

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the seven parts; research background, research question, hypothesis of the study, objective of the study, significance of the study, scope and limitation of the study, and definition of key terms.

A. Research Background

In academic life, people may have heard about TOEFL test or even done it. Even TOEFL has become very popular in the world. Educational Testing Service/ ETS announced TOEFL as “the most widely-used and internationally recognized test to evaluate non-native English speakers’ language proficiency”¹. The statement from Educational Testing Service gives reality that TOEFL is used in all over the world to test the English proficiency of people who live in non-English speaking countries. Because of widely used and internationally recognized test, TOEFL is used in all over the world include in Indonesia.

Although TOEFL is the most widely used in the world include in Indonesia, some facts shows that TOEFL should be developed in this country. Saukah finds that the average TOEFL scores of English language lecturers in Indonesia is 393, this condition is far lower than the third year Senior High

¹ Author, *Educational Testing Service Standard Setting Materials for the Internet-based TOEFL Test* (Princeton: ETS Press, 2005).

School students 435². Arifuddin and Sujana find that the average English proficiency of the students of English Education Program University of Mataram in TOEFL is, 437, this condition is lower than the minimum standard TOEFL score of 500 required for graduation³.

Based on the reality above, mastering the content of TOEFL is probably not enough. It also needs strategy in facing the test. The strategy when doing test is called test taking strategy. The term “Test taking” refers to the attitude, anxieties and motivation that individuals bring into a testing situation⁴. This definition drives the conclusion that test-taking covers three areas; opinion about test, feeling anxious of test, and willingness to take a test. More deep definition about test-taking strategies explained by College of the Canyon as “Test-taking strategies - involves specific strategies before and during a test”⁵. Furthermore, a theory about the importance of test-taking strategies supports that test-taking strategies take an important role in TOEFL success. Chesla states that TOEFL exam doesn’t only test the English language mastery but also test-taking skill.⁶

² A. Saukah, “The English Proficiency of the Academics of the Teacher Training and Education Institutions”. *Jurnal Ilmu Pendidikan*. Vol. 7 No. 1, 2000, 67-75.

³ Arifuddin Hasan dan Sujana. *Kecakapan Berbahasa Inggris Mahasiswa Senior Bahasa Inggris FKIP Universitas Mataram*. Hasil Penelitian Yang Tidak Dipublikasikan (Mataram: Lemlit Universitas Mataram, 2003). In Arifuddin Hasan – Susanto, “Gender-based Failure to Infer Implications from Pre-TOEFL Listening”. *International Journal of Learning & Development*. Vol. 2 No. 6, November 2012. 62-72.

⁴ Jeffrey A. Smith, Doctoral Dissertation: “An Examination of Test-Taking Attitudes and Response Distortion on a Personality Test”. (Virginia: Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, 1997), 2.

⁵ LEAP Team. “Test Taking Strategies”. (<http://www.canyons.edu/committees/leap/team1/15tips/tip7.asp> accessed on December 09.2013).

⁶ Elizabeth Chesla, *TOEFL Exam Success from Learning Express in only 6 Strategic Steps* (USA: LLC, 2002), 15.

English Teacher Education Department UIN Sunan Ampel Surabaya is one of the department in Indonesian universities that obligates their students to achieve the English Proficiency score at least 500 as the graduation requirement. By obligating this policy, the department hopes that the gradulators can have good ability in English in order to they can compete in either local or global market⁷. Furthermore, the department provides TOEFL Preparation class in sixth semester to help students in learning TOEFL. At the end of the class, students must participate in the test held by department. The test content is adapted from TOEFL material, but the test provider does not come from Educational Testing Services (formal TOEFL institution)⁸. Therefore, the TOEFL test in TOEFL Preparation class at English Teacher Education Department can be categorized as TOEFL Equivalent Test. If the students are not able to pass the test, they have to follow the class in the next period until they pass it. Consequently, the student graduation may be postponed. Moreover, UIN Sunan Ampel Surabaya is the one of state Islamic university in Surabaya. Although this university has a status as the one of state Islamic university in Surabaya, it does not only put a lot of attentions to Islamic disciplines. The university also gives effort to English education learning as proven by the existence of English Teacher Education Department. Because of obligating English Proficiency as the graduation requirement and having status as the one state Islamic university in Surabaya, the

⁷ Super User. "*Tujuan Jurusan Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris*". (fitk.uin-sby.ac.id/jurusan/pendidikan-bahasa/prodi-pbi/visi-misi.html, accessed on December 09, 2013)

⁸ Getting Conversation with TOEFL Preparation lecturer on May 7 2014.

researcher thinks that it is important to investigate the TOEFL equivalent test held by TOEFL Preparation class in this institution.

