

# **Chapter One**

## **Introduction**

Chapter one presents several parts. In this chapter, the researcher explains the background of the problem, the statement of the problem, the delimitation of the problem, the research question, the research. The significance of this research is also shown in this chapter. The last is the organization of the chapter.

### **Background of the Problem**

The standardized English proficiency test is one of the ways to measure English proficiency. There are IELTS (International English Language Testing System) and the TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language for the international standardized English proficiency test. Indonesia is one of the Asian countries that has implemented the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) to improve and maintain the students' English proficiency. On the other hand, TOEFL is also addressed for students as a test to measure the level of their English proficiency. This test is acknowledged internationally as an English standard test.

The TOEFL test aims to measure EFL learners' English proficiency. Each college or university has a minimum TOEFL score as a requirement for admission. The scores achieved from the test are essential to gaining a

scholarship. Some higher education institutions where English is not the language of instruction also require their students to have an adequate TOEFL score before they graduate. Proficiency in English has become something essential to compete in the global world. Therefore, a test such as TOEFL is important for non-native English speakers.

Non-native English speakers have widely used standardized English proficiency tests such as TOEFL to test English language skills. Since 1960, more than 27 million people worldwide have taken the TOEFL. More than 8,500 colleges, universities, and institutions in more than 130 countries have recognized and used the test (ETS, 2011). For the TOEFL tests, there are two test formats: the TOEFL iBT and TOEFL ITP. The TOEFL iBT test has reading, listening, speaking, and writing. The TOEFL ITP test has listening comprehension, structure and written expression, reading comprehension, and speaking.

One of the sections in the TOEFL test is the reading section that aims to measure person's reading skills. There are two other essential skills tested that contribute to the TOEFL ITP test's overall score: listening and structure. It is unknown precisely what text will appear on each TOEFL test reading test, but it is still predictable because the reading test will usually consist of five reading sections. Each is followed by some reading comprehension and vocabulary questions. The topics are varied but often about the informational subjects studied at American universities that usually speak of history, literature, art, architecture, geology, geography, and astronomy (Phillips, 2003).

Feelings of anxiety will usually arise when a person feels threatened, stressed, and overwhelmed. It can be said that anxiety is a frightening feeling of failure, including worry and other negative thoughts that can interfere with the concentration of test-takers during the test. Ghonsooly (2003) conducted a study on reading anxiety generated as a result of TOEFL test practice, and he found that test takers have anxiety in the reading sections in TOEFL. Anxiety in reading is one of the most significant factors affecting reading performance. A high reading anxiety level correlates to students' performance in TOEFL tests.

This research can be necessary for the students to provide information about reading anxiety, especially in a standardized reading test in one of a private universities in Yogyakarta. There is an English Language Education department in this university which has an ILT (International Language Testing) subject. It is provide TOEFL like test during the subject. Based on the researcher's interview with some students, some of them felt anxious and nervous while filling out the TOEFL test especially in reading section. Therefore, the researcher is interested in investigating EFL learners' reading anxiety levels in the standardized reading test in this department.

### **Statement of the Problem**

At one of the departments in a private university in Yogyakarta, especially the English Language Education Department, students have done TOEFL-like tests in the sixth semester, especially on International Language Testing Course. The test aims to measure students' English proficiency. The test was done by a

Paper-Based Test and conducted in the classroom. The TOEFL-like test is done twice at the beginning and the end of the course.

TOEFL test students take consists of three sections: listening sections, structure and writing expression section, and reading section. Based on the researcher's experience when the researcher took the course and took the test, the information gained by the researcher is that some students feel anxious, intimidated, and uncomfortable when they read the text while they are doing the test, especially in reading sections. It affects the students' performance in the test and their achievement.

There is a relationship between the participants' reading anxiety and reading ability or achievement, measured through a particular reading comprehension test. According to Mohammadpur and Ghafournia (2015), the findings in their study manifested a direct negative relationship between the participants' reading ability and reading anxiety. In other words, the more stressful the readers are, the less skillful they are in taking reading tests. High proficient learners feel less stress; therefore, they accomplish reading tasks more successfully than low proficient learners, who often experience stressful feelings while test-taking.

Based on the researcher's interview, anxiety has a significant impact on students, especially for students in English Language Education Department in one of a private university in Yogyakarta. The students in this department feel anxious about using their English in TOEFL-like tests. The test is conducted twice

during the International Language Testing course. The course is in the sixth semester. For instance, when the students are doing the test simultaneously, some students get anxious. The reasons which make the students feel anxious are nervous, uncomfortable with the situation, lack of confidence. According to Bhatti (2016), the anxiety of foreign language students is influenced by their feeling of low proficiency, nervousness, and lack of confidence. Those problems could affect the students' achievement and their performance, especially in TOEFL-like tests. Therefore, the researcher investigated EFL learners' reading anxiety in the standardized reading test. By this research, the researcher hopes that this research can give valuable information about the reading anxiety of EFL learners in standardized reading tests.

### **Delimitation of the Problem**

There are a lot of standardized English proficiency. There are TOEFL, TOEIC, or IELTS or local tests such as GEPT, TOEP, EIKEN, etc. The researcher only chooses the TOEFL-like test for this research. There are listening sections, structure and written expression sections, and reading. In this research, the researcher focus on the level of reading anxiety of EFL learners in a standardized reading test.

## **Research Questions**

The research is expected to answer three main questions. There are:

1. What is EFL learners' reading anxiety level in the standardized reading test?
2. Which aspect has the highest level of EFL learners' reading anxiety in the standardized reading test?
3. Which aspect has the lowest level of EFL learners' reading anxiety in the standardized reading test?

## **Research Objectives**

Based on the research questions, the purpose of the research is to find out:

1. To investigate the level of EFL learners' reading anxiety in standardized reading test
2. To investigate the aspect which has the highest level of EFL learners' reading anxiety in standardized reading test
3. To investigate the aspect which has the lowest level of EFL learners' reading anxiety in standardized reading test

## **Significance of the Research**

**For the teachers.** The researcher expects that the teacher has more information about the EFL learners' reading anxiety in standardized reading tests. Next, the researcher expects the teacher to treat students who have anxiety in

standardized reading tests. Then, the researcher also expects the teacher to know how to handle the students who have anxiety in standardized reading tests.

**For the pre-service teachers.** The researcher expects that the pre-service teacher has more information about the EFL learners' reading anxiety in standardized reading tests. Next, the researcher expects the pre-service teacher to know how to treat students with anxiety in standardized reading tests. Then, the researcher also expects the pre-service teacher to know how to handle the students who have anxiety in standardized reading tests.

**For the students.** The researcher expects students to have more information about EFL learners' reading anxiety in standardized reading tests. Students who have high reading anxiety level will feel anxious, nervous, and worry while fill out the test. The students who have high reading anxiety level in vocabulary aspect will feel upset when they find the unfamiliar words. On the other hand, the researcher expects the students to have a good achievement in standardized reading tests.

### **Organization of the Chapters**

This research consists of five chapters. The first chapter explained the introduction of the research. The second chapter showed the literature review related to this research. Then the third chapter is about the methodology used in this research. Next, the fourth chapter contained the results and the discussion sections. The last is the conclusion and the recommendation of this research.