

**THE DIFFICULTIES OF ENGLISH DEPARTMENT STUDENTS AT
UNIVERSITAS NEGERI PADANG IN ANSWERING READING
SECTION OF TOEFL**

THESIS

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By;

RISA ASRIDA

15018041/2015

Advisor

Fitrawati, S.S., M.Pd.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE DEPARTMENT

FACULTY OF LANGUAGES AND ARTS

UNIVERSITAS NEGERI PADANG

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Abstract

Asrida, Risa. 2019. The Difficulties of English Department Students at Universitas Negeri Padang in Answering Reading Section of TOEFL

This research was a descriptive research that aimed to identify the English Department students' difficult skills in reading section of TOEFL at Universitas Negeri Padang. This study used proportional stratified sampling to choose the sample. The participants of this study were 26 students in 2016 academic years. This study used instrument in the form of reading TOEFL test. The test consisted of 50 multiple choice questions in 55 minutes. The study found that the last year English students of Universitas Negeri Padang had problems in 13 skills among 5 topics assessed. There were five most difficult skills; main idea questions, stated detail questions, transition questions, context to determine meaning of simple words, and determine the tone of the passage.

Key words: Students' Difficulty, skills, Reading, TOEFL.

ABSTRAK

Asrida, Risa. 2019. Kesulitan Mahasiswa Jurusan Bahasa Inggris di Universitas Negeri Padang dalam Menjawab Bagian Reading TOEFL

Penelitian ini adalah penelitian deskriptif yang bertujuan untuk mengidentifikasi skill yang sulit oleh mahasiswa Bahasa Inggris dalam seksi reading TOEFL di Universitas Negeri Padang. Penelitian ini menggunakan proportional stratified sampling untuk memilih sampel. Partisipan penelitian ini adalah 26 siswa pada tahun akademik 2016. Penelitian ini menggunakan instrumen berupa tes reading TOEFL. Tes terdiri dari 50 pertanyaan pilihan ganda dalam waktu 55 menit. Penelitian ini menemukan bahwa mahasiswa Bahasa Inggris Universitas Negeri Padang memiliki masalah dalam 13 skill di antara 5 topik yang dinilai. Lima skill yang paling sulit; pertanyaan ide utama, pertanyaan detail yang dinyatakan, pertanyaan transisi, konteks untuk menentukan makna kata-kata sederhana, dan menentukan karakter penulis dari teks.

Kata kunci: Kesulitan, keterampilan, Membaca, TOEFL.

DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my beloved parents, Asral and Darnilis, for unconditional love, tireless work, and ceaseless pray. Thank you for taking me this far in spite of all hurdles and limitations. My dearest brothers and sisters; kapten imut, rini, ridon, iril, rilon, rike, rise, and rivu, team for teaching me what and how it means to grow as an adult. And all my bestfriend, best troop, and part of my life, who have given a big support and motivation to keep struggle in my way to finish this thesis.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, the researcher discusses the introduction. It consists of 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 research, the significance of the research, and the definition of key terms.

1.1 Background of the Problem

The era of industrial revolution 4.0 have tremendous impact on human life. One of them in the academic aspect. Students are required to upgrade and highlight the uniqueness or differentiation and added value themselves. Revolution 4.0 creates the world community interact and carry out various activities without being constraint by distance. In addition, global interaction is established by the presence of international languages. So, to be able to compete in this era the ability of communication is needed, especially in languages. One of the improvements made by the university to create the best graduates and being able to compete in the opportunities for employment is mastering English. English is used as an international communication. As the result, to improve students' English proficiency most of university conducts some test to measure students' skills in acquires English.

Due to the policies and the regulation of Universitas Negeri Padang in order to get graduated students have to pass the English Language Test successfully. In that case, Universitas Negeri Padang requires TOEFL to measure students'

proficiency in English. The purposes for taking TOEFL test are first to measure students' ability in English as a second or foreign language. Second, as an obligation for student who will pass the college study. The last, taking master/doctoral degree or applying particular jobs abroad and inside the country.

