

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter serves as the introduction of the paper, it consists of the research background, research problem, and research purpose, and it also includes the significance of the research, research scope, and terminology.

1.1 Research Background

TOEFL stands for Test of English as a foreign language. A test that is administered by ETS (Educational Testing Service). TOEFL is a standardized test of English as a foreign language to assess someone's ability to master English (Ang-Zie, 2017). In other words, TOEFL is used to measure whether or not a non-English native speaker is able to master English.

There are some variations of the TOEFL test format such as Paper-Based, Computer-Based, Internet-Based, and Institutional Testing Program (ITP); all of these formats are recognized as the international standard of the TOEFL test. Although several Asian countries, especially Indonesia, mostly use the most known format, the PBT as an international standard for TOEFL.

Many people from all around the world are taking the TOEFL test since the result of the TOEFL test is frequently used as one of the required files on some occasions. According to Jabal & Nur, n.d., (2022). It has become a crucial thing that someone must have if they wanted to pursue higher-level studies and apply several leading companies Moreover, universities all around the world apply TOEFL as a graduation requirement, which is the main concern of this research.

Most universities in Indonesia require students to achieve a minimum TOEFL score as a graduation requirement. However, many students experience difficulties in obtaining the required score and often fail to meet the minimum standard (Samad & Fitriani, 2016). This problem indicates that students may lack effective strategies for preparing for and taking the TOEFL test. Therefore, it is important to investigate the strategies used by successful test takers to improve their TOEFL scores. Understanding these strategies may help students overcome their difficulties and achieve the required score more effectively. Based on this issue, the researcher is interested in examining the strategies that can help students improve their TOEFL performance.

Although TOEFL scores are required for graduation, many students in Banda Aceh still struggle to achieve the minimum score. This situation raises questions about what strategies can help students improve their TOEFL performance. Since effective learning and test-taking strategies may contribute to higher TOEFL scores, the researcher is interested in investigating the strategies used by students to improve their TOEFL results.

Each institution that uses TOEFL score as a requirement usually sets its own minimum level of acceptable score. The minimum TOEFL score required varies depending on the institution and program. For many of these prospective university students, a 500 score on the TOEFL exam becomes their primary goal (Konstantopoulos, 2014). They believe the number of 500 TOEFL scores measures students' English proficiency. However, the average TOEFL score for Indonesian

students is still below 500, according to IIEF (Indonesian International Education Foundation) demographic statistics from 2015 (Munzaki, 2018).

Students who face difficulty on the TOEFL test can be caused by some factors, one of them being a lack of strategy (Antoni, 2014). To get a good score on the TOEFL, someone needs a good knowledge of English and a good strategy for taking the test (Nurhayati, 2016). Using the strategy in taking the TOEFL test is expected to help the students answer the question.

According to Netta and Trisnawati (2019), The majority of students choose self-study as their approach to improve their TOEFL test scores. The student self-study consisted of reading books, listening to music, and watching films, all conducted in the English language. Additionally, self-study test preparation might also include participation in TOEFL preparation courses.

Several researchers have conducted research related to students' strategy in TOEFL. The first research came from Wahyuni, Azisah, and An Nur from UIN Alauddin Makasar in 2015. They did research about the language learning strategy of successful TOEFL test takers. The result of the research demonstrated that the test taker had successfully applied several learning strategies. The strategies are compensation strategies include guessing the meaning of unfamiliar words, metacognitive strategies such as goal setting, affective strategies such as self-encouragement, memory strategies such as grouping some new words in a certain group to make remembering the words easier and using keywords and imagery to help remember new words, cognitive strategies such as making summaries of

TOEFL materials and watching and reading books about TOEFL, and social strategies such as practicing TOEFL with friends and family.

The second research is conducted by Fadila from UIN Ar-Raniry in 2020. She did research about EFL student's preparation in TOEFL. The findings revealed that students are conscious to use learning skills during their time of preparation for each section of the TOEFL test. Students prepared for the listening comprehension test by practicing the test and listening to genuine resources. Students learnt about grammar, practiced the test, and took notes on the themes for structure and written expression. Finally, for the reading comprehension component, students not only practiced the test but also engaged in actual material exposure, questioning methods, and vocabulary notes.

The other research has been conducted by Nurhayati and Nehe (2016) research from Educational Collage of Setia Budhi. They did a reseach about student's strategy in answering TOEFL. The result of the research revealed various ways were used in answering the TOEFL test. The research find out that the students used bottom up for detailed information and top down for implied information and situation in listening comprehension. For structure and written expressions, they read the entire sentences before they answered the questions. While for reading comprehension, many of students read the questions first, and then read the text related to the questions.

The similarity of this research with the previous research is to discuss about student's strategies in TOEFL using qualitative methods. From the previous

research above, the third research is finding out English on English department student strategies who is successful in taking the TOEFL test and getting a high score. Therefore, the researcher is interested in finding out what strategies are used by non-English major students to pass the TOEFL test. So, the researcher intended to conduct research with the title "*the strategy of non-English major students to elevate TOEFL prediction tests score*".

1.2 Research Problem

Based on the Research background, here formulated the problem of the research: what is the strategy used by non-English major students to elevate the TOEFL test score?

1.3 Research Objective

Based on the research problem, the research objective is: to find out what the strategies used by non-English major students to elevate the TOEFL test score.

1.4 Research Scope

This research will only focus on the strategies of non-English major students who reached high scores in TOEFL, by taking less than five tests. The researcher conducted research on university students or graduated students from universities in Banda Aceh.

1.5 Significance of The Research

In making this paper, the researcher hopes the result of "the strategy of non-English major students to elevate institutional testing program (ITP) TOEFL test score" can be beneficial to anyone in the future.

1. Non-English major students

The paper is expected to be beneficial for non-English major students to help them in finding a various way they can apply through TOEFL that is suggested by the informants who share the same background as non-English major students like them. Therefore, it is hoped that the student can find an easier and suitable strategy for TOEFL, and make significant progress in TOEFL score result.

2. TOEFL test-takers

The result of this research is expected to be helpful for test-takers in preparing directions to an effective method for TOEFL test.

3. English TOEFL instructor

This research is also hoped to be beneficial for English TOEFL instructors to use this information to guide their students using learning strategies to increase the possibility for their student to pass the TOEFL test and be able to achieve a good result.

4. Researcher

For the researcher, this study provides a deeper understanding of the strategies used to improve TOEFL scores. It also enhances the researcher's knowledge of TOEFL preparation and develops research skills that may be useful for conducting future studies in the field of English language education.

1.6 The Definition of Key Terms

1. Test of English as a Foreign Language

The TOEFL test is often used as a trademark test of standardized exams to measure the English proficiency of foreign language learners (Oktarina, 2018). A test that is used to evaluate the ability of someone who does not speak English as their first language or an English foreign language learner to check their English proficiency. It tests English basic skills, such as listening, structure and written expression, and reading in each different section.

2. Strategy

Strategy is a way to increase competence in the learning process (Wijayanti, 2018). It is a method that someone can use to help them understand the material. The use of strategies will make it easier for someone to achieve their goals.