Moreover, the TOEFL preparation class in English Teacher Education Department UIN Sunan Ampel usually focuses only in learning test content so far. The class do not concern on test taking strategies. From 30 students who were succeed to be interviewed in preliminary study, 53 % say that there is no lecturing about test taking strategy in their TOEFL class⁹. For more detail of students' answer in preliminary study, see appendix 1. Even one student says that they just study about strategy how to do TOEFL test effectively, not about physical way¹⁰. As a result, TOEFL equivalent test takers sometimes do not consider about the thing they do before and during the test. On the other hand, test-taking strategy becomes an important thing in a test beside the content. This reason inspires the researcher to take a research about test-taking strategy doing by English Teacher Education Department students in TOEFL equivalent test.

In fact, there are seven studies in the previous time that related to this research. The first two studies come from Wenxia and Majid that focus on test-taking strategies¹¹. The rest studies are from Taiko, Amirousefi, Sheshkelani, Fahim , and Wait that focus only in specific part of test taking such as test

⁹ Interview with 32 students of sixth semester English Education Department academic year 2013-2014 on May 19 2014.

¹⁰ Interview with one of the students in TOEFL Preparation class, on May 19, 2014.

¹¹ - Wenxia Zhang, Meihua Liu, Shan Zhao, Qiong Xie, "English Test-Taking Strategy Use and Students' Test Performance". *Asian EFL Journal*. Vol. 13 issue 2, 133-168.
- Majid Pour-Mohammadi, and Dr. Mohamad Jafre Zainol Abidin. "Test-taking Strategies, Schema Theory and Reading Comprehension Test Performance". *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science*. Vol. 1 No. 18, 237-243.

anxiety, test wiseness, etc¹². Including in test-taking strategies focus, Wenxia's research finds that some strategies are significantly correlated in students English test performance¹³. Whereas Madjid' research find that reading test-taking strategies improve students' reading score¹⁴. Focusing only in some parts of test-taking, Taiko finds that there is relationship between test-wiseness and listening ability¹⁵. Then Amiryousefi finds that there is influence between test anxiety and listening score.¹⁶ Still about listening skill, Sheshkelani appears the fact that test preparation gives positive impact to listening score.¹⁷ Whereas, Fahim finds that critical thinking contribute to reading TOEFL score¹⁸. At last, Wait appears the

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- ¹² - Mohammad Amiryousefi, "The Relationship between Test Anxiety, Motivation and MI and the TOEFL iBT Reading, Listening and Writing Scores". *Procedia Social and Behavioral Sciences*. Vol. 15, 2011, 210-214.
- A. Aylar Poorabdollahi Sheshkelani, et.al., "An Investigation of Relationship between Test Preparation and Test Performance of Iranian EFL learners on Listening Skill in TOEFL". *IJBAS-IJENS*. Vol.12 No.02, April 2012, 159-167.
- Fahim Bagherkazemi and Alemi, "The Relationship between Test Takers' Critical Thinking Ability and Their Performance on the Reading Section". *Journal of Language Teaching and Research*. Vol. 1 No. 6, November 2010, 830-837.
- Tania Hanlie Wait, Master Thesis: "*The Relationship between the Use of Language Learning Strategies and Performance on a Standardized English Proficiency Test*". (South Africa: Stellenbosch University, 2007).
- ¹³ Wenxia Zhang, Meihua Liu, Shan Zhao, Qiong Xie, "English Test-Taking Strategy Use and Students' Test Performance". *Asian EFL Journal*. Vol. 13 issue 2, 133-168.
- ¹⁴ Majid Pour-Mohammadi, and Dr. Mohamad Jafre Zainol Abidin. "Test-taking Strategies, Schema Theory and Reading Comprehension Test Performance". *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science*. Vol. 1 No. 18, 237-243.
- ¹⁵ Taiko Tsuchihira, "The Relationship between Test-Wiseness and the English Listening Test Scores". *Journal of Bunkyo Gakuin University*. Vol. 8, 2009, 13-30.
- ¹⁶ Mohammad Amiryousefi, "The Relationship between Test Anxiety, Motivation and MI and the TOEFL iBT Reading, Listening and Writing Scores". *Procedia Social and Behavioral Sciences*. Vol. 15, 2011, 210-214.
- ¹⁷ A. Aylar Poorabdollahi Sheshkelani, et.al., "An Investigation of Relationship between Test Preparation and Test Performance of Iranian EFL learners on Listening Skill in TOEFL". *IJBAS-IJENS*. Vol.12 No.02, April 2012, 159-167.
- ¹⁸ Fahim Bagherkazemi and Alemi, "The Relationship between Test Takers' Critical Thinking Ability and Their Performance on the Reading Section". *Journal of Language Teaching and Research*. Vol. 1 No. 6, November 2010, 830-837.

findings that language learning strategies give benefit to standardized test result¹⁹.

