Students' Ability in Comprehending TOEFL Reading Test at English Department Universitas Negeri Padang

Thesis

Submitted as a Partial Fulfillment of the Requirement to Obtain Bachelor of Education in English Language Education Program



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ABSTRAK

Kurniawati, Annisa. 2020. An Analysis of Students' Ability in Comprehending TOEFL Test at English Department Universitas Negeri Padang. Skripsi. Padang: Jurusan Bahasa dan Sastra Inggris. Fakultas Bahasa dan Seni. Universitas Negeri Padang.

Penelitian ini membahas tentang kemampuan mahasiswa Bahasa Inggris Universitas Negeri Padang dalam memahami tes membaca di TOEFL. Desain penelitian ini adalah deskriptif. Populasi dalam penelitian ini adalah mahasiswa tahun ketiga di Jurusan Bahasa Inggris tahun akademik 2017 sebanyak 148 mahasiswa dari 6 kelas. Pengambilan sampel dilakukan dengan cara pengambilan kelas secara acak sehingga jumlah sample yang diperoleh sebanyak 22 mahasiswa. Instrumen yang digunakan adalah tes reading di TOEFL. Hasil tes siswa dikonversikan berdasarkan ke nilai TOEFL yang berbasis international. Berdasarkan penelitian ini, kemampuan siswa dalam memahami teks bacaan di TOEFL tergolong cukup dengan (64%) 14 dari 22 siswa memperoleh score antara 41-48 yang mana merupakan nilai tengah dari table penilaian reading TOEFL. Sementara itu, ada 18 % siswa (4 siswa) yang mendapatkan rentang nilai antara 30-40. Sedangkan, 18% sisanya mendapatkan rentang nilai 49-55. Untuk rentang nilai terendah, yaitu 22-29, tidak ada siswa di kategori ini. Untuk rentang nilai tertinggi, 56-67, juga tidak ada siswa yang memperoleh nilai ini. Jadi, dapat disimpulkan bahwa kemampuan mahasiswa dalam memahami tes membaca di TOEFL adalah sedang.

Kata kunci: Pemahaman membaca, Tes membaca TOEFL

ABSTRACT

Kurniawati, Annisa. 2020. *An Analysis of Students' Ability in Comprehending TOEFL Test at English Department Universitas Negeri Padang*. Skripsi. Padang: Jurusan Bahasa dan Sastra Inggris. Fakultas Bahasa dan Seni. Universitas Negeri Padang.

This research was about the students' ability in comprehending TOEFL reading test at English department of Universitas Negeri Padang. The research design was the descriptive research. The population of this study was third year students of English Education Study Program Academic Year 2017. The population was 148 students from 6 classes. The sample was taken by cluster random sampling technique so that the number of samples obtained was 22 samples. The instrument used was a reading TOEFL test for 60 minutes. The correct answer of the reading test was converting to reading TOEFL scoring table with international standardized. Based on this research, students' ability in comprehending TOEFL reading text was moderate with 64% of the students (14 out of 22 students) got score in the range 41-48 which is the middle range in reading TOEFL table scoring. Meanwhile, there were 18% of students (4 students) got score in range 30-40 and the rest 18% (also 4 students) got score in range 49-55). Meanwhile, in the lowest range (22-29) and the highest range (56-67), there were no students got scores in those ranges. This finding indicated that the third-year students' ability in comprehension in reading TOEFL test at English Department of UNP was moderate.

Key words: Reading comprehension, Reading TOEFL test

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. Background of Problem

In teaching and learning English there are four language skills which should be learned by students. The skills are listening, speaking, reading, and writing. The students must master these language skills, in order to use and communicate in English well. Because of that, students need tests to know on their skills. One of well-known tests is TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language); that is very popular and important for almost all university students all over the world besides IELTS. It tests Listening Comprehension, Structure, Written Expression, and Reading.

Furthermore, TOEFL has 4 sections, first is listening comprehension, in this section demonstrate their ability to understand spoken English. Examinees must listen to various types of passages tape recording and respond to multiple choice questions about the passages. The second is structure and written expression, it is demonstrate their ability to recognize grammatically correctness English, examinees either choose their correct way to complete sentences or find errors in sentences. The third is reading comprehension; it demonstrates their ability to understand written English, examinees must answer multiple choices about the ideas and the meanings of words the reading passages. The fourth test of Written English, it demonstrates the students' ability of produce, correct, and organize meaningful English, examinees must write an essay on a given topic in thirty minutes, the Test of Written English is not given with every administration of the paper of TOEFL Test.

In Universitas Negeri Padang TOELF is very important because every student who wants to get their degree, they must have TOELF certification first. If they do not have it, so they will not be able to graduate. UNP requires the students to get scores at least 400 of the TOEFL test for non English Department and 475 for English Department students. This is stated in the rector's regulation for prospective graduates which have been updated in 2018.

The bad point is there are still many of English Department students of UNP who cannot achieve that score point, even 400 for general students. Actually, they have learned how to do TOEFL in grammar 4, advanced listening and advanced reading lesson in fifth semester, but some students failed in doing it.

