

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, the researcher discusses some points. They deal with the background of the problem, the identification of the problem, the limitation of the problem, the formulation of the problem, research questions, the purposes of the study, the significance of the study and the definition of the key terms.

1.1 The Background of the Problem

It has been known that communication competence plays a very extremely important role in the era of revolution 4.0. According to Hashim & Yunus (2019), communication is one of the most crucial aspects that individuals need in revolution Industry 4.0, especially communication by using English. It has become the majority language used as an international spoken and written language. Therefore, advanced students at universities must be able to communicate in spoken and written communication and understand some kinds of reading texts in English.

Since the students are obligated to have high proficiency of English, some language institutions in the world provide international English tests for students who want to know their English proficiency. Those tests are International English Language Test System (IELTS), Test of English for International Communication (TOEIC), and Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL). IELTS is a test to measure the language proficiency of people who want to study or work where

English is used as the language of communication (<https://www.ielts.org/>). TOEIC is a test that is needed in the workplace as the standard for assessing English (<https://www.ets.org/toEIC/>). According to Education Test Service (ETS) (2017), TOEFL is considered to find out how well the nonnative students use their English language skills.

The official TOEFL examination is administered around the world in three formats: The Internet-Based Test (IBT), The Computer-Based Test (CBT) and Paper-Based Test (PBT). According to ETS (2017), the IBT test is the test taken to measure students' ability in all English skills; speaking, listening, reading, and writing. Computer-based test (CBT) is a standard test of English academics administered by a computer since the 1970s (Yao, 2020). TOEFL PBT is a traditional English examination that uses pencil-paper (Alek et al., 2019). The Paper-Based Test (PBT) is almost similar to CBT TOEFL. The difference is using of the computers in doing the examination. For the TOEFL scores, experts usually classify TOEFL scores into 4 levels in English proficiency, elementary level (310-420), low intermediate level (420-480), high intermediate level (480-520), and advance level (525-677) (Carson, et al., 1990, cited in Airin & Power, 2018:16).

Paper-Based TOEFL examines three sections, and one of them is reading comprehension. Reading is one of four basic skills in the teaching and learning process of English. According to Suryanto (2017), reading refers to the ability to obtain information and knowledge through written media. Moreover, reading comprehension is the process to get information and to understand the ideas and

topics presented in the text (Yusuf & Fauzan, 2016). Thus, the students must be competent in reading skill because reading can provide various information and ideas which help students to improve their capability in English.

As a matter of fact, reading comprehension has six levels of thinking of a revision of Bloom's taxonomy; remember, understand, apply, analyze, evaluate and create (Anderson & Krathwohl, 2001). Related to Bloom's taxonomy, reading comprehension of the TOEFL test has four levels of thinking that are to remember, understand, analyze, evaluate (Silalahi, 2017). In the TOEFL test, reading comprehension has the main questions that consist of the main ideas of the passage, stated or unstated detail, vocabulary, and review (Phillips, 2003 & Rogers, 2011).

The TOEFL test is significantly important for the advanced students at universities as it becomes one of requirements to take final thesis examination, to get a scholarship and to get a job. In fact, the universities have their own policies in establishing the TOEFL test because they believe that the TOEFL test is able to measure students' ability and evaluate students' skills to understand English in academic tasks (Aliponga, 2013). For example, Bung Hatta University makes a policy for English Department students to have a minimum standard of TOEFL score that is 400 when registering for a thesis final examination.

Unfortunately, the majority scholarship and job recruitment determine their own standards of TOEFL score. According to LPDP (2019), if the students want to apply for scholarships, they must have 500-530 score of the TOEFL. For the job

requirement, the student must get 450-550 score of the TOEFL test (<https://makassar.tribunnews.com/2019/11/15/link-pendaftaran-cpns-2019-7-instansi-ini-wajibkan-sertifikat-toefl-segini-syarat-nilainya?page=2>).

The researcher checked and observed students' score of reading TOEFL from website UPT-PPBA as a TOEFL Institution of Bung Hatta University. The preliminary data revealed that students did the TOEFL test in 2017-2019 at English department of Bung Hatta University. The total numbers of students were 93 who took Paper-Based TOEFL. Based on the classified score TOEFL by Carson above, the researcher found out the percentage of the students who got score in elementary level 48.4 % (percentage), the students who got score in low intermediate level 36.6 %, the students who got score in high intermediate level 12.9 % and the students who got advance score only 2.2 %. It means that the students' English Department is still having difficulties in reading comprehension of the TOEFL test. Hence, the researcher wants to investigate "The Difficulties Faced by the Third Year English Department Students in the Reading Section Comprehension of TOEFL at Bung Hatta University".

1.2 The Identification of the Problem

Paper-Based TOEFL has three section tests, listening, structure and written expression and reading comprehension. In this case, this research only focused on one section, which is reading comprehension. When the students do the reading comprehension test, they have levels of thinking to answer all of the questions;

remember, understand, apply, analyze, evaluate and create (Anderson & Krathwohl, 2001).