On the other hand, this research will be different from previous studies. Although this study and Wenxia's research talk about test-taking strategies, this study will use different point of test taking-strategies e.g. this research will not use test-taking strategies in reading, writing, and speaking as like in Wenxia's research. This research will also be different from Majid's research that examines test-taking strategies in reading skill. This research will investigate test-taking strategies in TOEFL Equivalent Test. Moreover, this study is not like the five last studies that only researches the part of test taking strategies e.g. test wiseness in Taiko's research, test anxiety in Amiryousefi's research, test preparation in Sheskelani's research, test' taker critical thinking in Fahim's research, and language learning strategies in Wait's research.

Researching the use of test-taking strategies to TOEFL Equivalent Test in English Teacher Education Department UIN Sunan Ampel will be very important. First, people will know the investigation result of test-taking strategies used by sixth semester students of English Teacher Education Department. By knowing this, people will indirectly know what test-taking strategies used by sixth semester TOEFL Equivalent Test takers and what test-taking strategies that are not used by test takers. As a result, the department can optimize the use of all

¹⁹ Tania Hanlie Wait, Master Thesis: "*The Relationship between the Use of Language Learning Strategies and Performance on a Standardized English Proficiency Test*". (South Africa: Stellenbosch University, 2007), iii.

test-taking strategies. The second importance is that people can know motivations having by sixth semester test taker in using some strategies. By knowing motivations having by test takers, people can know about test-takers perspective toward using some strategies. Third, people will know whether there is a significant relationship between test-taking strategies and TOEFL Equivalent Test score in sixth semester test takers. If there is significant relationship, people will know that unsuccessfully TOEFL Equivalent Test taker along this time is caused by inconsiderable test-taking strategy.

B. Research Question

Based on the research background, the researcher has formulated research questions of this study as follows:

1. What are test-taking strategies used in TOEFL Equivalent Test by sixth semester students of English Teacher Education Department UIN Sunan Ampel?
2. Why do the sixth semester test takers choose those strategies?
3. Do test-taking strategies have a significant relationship to TOEFL Equivalent Test score partially and simultaneously?

C. Hypothesis of the Study

Hypothesis of this study are based on the third research question as follows:

H₀ (1): Test-taking strategy does not have a significant relationship to TOEFL Equivalent Test score simultaneously.

H₁ (1): Test-taking strategy has a significant relationship to TOEFL Equivalent Test Score simultaneously.

H₀ (2): Test-taking strategy does not have a significant relationship to TOEFL Equivalent Test score partially.

H₁ (2): Test-taking strategy has a significant relationship to TOEFL Equivalent Test Score partially.

D. Objective of the Study

Based on the research questions stated previously, the researcher has formulated the major objectives of this research. Those objectives are addressed to help sixth semester students of English Teacher Education Department to reflect on what they will have done in TOEFL Equivalent Test. Those objectives are also useful for teacher to take the best step toward their TOEFL class especially in term of test-taking strategies. The objectives having by this research are:

1. To observe test-taking strategies used by sixth semester test taker students of English Teacher Education Department UIN Sunan Ampel.
2. To investigate test taker students' reason in term of using those strategies.
3. To find more facts about the relationship between test-taking strategies and TOEFL Equivalent Test score partially and simultaneously.

E. Significance of the Study

The researcher expects some valuable contributions from this research. First, this research can contribute to the students' ability in facing TOEFL Equivalent Test. By knowing the result of this research, the researcher hopes that the students will know the major findings in test-taking strategies used by their classes. If the result shows that test-taking strategies used have a significant relationship to the students' TOEFL Equivalent Test score, it is expected that they can do better test-taking strategies in their later test. Moreover, after knowing the result the researcher hope that sixth semester test taker students will consider test-taking strategies not only in TOEFL Equivalent Test, but also in other test.

Second, the research hopes that the research can give advantage for TOEFL preparation lecturer. This research result is possible to map test taking-strategies used by sixth semester test taker students, so the researcher expects that the lecturer can use it as reflection. Lecturers may be able to develop which test-taking strategies that mostly difficult to do and can build the students' ability in mastering those difficult test-taking strategies. Learning test-taking strategies actually improves the validity of a test by making scores reflect more accurately

what students know²⁰. Hopefully, this research can be useful for perfecting the sixth semester test takers ability in test-taking strategies.