Since there are four skills are tested in the TOEFL test, the researcher focuses only to reading TOEFL. Van Chung (2017) also states that among the four language skills, reading is the most important for university students because it is the chosen instrument to widen their knowledge. In addition, Chung also states various printed material are available for university students to read while opportunities to speak, listen, and write are not common in their daily life. Moreover, in answering reading questions, there are several skills which are needed. The examples of those skills are the skill of finding ideas of the passage, answering direct and indirect questions, and vocabulary (Phillips: 2001). Those skills have been learned by the English Department students in Critical Reading subject. Yet, those skills are often getting neglected by students. Indeed, reading skill is important as Asmawati (2015) states that students should have good reading skills to help them in academic studies.

Based on preliminary interview with English Department students who have taken TOEFL test, it is found that among the four sections, reading section was difficult for them because the students have problems in understanding or comprehending the texts. Finocchiaro and Bronomo (1973:119) define reading comprehension as one's ability to get information from written materials, it is the main goals on the purpose of reading. Moreover, they said that due to the length of the texts in reading section, makes them more confused to understand or comprehend the texts.

In addition, the students also stated that they still have problems in finding information when they try to answer reading TOEFL questions. This problem is still related to reading comprehension in the area of finding main ideas and answering detailed questions or specific information. Moreover, they claim that they often misunderstand a text or an answer because they lack in making inference. In reading there are many questions where the answer in multiple choices is the paraphrasing of the answer in the text. Due to the paraphrasing, it often makes them confused or even leads them to incorrect answer. Here is the example of the question which is taken from Phillips' book:

The passage:

In English, there are many different kinds of expression that people use to give a name to anything whose name is unknown or momentarily forgotten. The word *gadget* is one such word. It was first used by British sailors in the 1850s and probably came from the French word *gachette*, which was a small hook. In everyday use, the word has a more general meaning. Other words are also used to give a name to something unnamed or unknown, and these words tend to be somewhat imaginative. Some of the more commonly used expression are a *what-d'ye-cal-it*, a *whatsis*, a *thingamabob*, a *thingamajig*, a *doodad*, or a *doohickey*.

The question:

Which of the following is NOT true about the word *gadget?*

- a. It is used to name something when the name is not known
- b. It was used at the beginning of the nineteenth century
- c. It most likely came from a word in the French language
- d. Its first known use was by British sailors

The answer is B that is *it was used at the beginning of the nineteenth century*. In Phillips' book that question is categorized in 'finding unstated details' which need making inference ability or it will lead students to the wrong answer.

Based on the students' problem mention earlier reading skill is related to reading technique. According to Grellet in Fahriany (2014), the reading techniques are skimming, scanning, intensive and extensive reading. Students cannot focus on what they read during the reading activity and still have difficulty to get the ideas of the text.

Asmawati (2015) states answering reading comprehension test will be time consuming if they use inappropriate strategies. Another problem is that not every detail of information in the passage is needed to answer the reading questions but students usually read the reading passage word by word. Reading a text word by word also makes them quickly forget what they have read.

Some studies have discussed in the area of reading TOEFL ability and problem. The first research was conducted by Sari (2016) in Institut Agama Islam Negeri (IAIN) Salatiga. This research entitled "The Descriptive Analysis of Students TOEFL Reading Score In 6th Semester of English Department Students of State Institute For Islamic Studies In The Academic Year of 2015/2016". The second research was conducted by Herdi. The title of his research is The Students' Reading Ability on Test of English as the Foreign Language (TOEFL). The third one is a research by Oktarina (2018) under the title "Difficult Skills in Reading Section of TOEFL Faced by Sixth Semester English Students". The fourth on is by Girsang, Marbun, Turnip, & Saragih (2019) with the title "An Analysis of Reading Comprehension Difficulties in TOEFL Test by High School Students". The fourth one is conducted by Febriani, Efrida, & Jayanti (2019) under the title "Reading Comprehension Problems in Reading Section of TOEFL".

These researches have similarity and difference with previous researchers. The similarity is those researchers discussed about students' ability and problems or difficulties in reading TOEFL .However, it is also have the differences which is this research studied the ability of each skill in reading comprehension of TOEFL also the problems which they faced in each reading skill. The previous study, Sari (2016) just discusses about the homogeneity of the score of the test and she

categorized into four positions, that are excellent, good position, moderate, poor to fair. Meanwhile Herdi (2016) only discusses about the ability of reading TOEFL using descriptive statics of the reading score. Gisang et al., (2019) discuss the difficulties by High school students in general. Then, a research by Oktarina (2018) only studied which skill was difficult for the students. Lastly, Febriani et al., (2019) provide the research in 5 aspect of reading comprehension problem. Those previous researchers inspired the researcher to know Students' ability and problems in each skill of reading comprehension of TOEFL by fifth semester students of English Department students in UNP.

