova, Zalyaeva, and Sungatullina (2015), reading comprehension in the TOEFL test is complex because it is designed into various types of texts. Students cannot predict the texts that will appear. The length of the text as well as the difficult words or diction used in the TOEFL reading comprehension test make it hard for students to understand.

In regards to structure and written expression section, some challenges are also faced. The challenges in structure and written expression are the students have not good strategies in complementing the questions and find it, difficult to determine a subject and a verb in sentences. Similarly, in listening comprehension section,

students find it hard to understand the spoken language. One of the reason is that the speaker speak too fast.

The Limitation of the Problem

Based on the statement of the problem above, this study has to be limited due to limited time, limited place, and limited cost. Considering this study has limited place, so the researcher conducts the research at ELED in a Private University in Yogyakarta. This study involves three students as the participants. The researcher is focused on the challenges that occur in reading comprehension in the TOEFL test. This research also only focuses on the qualitative study and uses the interview as a data collection method.

The Research Question

To achieve the aim of this research, the following question will be answered “what are the challenges faced by students on reading comprehension section of the TOEFL test in a Private University in Yogyakarta?”

The Purpose of the Research

Based on research question above, the purpose of this research is to identify the challenges faced by students in reading comprehension section of the TOEFL Test in a Private University in Yogyakarta.

The Significance of the Research

The researcher believes that this research is important. The significance of the research can be useful for students, lecturers, institution, and other researchers.

Students. This research can be beneficial for the students who are about to take the TOEFL test especially in reading comprehension. When students know the challenges that are possibly found in reading session in the TOEFL test, students can anticipate the challenges before taking the test in order to get better score. Students can more be well prepared and ready to do the next TOEFL test.

English Teacher. This study can give benefits for the English teachers. This study provides information about the challenges that students faced in reading session in the TOEFL test. The teacher can assist students by presenting appropriate techniques in the classroom activities to increase their score in reading comprehension section.

Other Researchers. The procedure and results of this research are hopefully able to encourage other researchers to do further studies with the similar theme. This research also could be a reference for relevant future project.