TOEFL or Test of English as a foreign language is accepted as a proof of English proficiency in 9,000 universities, organization and other TOEFL participating institute across 130 countries in the world (Simanjuntak, 2016). TOEFL consists of three types; they are Paper Based Test (PBT), Computer Based Test (CBT) and internet Based Test (iBT). In Universitas Negeri Padang, the students still take TOEFL PBT. It is supposed as the easier and the cheapest one. Moreover, the local institutions or companies in Indonesia still accept the certificate of TOEFL PBT as long as the institutions which held TOEFL are legally reliable.

TOEFL consists of several sections that are being examined; listening, speaking, structure and written expression, reading, and writing, depending on TOEFL type. TOEFL PBT has three sections, listening section, structure and written expression section, and reading section. In order to past TOEFL, the test-takers have to master the basic skills and the language elements of English, speaking, listening, reading and writing. This research focused on reading section of TOEFL. Reading comprehension section being one of the larger complex, include a variety of text types as well as various task design (Dilyana, 2016).

Reading comprehension at TOEFL is a cognitive process interacts with the text Dilyana (2016). Reading for comprehension level are reading to learn,

combine information and multiple texts. According to Kamijo (2011) students frequently read the questions carelessly scan the passage, merely guessing answers in the end. Nehe (2016) shown there were about 11 students (46%) at STKIP Setia Budhi who answered correctly in Reading comprehension section. Means that the ability of students are still low in reading section.

Especially for English department students of Universitas Negeri Padang have to pass 475 score of TOEFL for the graduation. In fact, many students cannot complete the requirement for graduation because the TOEFL score are low. Moreover, the score of reading TOEFL test at Advanced Reading subject are still low, based on the researcher's observation; data score and simple interview with the lecturer. This fact is really problematic because these students have learned English since the first semester. Also, students have passed the basic reading, intermediate reading, advanced reading and extensive reading, and last, students have conducted TOEFL for several times.

There are several students' problem in answering reading section of TOEFL. Mahmud (2014) argues that fewer basic skills, less practice, less motivation, and students' individual differences as the students' problem in answering TOEFL test. Halim & Sri (2018) found that there are three major problems in answering TOEFL. Fewer basic skills, students' low vocabulary mastery such as difficulties finding the synonyms. This situation caused by lack of practice and less awareness of the importance of English. Second, less practice most of students got difficulties in time management. Proven by the questionnaire's result where 30 students said they need more practice for TOEFL

test. The last, less motivation, motivation played an essential role in the success of the students in answering TOEFL. They have less motivation to learn TOEFL outside the university, like join in TOEFL tryout or preparation club.

In addition, the difficulties in answering reading section could come from internal aspect of reading section. Nurhayati & Berita (2016) found that reference question in reading section are the most difficult question types for eighth semester students of STKIP Setia Budhi. Oktarina (2018) found that there are five problem of sixth semester English students of Universitas Negeri Jambi in reading section; Finding Main Idea, Implied Detail Question, Unstated Detail, Stated Detail Question and Vocabulary question.

This study is an expansion of those previous studies, which focuses on the difficult skills faced by fourth year English department students of Universitas Negeri Padang in TOEFL reading section. Using five main topics of reading section of TOEFL and divided the main topic into thirteen sub topics in order to find students' difficulties more specific. A better understanding of students' problems would not only make the students realize their weaknesses but also enable for teachers plan suitable teaching materials or methods to improve students' ability in answering reading section on TOEFL.

1.2 Identification of the Problem

Related to the background of the problem there are several problems identified such as the strategy used, preparation and the difficulties felt by the students. First is about the strategy used while taking TOEFL. This study talks about what strategy used by the students while learning TOEFL, depending the

students' need, place, and habits. It also can relate and/or compare the strategy used by the different teachers.

Second is about preparation before conducting the TOEFL. It talks about the preparation from the students themselves, TOEFL curriculum, the facility and equipment on the class, the language center staff and others. It can also talk about the process and time of the students to prepare the test itself.

Last problem is about difficult skills on TOEFL. Focuses on reading comprehension questions and analyze their difficult skills in reading section of TOEFL. It examines which question that is hard for the students mostly and which question that is easy.

