

**AN ANALYSIS OF ENGLISH DEPARTMENT STUDENTS'
DIFFICULTIES IN ANSWERING TOEFL TEST OF LISTENING
COMPREHENSION**

THESIS

*Submitted as a Partial Fulfillment of the Requirement to Achieve Bachelor of
Education (B. Ed) in English Language Education Program*



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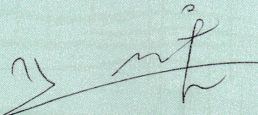
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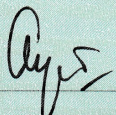
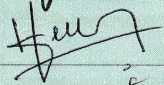
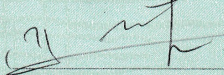
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Abstract

Rina, Parni. (2021). An Analysis of English Department Students' Difficulties in Answering TOEFL Test of Listening Comprehension. Thesis. Padang: English Language and Literature Department. Faculty of Languages and Arts. Universitas Negeri Padang.

The purpose of the research is to find out the English students' difficulties in answering TOEFL test of listening comprehension and the factors of the difficulties. The sample of this study was the English department students of Universitas Negeri Padang who have taken the TOEFL test from August to December 2020. They were given 63 questions to explore their difficulties. Descriptive method with quantitative approach is used in this study. The result showed that there are seven skills that students face difficult; similar sounds, answers in order, who, what and where, anticipate questions, reduced forms of words, chunks of language, and speed delivery. The factors which cause the difficulties in answering the TOEFL test questions are lack of vocabulary, length and speed of listening, unfamiliar with reduced form of words, low skill and less practice. By guessing the answer and using clues were the strategies the students used to overcome the difficulties in answering TOEFL test of listening comprehension.

Key words: *Students' difficulties, Listening Comprehension, TOEFL.*

Abstrak

Rina, Parni. (2021). An Analysis of English Department Students' Difficulties in Answering TOEFL Test of Listening Comprehension. Thesis. Padang: English Language and Literature Department. Faculty of Languages and Arts. Universitas Negeri Padang.

Tujuan dari penelitian ini adalah untuk mengetahui kesulitan siswa bahasa Inggris dalam menyelesaikan tes TOEFL pemahaman listening dan faktor-faktor yang menyebabkan kesulitan. Sampel penelitian ini adalah mahasiswa Jurusan Bahasa Inggris Universitas Negeri Padang yang sudah mengikuti tes TOEFL dari bulan Agustus sampai Desember 2020. Mereka diberikan 63 soal untuk mengetahui kesulitan yang mereka hadapi. Metode deskriptif dengan pendekatan kuantitatif digunakan dalam penelitian ini. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa ada tujuh skill yang sulit bagi siswa; persamaan bunyi, jawaban berurutan, siapa, apa dan dimana, mengantisipasi pertanyaan, bentuk kata yang direduksi, potongan bahasa dan penyampaian yang cepat. Faktor yang menyebabkan kesulitan dalam menjawab pertanyaan adalah kosa kata yang sedikit, panjang dan kecepatan dalam mendengar, kata reduksi yang tidak diketahui, kemampuan yang rendah dan kurang latihan. Dengan menebak jawaban dan menggunakan petunjuk merupakan strategi yang gunakan siswa untuk mengatasi kesulitan dalam menjawab tes TOEFL pemahaman menyimak.

Key words: *Kesulitan siswa, Pemahaman listening, TOEFL.*

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the description about the introduction of this research. It consists of some parts which deal with background, identification, limitation, formulation, research question, and purpose, significance of the problem and the definition of key term. Each part is presented systematically.

A. Background of the Problem

TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language), paper and computer based, has become the most popular of International test in many countries currently. It was first administered by ETS (Educational Testing Service), in 1964. A report by ETS, it is more than 50 million people in 180 countries all over the world have signed up to take the TOEFL test. According to Philips (2001), TOEFL is a test to check non-native speakers of English level of proficiency. Additionally, it is required by college students to graduate from universities. Then, it is also taken by non-native students to get scholarship to English speaking country (Astuti & Sudrajat, 2018). Samad, Jannah & Fitriani (2017) also add that TOEFL is used to apply for a job vacancy.

Furthermore, students may face difficulties in answering the TOEFL test which involves the listening skill, structure and written expression skill and reading skill. Kristiyanti (2018) finds that the most incorrect answer when student answering the TOEFL test is the structure and written expression. Students are not able to understand the grammar rules. Then, students have problem with English

mastery. Redundancy is also difficult part in TOEFL test (Muhajir & Gani, 2018). Akmal, Risdaneva, Habiburrahim and Sari (2020) mention that the common difficulties dealing with determiners, conjunctions, adjective clauses, apposition phrases, and reduced clauses are found in structure section. While, adverb connections, subject-verb agreement, and clause of concession, relative clause, and quantifier are encountered in the written expression section. Thus, students' difficulties related to the structure and written expression becomes a crucial part that students have to recognize and understand the grammatical rules in order to gain the maximum score.

In line to this, Mahmud (2014) and Halim & Ardiningtyas (2018) agree that the problems faced by students in answering TOEFL test are; fewer basic skills, less practice, less motivation and students' individual differences such as age and social status. In addition, Rezkiani (2019) shows students have difficulties in the TOEFL test such as clustering, redundancy, reduce form, rate of delivery, incomplete rule application, determining main idea, locating inference, making inference and detail information. Those problems influence students' achievement in answering the TOEFL test. Students not only need practicing more but they need more attention and motivation to reach good achievement toward the TOEFL test.

