

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

A. Background of the Study

The way to measure the students' ability is using test. Test can help the teacher to evaluate and diagnose the students' strengths and weakness¹. It can also identify the students' progress². So, testing is important to do for knowing how far the achievement of the students' understanding to the materials. There are four types of test in language testing. One of them is proficiency test³. Proficiency in the dictionary means that the quality of having great facility and competence⁴. But in this case, proficiency means having sufficient command of the language for a particular purpose.

From those terms, proficiency test is useful to measure one's language ability. The kinds of proficiency test are Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL), Test of English for International Communication (TOEIC), International English Language Testing System (IELTS), Pearson Test of English Academic (PTE Academic), Cambridge First Certificate in English Examination (FCE), Cambridge Certificate of Proficiency in English Examination (CPE), Association of Language Testers in Europe (ALTE), International Student Admission Test (ISAT), and others⁵.

Proficiency test which is prominently applied as the English standardized test in Indonesia is TOEFL. As it is implied for the measurement of English ability, TOEFL is

¹ Arthur Hughes, *Testing for Language Teachers* (UK : Cambridge University Press, 2003) 8

² Thomas Kellagar & Gery Shiel, *Standardised Testing in Lower Secondary* (Dublin : Research conducted on behalf of the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment, 2010) 16

³ Arthur Hughes, *Testing for Language Teachers* (UK, Cambridge University Press, 2003) 11-16

⁴ Oxford Dictionary

⁵ Arthur Hughes, *Testing for Language Teachers*, (UK, Cambridge University Press, 2003), 12

designed into three versions⁶. Each version has different material tested, thus it will affect the difference of scoring scale. The first version is PBT. It stands for Paper-Based test. The material of this test consists of listening, structure and written expression, and reading. The scoring scale is 310-677. The second version is CBT. It stands for Computer-Based test. The material encompasses listening, structure, reading, and writing. The scoring scale for this test is 0-300. The last is IBT. It stands for Internet-Based test. The test inquiries are listening, reading, speaking, and writing. The scoring in IBT is 0-120⁷. Based on the explanation above, some institutions in Indonesia use TOEFL PBT version as a parameter to measure the English ability of a person.

TOEFL is obviously important to meet students' ability in English standard test. It is one of the important admission requirements for students who are planning to study abroad. It also becomes quite necessary for some the businesses, government, and scholarship program. Furthermore, it is particularly used by some institutions in Indonesia recently as the one of requirements to get a job as well. So, it will be beneficial for job seeker when they have the TOEFL certificate first.

Due to the importance of TOEFL, most of the universities in Indonesia apply TOEFL test as one of students' requirements before graduation. Each university has different standard score as the requirement for graduation. Unfortunately, this policy hasn't completely succeeded to apply for some students yet. The journalist of Kompas reported many students in Riau have the difficulties to do TOEFL test. Most of them have already participated in TOEFL test more than once, unfortunately they still failed. Finally, the big effect is the opportunities to take the graduation will be longer⁸.

⁶ Educational Testing Service, TOEFL : Score Comparison Tables (USA : 2005) 5

⁷ Ibid, 4

⁸ Kompas Newspaper, Editor :Ingried Dwi Wedhaswary, published on December 1st, 2011.

Some universities use TOEFL test to measure students' skills in English. ITS, IAIN Sunan Ampel, UGM, UNESA, UNAIR, UNIPA for instance⁹. They must take TOEFL test as the requirement to graduate. UIN Sunan Ampel as one of the universities in Surabaya which apply TOEFL test for graduation requirement as well. Furthermore, this university has special course for students of English Education Department to prepare students in doing TOEFL test well. The course is TOEFL Preparation.

It is one of compulsory subjects on the seventh semester students of English Education Department. In this subject uses the TOEFL PBT version in learning process, thus it gives opportunities to increase the students' knowledge especially for listening, structure and written expression, and reading comprehension. Teacher gives many tests to drill students during one semester as well. Furthermore, it will be beneficial for students of English Education Department to learn TOEFL test well. Based on the preliminary study, the researcher got 62% of nineteen students in TOEFL Preparation of Class B 2012 failed in the final examination, thus only six students passed the final examination. Moreover, they have difficulties especially in reading comprehension.

Reading comprehension is one of sections in TOEFL test. High or low score in reading section will affect TOEFL score. Based on the fact that 93% of thirteen students of TOEFL Preparation Class B who have failed in final examination got failure in reading comprehension, automatically it will affect their TOEFL score¹⁰. In fact, TOEFL is a parameter to measure the English ability of a person. As the researcher explains the importance of TOEFL for university students above, reading is one of important section in TOEFL that must be understood carefully. Therefore students must take more

⁹ Based on the Interview with M. Nur, Ratna Wuri, Suci W on March 23rd, 2012

¹⁰ The Result of TOEFL Final Test in Students Class B, 2012

attention on reading section in TOEFL, knowing the fact that the capability in reading section is also important to achieve the high score in TOEFL.