1.3 Limitation of Problem

The researcher limits this study to investigate English Students' difficult skill related to reading section questions. The reason of choosing this problem is because the researcher found many researchers have been conducted related to the two other problems, listening and structure section. Moreover, the previous research focuses on main topics in reading section of TOEFL. Based on the interview from lecturer at English department, most of students score at TOEFL test are low. It also makes this problem becomes urgent to be solved because this is what the students need now.

In addition, many students do not realize in which skills they have problem. When the students realize their weakness, they can learn better. So, this problem is importance because many students do not realize in which skills they have

problem. For the lecturer, it will be useful because the lecturer can design and improve the learning process based on the students' problem.

1.4 Formulation of the Problem

According to the limitation of the problem, the formulation of the problem is “which skills of reading comprehension section of TOEFL test are difficult for English students?”

1.5 Research Questions

The problem is developed into several questions below:

1. What are the students' difficulties in answering the ideas of the passage?
2. What are the students' difficulties in answering directly answered questions?
3. What are the students' difficulties in answering indirectly answered questions?
4. What are the students' difficulties in answering vocabulary questions?
5. What are the students' difficulties in answering overall review questions?

1.6 Purpose of the Research

Related the research questions stated previously, the purpose of this study to investigate difficult skills in reading section of TOEFL faced by fourth semester of English students in Universitas Negeri Padang.

1.7 Significance of the Research

This research contribute knowledge and information about which skills are difficult for students and teacher can provide better instructions in teaching English students practically. Theoretically, this research is beneficial on knowing skills that are difficult for English Students of Universitas Negeri Padang in answering the reading section of TOEFL.

1.8 Definition of Key Terms

- Analysis : Systematically, examination and evaluation of data or information, by divided it into its part of component to uncover their interrelationships. The process of analysis is done to gain understanding about the data or information.
- Difficulty : The quality or state of being hard to do, deal with, or understand. The condition or situation of a thing that is hard to accomplish.
- Skills : The kinds of skill that are tested in TOEFL test. Consists of 5 main topics and divided the main topic into thirteen sub topics.
- Reading section : Reading is tested in the third section on both the paper TOEFL test and the computer TOEFL test. This is one of four sections on Paper Based TOEFL and should be answered with a limit of time.
- TOEFL : The abbreviation of “Test of English as a Foreign Language”. This is one of international test as a measurement of the ability of English as a second language or foreign language.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

5.1 Conclusion

The results of analysis on the students' difficult skills have led into some conclusions. The analysis of students' difficulty in all skills in reading TOEFL are difficult for students, mostly. Then, the analysis toward all skills assessed also gave the information that; First, in the ideas of the passage students' difficult skills was answer main idea questions. Second, directly answered questions students' difficult skills was answer stated detail questions. Third, in answer indirectly answered questions students' difficult skills was answer transition questions correctly. Fourth, vocabulary questions students' difficult skills was use context to determine meaning of simple words. Fifth, overall review questions students' difficult skills was determine the tone of the passage. Eventhough, students have learn reading TOEFL previously the result of the test show that it does not have significant impact. Therefore, English Department students not only need to learn the materials in classes but also need to exercise them outside of the classes.

5.2 Suggestion

Taking TOEFL is a must for English Department Students and they are expected to have a high TOEFL score. However, many students take TOEFL several times because they cannot pass the score. The students do not realize that

they cannot pass it may be caused by small reason, careless for instance. Based on the finding of the research, there are some suggestions offered:

1. It is really recommended for the English Department Students to practice more and be careful in answering the test. The students need to add reading materials and relearn the reading TOEFL materials. TOEFL should not be a difficult thing to do because the students have learned English since the first semester; they learn listening speaking reading and writing in English. It is something pathetic when English Department Students cannot reach the minimum score given for their final examination and graduation. The students are expected to have a high score of TOEFL. Therefore, to minimize the mistakes, the students cannot put their hope in the material gotten when they learn reading, but they need to read a lot to add the vocabulary and find new knowledge.
2. It is suggested for English lecturer to explain the reading for TOEFL material deeply. It is because most of the topics that are hard for the students. The students might say they never learn it before, but it also has the possibility in which the students have learned it but they do not understand it well. Therefore, a deep and clear explanation will help the students in understanding the material better.

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