Third, the researcher expects that this work can be valuable for English Teacher Education Department of UIN Sunan Ampel. By seeing the result of the research, department may be able to introduce test-taking strategies intensively since their students are in the first year. Accordingly, it is expected that students will be usual to do test-taking strategies in every test not only in TOEFL equivalent test. Students may use it such as in midterm test, final test, and etc. Thus, English Education Department students will have good academic achievement. Furthermore, department can gain the result as the latest data of TOEFL Preparation class.

Fourth, this research is also expected to contribute in the future research. The researcher hopes that the future researchers do not stop the discussion only in TOEFL theme, but also in other test. With hoping that the future researchers do not stop only in TOEFL theme, The researcher expect that the future researchers can rely on this research result to develop more research in term of test-taking strategies for example in final test, So that the existence of test-taking strategies can be more useful for test takers.

²⁰ Author, *Research-Based Test Preparation Instruction Better Test Scores Grades 3–12 Making Students Test Wise “Students Who Are Test Wise Can Outperform Students of Equal Ability but Lacking Test-Wisness”* (USA: Perfection Learning Corporation, 1992), 1.

F. Scope and Limitation of the Study

The scope of this research is TOEFL Equivalent test-taking strategies. “Test-taking strategies” in this research is defined as the test takers’ attitude before and during the TOEFL Equivalent Test. In this case, before the test includes preparation to face the test for example; knowing the test location, direction, preparing everything that is necessary in the test (pen, pencil, eraser), and etc. Whereas test-taking strategies during the test include the test taker attitude toward the test such as how to handle the stress, how test-takers answer the test, and etc.

On the other hand, the researcher tries to limit the study. This research does not tell about student ability in using strategies dealing with content *e.g.* TOEFL Equivalent reading strategies, TOEFL Equivalent structure strategies, and TOEFL Equivalent listening strategies.

G. Definition of Key Terms

In order to make this writing clear, the researcher tries to explain some related terms used in the research as follows;

1. Test -Taking

The term “test-taking” can be defined as the attitude, anxieties and motivation that individuals bring into a testing situation²¹. Based on the previous definition, test-taking in this research also observes those 3 areas; the

²¹Jeffrey A. Smith, Doctoral Dissertation: “*An Examination of Test-Taking Attitudes and Response Distortion on a Personality Test*”. (Virginia: Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, 1997), 2.

attitude, motivation, and anxiety having by sixth semester TOEFL Equivalent test-taker.

2. Test-Taking Strategies

This term can be defined as the sixth semester test takers' attitude before and during the TOEFL test. In this case, the researcher relies on College of the Canyon definition about test taking strategy "Successful test taking involves specific strategies before and during a test"²². Based on college of canyon definition, people may know that test taking strategies contains of strategies before test and strategies during test.

3. Test Strategies.

There is a marked difference between test strategies and test taking strategies. If test strategies cover all the things that may appear on the test, test-taking strategies helps students understand the format and conventions of a specific type of test and make them feel comfortable in a testing environment²³. On the other word, test strategies probably cover such as listening strategies, reading strategies, writing strategies, and structure strategies that related to the test content. But test taking strategies in this research concern on comfortable situation having by sixth semester TOEFL Equivalent test takers in doing test.

²² LEAP Team. "Test Taking Strategies". (<http://www.canyons.edu/committees/leap/team1/15tips/tip7.asp> accessed on December 09.2013).

²³ Author, *Research-Based Test Preparation Instruction Better Test Scores Grades 3–12 Making Students Test Wise "Students Who Are Test Wise Can Outperform Students of Equal Ability but Lacking Test-Wiseness"* (USA: Perfection Learning Corporation, 1992), 1.

4. TOEFL Equivalent Test

There are some definitions of TOEFL that supports this research. The *Test of English as a Foreign Language*, better known as TOEFL, is designed to measure the English proficiency of people whose native language is not English²⁴. Furthermore, Educational Testing Service/ ETS announced TOEFL as “the most widely-used and internationally recognized test”²⁵.

On the other hand, this study uses the term “TOEFL Equivalent Test”. This term means that the TOEFL material used in the test is adapted from some sources such as Longman Preparation Course for Computer and Paper Test²⁶, but the test provider is English Teacher Education Department itself not the formal TOEFL institution like Educational Testing Service²⁷.

²⁴ Educational Testing Services official site, *Test and Score Data Summary for TOEFL®Internet-based and Paper Based Test* (NJ: Educational Testing Services, 2007), 2.

²⁵ Author, *Educational Testing Service Standard setting materials for the Internet-based TOEFL test* (NJ: Princeton, 2005).

²⁶ Deborah Philips, *Longman Complete Course for the TOEFL Test: Preparation for the Computer and Paper Test* (NY: Pearson education Company, 2001).

²⁷ Interview with TOEFL Preparation lecturer on May 7 2014.