In fact, there are other factors that may affect the students' score in TOEFL test. As the explanation of Douglas Brown in Principles of Language Learning, there are some principles that affect the process of students' achievement¹¹. The principles are motivation and teacher's strategies. Thus, the researcher will analyze students' failure which is focused on the students' difficulties in doing TOEFL test especially in reading section, the students' motivation and teacher' strategies as well.

As the previous study, the researcher focused on the causes of student's difficulty in TOEFL test in term of listening, in this case the researcher of previous study tried to discuss and find solution for listening section in TOEFL test. It happened because of students' difficulty mostly happen in listening. In the first research that was stated by Irene Kostin¹². She reported Exploring Item Characteristics that are related to the Difficulty of TOEFL Dialogue Items. The difficult items are dialogue in listening comprehension. The items will be analyzed based on word - level factors, sentence - level factors, discourse - level factors, task - processing factors.

The second research was conducted by Freedle and Kostin. They reported the Prediction of TOEFL Listening Comprehension Item Difficulty for Mini talk Passage¹³. This research analyzes the relevant features of item passages significantly influenced listening comprehension item difficulty, indicating that listeners were responding to the meanings of the passages. While in this research, the researcher will focus on answering

¹¹ H. Douglas Brown, Principles of Language Learning fourth Edition, (New York : Pearson Education Company, 2000) 150

¹² Irene Kostin, Exploring Item Characteristics That Are Related to the Difficulty of TOEFL Dialogue Items. ETS, Princeton, NJ, 2004.

¹³ Freedle and Kostin, The Prediction of TOEFL Listening Comprehension Item Difficulty for Mini talk Passage, ETS, 1996.

the different questions which appear in the causes of students' difficulties in doing TOEFL test.

The researcher is interested in researching this case in term of students' failure in TOEFL test and choosing the students in the TOEFL Preparation of Class B as the object of the research because they are the seventh semester students of English Education Department. They studied English among seven semesters. As a matter of fact, this class is the highest of students' failure in final test from three classes. More than half of students class B failed in final examination. They have already learned about listening, structure, and reading for four semesters. They are not only studied about those required subjects in TOEFL test, but also studied the translation and interpretation, vocabulary, semantics, English syntax, speaking. Unfortunately, they still failed of TOEFL test after all learning for four semesters.

Therefore, the researcher is looking forward to discuss and analyze the students' difficulties in doing reading TOEFL test based on Deborah Phillips theory in *Preparation Course for the TOEFL test : Skills and Strategies* and the factors which create the students' failure in doing the TOEFL test based on H. Douglas Brown theory in *Principles of Language Learning* with the focus on motivation and teacher' strategies¹⁴. In this case, it will be known the causes of students' difficulties in doing TOEFL test. So the students can prepare the TOEFL test better in the future.

¹⁴ H.Douglas Brown, *Principles of Language Learning* fourth Edition, (Newyork : Pearson Education Company, 2000), 20

B. Statement of the Problem

Based on the background of the study above, the researcher will set out the statement problem, they are :

1. What are the factors which create students' failure in reading section test?
2. What are the causes of students' difficulties in doing reading TOEFL test?

C. Objective of the Study

Based on the research problems, the objectives of the study are stated as follows :

1. Identify the factors which create failure for students Class B in reading TOEFL test.
2. Explain the cause of students' difficulties in doing reading section.

D. Significance of the Study

This research is expected to be useful for teachers and students :

1. Student : Giving additional information to the students of seventh semester know about the causes of students' difficulties in doing reading section test and other factors that may create the causes of students' difficulties in doing reading TOEFL test. So the students can find the solution to overcome their failure well.
2. Teacher : Teacher knows the causes of students' difficulties in doing reading TOEFL test and the other factors of students' failure in doing reading section. Therefore, teacher can apply the suitable method for them. Hence, the teaching learning process in the class will be run well.

E. Scope and Limitation of the Study

The scope of this study is TOEFL Preparation of Class B because this class is the highest of students' failure in final test from three classes. The limitation is in the reading

section, it is because 93% of thirteen students in class B who have failed in final examination got failure in reading section. Thus in this research, the researcher discusses an analysis of students' failure in doing test at TOEFL Preparation of Class B. To make the discussion specific, the researcher emphasizes the research in the causes of students' difficulties in doing reading TOEFL test and the other factors that causes the students' failure in doing reading TOEFL test in Students of Class B.

F. Key Terms

1. Failure : Failure in dictionary means lack of success. But in this research, failure means if the student gets TOEFL PBT score less than 475 in test.
2. TOEFL Preparation : TOEFL Preparation is one of compulsory subjects for seventh semester students of English Education Department at IAIN Sunan Ampel Surabaya. It is a subject that gives the opportunities for students to learn TOEFL test. So, this subject is a program that helps the students to prepare the TOEFL test better in the future.