The most critical problem of students in reading comprehension is lack of knowledge in reading aspects (Samad, et al., 2017). According to Rogers (2011: 281), Reading Comprehension of TOEFL test can be classified into some aspect questions as follows: 1) overview questions, 2) factual questions, negative questions, and scanning questions, 3) inference questions and purpose questions, 4) vocabulary-in-context questions, 5) reference questions.

The aspect of reading comprehension questions in TOEFL test consists of five aspects and 13 skills (Phillips, 2003). The first is the questions about the ideas of the passages that consist of two skills, there are answering main idea questions correctly and recognizing the organization of ideas. The second is directly answered questions that consist of three skills: answering stated detail questions correctly, finding unstated details, and finding pronoun referents. The third is indirectly answered questions that consist of two skills: responding to implied and transition questions. The fourth is vocabulary questions which consist of four skills: finding out meanings from structural clues, finding word parts, giving meaning for difficult and simple words by using context. And the last is overall review questions which consist of the tone, purpose, or course, this aspect focuses on finding the specific information of the text.

1.3 The Limitation of the Problem

Based on the identification of the problem above, the researcher limited her study to find out the difficulties of the third year students at English Department of Bung Hatta University to answer the aspects of reading comprehension questions in Paper-Based TOEFL. They deal with the questions about the ideas of the passage, direct questions, indirect questions, vocabulary questions, and overall review questions.

1.4 The Formulation of the Problem

Based on the limitation of the problem above, the researcher formulated the problem as follows: “What are the difficulties to answer reading comprehension section in TOEFL faced by the third year students of English Department of Bung Hatta University?”

1.5 Research Questions

Based on the formulation of the problem above, the researcher had five research questions to be answered as follows:

1. Do the third year students at the English Department of Bung Hatta University have difficulties in answering the questions about the ideas of the passage?
2. Do the third year students at the English Department of Bung Hatta University have difficulties in answering direct questions?
3. Do the third year students at the English Department of Bung Hatta University have difficulties in answering indirect questions?

4. Do the third year students at the English Department of Bung Hatta University have difficulties in answering vocabulary questions?
5. Do the third year students at the English Department of Bung Hatta University have difficulties in answering overall review questions?

1.6 The Purposes of the Study

In general, the purpose of this research was to describe the difficulties of the third year students in the reading comprehension section of TOEFL at English Department of Bung Hatta University. Specifically, the purposes of the research were as follows:

- 1) To find out whether the students had difficulties in answering the questions about the ideas of the passage.
- 2) To find out whether the students had difficulties in answering direct questions.
- 3) To find out whether the students had difficulties in answering indirect questions.
- 4) To find out whether the students had difficulties in answering vocabulary questions.
- 5) To find out whether the students had difficulties in answering overall review questions.

1.7 The Significance of the Study

The result of this study is expected to be useful practically and theoretically in the process of learning English especially for learning the reading comprehension section of the TOEFL test. Practically, these findings can give significant contributions for lecturers, students, and TOEFL institutions in Bung Hatta University. For lecturers, the finding of this research can give contributions for education English department of Bung Hatta University, as information in developing learners' quality in learning English especially in reading comprehension course and to find problem solving of these difficulties in teaching and learning reading course.

For students, these findings can drive students to concern on the difficulties faced of the reading comprehension section in TOEFL Test, and lead them to be more aware of particular difficulties so they can focus on enhancing their skills in the reading comprehension section of the TOEFL test.

Moreover, these findings are very useful for TOEFL Institution namely UTP-PPBA at Bung Hatta University which provides PBT TOEFL. By referring to these findings; UTP-PPBA can provide the TOEFL test which concerns the difficulties in the reading comprehension section on the TOEFL.

On the other hand, theoretically, this finding can give contribution for the scientific reference, especially in reading difficulties variables.

1.8 The Definition of Key Terms

There are some key terms used in this study and to avoid misunderstanding about them it is necessary to provide their definition as follows:

- 1) Difficulties are obstacle faced by the students who get indicated low scores because of many incorrect answers in reading comprehension section of TOEFL test.
- 2) Reading Comprehension is a skill in English that is tested in the TOEFL test.
- 3) TOEFL is a test that measures student proficiency in English and also uses for graduation requirements at college.
- 4) The idea of the passage is the main idea from the text of reading comprehension in the questions of TOEFL test.
- 5) Direct question is a question that the answers stated plainly in the reading comprehension text of TOEFL test.
- 6) Indirect question is a question that can only be answered if the reader understands the text well in the reading comprehension of the TOEFL test.
- 7) Vocabulary question is a question to guess the meaning of the difficult words in the reading comprehension text of the TOEFL.
- 8) Overall review question is a question that asks about specific information such as tone, purpose, or course on the reading TOEFL