Similarly, Abboud & Hussein (2011) state that there is a time problem for the whole sections, especially for listening comprehension and reading comprehension. The problems with reading comprehension process such as;

students' motivation, problem with background knowledge, lack of reading strategies and problem with language knowledge are also mentioned by Febriani, Elfida & Jayanti (2019). Asrida and Fitrawati (2019) state that main idea questions, stated detail questions, transition questions, context to determine meaning of simple words, and determine the tone of passage are the most difficult items encountered by students. Reading skill is an essential skill for students to succeed in answering the TOEFL test. The reading section contains specific scientific topics on biology, physiology nature, social and physical science, history and many more.

Additionally, at Universitas Negeri Padang the students who want to enter the university and finish their study have to take the TOEFL test which is administered by the UPT Bahasa which the passing grade is determined by the university. For English Department students the minimum score should be 475 and for other students the minimum score should be reached 400 of TOEFL test. The types of TOEFL test that undertaken by students is the TOEFL preparation test. This test belongs to the Paper Based TOEFL test. It consists of three part; listening comprehension, structure and written expression, and reading comprehension. Students who are failed in the TOEFL test must retake another chance to get the minimum score.

However, the English Department students of Faculty Languages and Arts, Universitas Negeri Padang have learned about the TOEFL test in some courses at English department. The listening comprehension part of TOEFL test is studied in

Listening subject. The structure and written expression part is studied in Grammar subject, while for the reading comprehension is studied in Reading subject. Although they have learned about it, the difficulties may be encountered. It can be from the material problem or technical problem or another problem.

To sum up, the previous studies have focused on the TOEFL test in general and problems in structure and written expression and reading comprehension. In this study the researcher will focus to analyze the English Department students' difficulties in answering the TOEFL test of listening comprehension which is taken as a requirement for students to graduate from Universitas Negeri Padang. In addition, the researcher will also elaborate the factors that make students face difficulties.

B. Identification of the Problem

Based on the problem that explained in the background of the problem above, the identification of the problem of this study are:

1. The students' difficulties in answering the TOEFL test of structure and written section.
2. The students' difficulties in answering the TOEFL test of reading section.
3. The students' difficulties in answering the TOEFL test of listening comprehension.

C. Limitation of the Problem

Based on the identification of the problem above, the researcher focuses on analyzing the English department students' difficulties in answering the TOEFL test of listening comprehension.

D. Formulation of the Problem

Related to the focus of the problem above, the problem is formulated as: "What are the English department students' difficulties in answering the TOEFL test of listening comprehension?"

E. Research Question

The research questions are:

1. What are the difficulties encountered by English Department students' in answering the TOEFL test of listening comprehension?
2. What are the factors which cause students' difficulties in answering the TOEFL test of listening comprehension?

F. Purpose of the Research

In accordance with the background the objectives of the study are:

1. To find the difficulties encountered by English department students in answering the TOEFL test of Listening Comprehension.
2. To find the factors of the difficulties faced by English department students in answering the TOEFL test of Listening Comprehension.

G. Significance of the Research

The researcher hopes the result of this research gives some benefits to the English teaching and learning. It has two major significances:

1. Theoretical Significance

Dealing with theory, this research gives benefits to find out the students' difficulties and its factor in answering the TOEFL test of listening comprehension. Then, this research also elaborates theories related to the TOEFL Test and Listening skill. Hopefully, students who understand about TOEFL and listening skill will find a good strategy to overcome the difficulties in answering the TOEFL test especially in listening comprehension.

2. Practical Significance

a. For the lecturers

The result of this research can help lecturers to be aware on students' difficulties in answering the TOEFL test of listening comprehension and also lecturers can help students to overcome the students' difficulties. Hopefully, lecturers will prepare good strategy and technique to help students solve their problems.

b. For TOEFL Training

The result of this research can be used as a reference to know students difficulties which occur in answering TOEFL test of listening comprehension, then to conduct good strategies to help them to overcome those difficulties.

c. Other researchers

The result of this research will give additional information for other researchers who want to conduct further research on the related field.

H. Definition of Key Terms

Difficulties : A condition that is hard to accomplish, deal with, or understand.

Listening Comprehension of TOEFL Test : A part of TOEFL test section which demonstrates students' ability to understand conversations and talks in English.

TOEFL Test : A test to check students' comprehension about English and the use of it in daily life toward American standard of English.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

A. Conclusion

From the results of the data from this study it can be concluded; first, the most difficult skill in listening comprehension of TOEFL test are similar sounds, answer in order, who, what where, and anticipate questions. The factors of the difficulties are because of lack vocabulary, length and speed of listening. And other difficult skills in listening skill are reduced forms, chunks of language, and speed delivery. It happens because students are not familiar with it, low skill and less practice. Then, the most mastered skill are what, who, where in multiple nouns, two and three part of verbs, anticipate questions, double negative expressions, grammatical word classes, detect key words and distinctive sounds of English.

In addition, even the students face some difficulties they are able to answer the question well. The students used their own strategy to help them in answering the question of TOEFL test. They used to guess random answer based on the clues that they hear. To overcome those difficulties the students have to do listening practice more in order to achieve the highest score in TOEFL test.

B. Suggestions

Based on the findings some suggestions are proposed;

1. The lecturer

The lecturers who teach listening subject to support English students to work harder in answering TOEFL test because from the data on the questionnaire of this research the researcher found that the highest score was 610. Hopefully, that the next time students' score to be increased more until 677 as the highest score.

2. The next researcher

This research is expected to give benefits for other researchers who want to conduct the same topic, it is suggested to involve many participants may be from another faculty and department. It will make the result of the research be richer and powerful. This research cannot involve many participants due to Covid-19 outbreak which makes other students' cannot take the TOEFL test.

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