Based on the problem that is faced by English Department students in reading comprehension and some previous research which have done regarding reading comprehension in TOEFL, it encourages the researcher to make research about it. The researcher is interested in doing research about "Students' Ability and Understanding in Reading Comprehension of TOEFL (A Study of English Department Students of Universitas Negeri Padang Registered in 2017/2018 Academic Year)."

B. Identification of the Problem

Based on the background problem above, researcher found TOEFL (Test of English of a Foreign Language) is one of test model to measure people's ability or competency in English. It tests people's proficiency in English that is included Listening Comprehension, Structure and Written Expression, and Reading Comprehension.

One of the TOEFL that is tested is Reading of the TOEFL. Related to the background problem, it can be identified that there are some problems found by the

researcher. The first one is students' problem in understanding long texts. Students claim that they have problem in finding main idea of a text especially long texts. Second, students have problem in finding information to answer questions. The third one is making inference of texts. In this case, those problems are related to reading comprehension questions.

C. Limitation of the Problems

Since there are three categories of the TOEFL test, the researcher would like to limit to Reading Comprehension of the TOEFL test. There are six abilities of reading comprehension which will be tested. Those six abilities are:

- 1. Students' ability in term of finding main ideas
- 2. Students' ability in term of directly answered questions
- 3. Students' ability in term of indirectly answered questions
- 4. Students' ability in term of vocabulary questions
- 5. Students' ability in term of overall review questions

Based on the identification of the problem above, the researcher limited the problem on the fifth semester students` ability in Comprehending TOEFL Reading who have learned the five skills.

D. Formulation of The Problems

Based on the limitation of the problem above, the problem of this study is formulated into the following questions: "How is the students' ability in comprehending reading TOEFL by the fifth semester students of English department at Universitas Negeri Padang registered in 2017 academic year?."

E. Research Questions

To be specific, the problem of this research is formulated as follow:

- 1. How is students' ability in comprehending TOEFL reading test?
- 2. What are the problems faced by students in comprehending TOEFL reading test?

F. The Purpose of the Research

Based on the research questions mentioned previously, the purposes of this research as follows are:

- To find out the students' ability in comprehending TOEFL reading test
- To find out the problems faced by students in comprehending TOEFL reading test

G. Significance of the Research

The result of the study is expected to be useful in two ways:

1. Theoretical

Theoretically, this research hopefully can provides the information and knowledge for the readers about the reading comprehension in TOEFL by third-year university students and also the problems which faced by the students in comprehending the reading TOEFL test.

2. Practical

a. English students

This research hopefully can give the information to the students' ability in comprehending reading TOEFL-like test, it is useful for them in measuring their ability in understanding reading TOEFL text and it can be reference whether students will be able to pass as they follow the real TOEFL test or not.

b. The Lecturer

This research hopefully can help lecturer, especially in teaching Critical Reading to know how far students ability in reading comprehension in TOEFL and the problems. Furthermore, after knowing the ability and problems, this research expected can help lecturer in teaching and giving learning material about reading in TOEFL which focusing on the students' problems.

c. The researcher

This research hopefully can increase the researcher's knowledge about scientific research. Then, this research is aimed at obtaining bachelor's degree.

d. Another researcher

It is hoped the result of the research can contribute useful information for the future experiment research with the similar problem of the descriptive analysis of students TOEFL reading comprehension.

e. The readers

This research hopefully provides the information and knowledge for the readers about reading comprehension in TOEFL. Moreover, it is hoped the result of the research can contribute useful information for the

future experiment research with the similar problem of the descriptive analysis of students TOEFL reading comprehension

H. Definition of the Key Terms

In order to avoid misunderstanding of these key terms, the researcher defines some terms as follows:

1. Reading comprehension

Reading comprehension is defined as ability in Comprehending texts that given.

2. Reading TOEFL test

Reading TOEFL test means that the reading test items are from the international TOEFL that has been tested

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

A. Conclusion

The purpose of this research is to find out students' ability in comprehending reading TOEFL test and the problems which faced by the students in comprehending it. The students' ability in reading TOEFL test in general is classified in moderate. Based on the findings and discussion above, there are some difficulties and problems in all of the type of reading skills that the students faced in comprehending reading TOEFL test, Based on the interview of their problems were the lack in language knowledge, motivation in reading, and the problem in reading comprehension process. In addition, some of the students also had problems with the external factors, such as time limit and noises.

B. Suggestion

There are some suggestions offered by the researcher to the following parties:

For the third-year student of English Department in UNP, it is suggested for
the English language learner to learn more about reading TOEFL by
focusing on the skills and type of questions in reading TOEFL; therefore,
the ability itself can be increased. Also a lot of practice will also be helped
in increasing the ability in reading TOEFL.

2. Moreover, for English language instructor it is suggested to teach about reading TOEFL by focusing more on the reading skills or its type of questions. The learners also need to expose more to the exercise related to reading TOEFL in order to gain better comprehension about reading TOEFL. After knowing the problem of the students, it is also expected to lectures to design a suitable teaching-learning process or learning material which will decreased the students' problems in comprehension reading TOEFL.

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